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EDITORIAL

Getting it wrong on May 24

SOCIALIST WORKER of April 30 carries an article criticising the May 24 women's day of action. A lot of the points SW makes have some validity, but their conclusion is wrong.

"It is possible that in a few places . . . there will be some response to the May 24 call. Socialist Workers Party members will back such activity, just as we back any demonstration against the Bomb." I.e. the SWP will not positively campaign for May 24.

SW puts three arguments. First, and most important, is the inadequate preparation for May 24.

"Strikes are a much more powerful form of action than demonstration. But they are also much harder to organise."

SW goes on to argue that "an all-out sustained strike" could arise only from a general revolutionary upsurge, not from a simple call from anti-war activists on the single issue of peace. True enough, but not very relevant, since no-one is suggesting that May 24 strikers should stay out indefinitely.

May 24 will be a protest strike, and no less worthwhile for that. But SW correctly points out, "even that can only be successful on the basis of a massive amount of propaganda and agitation. Look at the massive number of delegations and pickets that had to be sent out by hospital workers last year in order to get solidarity from other workers."

It's true that with longer and better preparation — so that, for example, the various official labour movement statements of support had been got in time for rank and file activists to really use them — May 24 could have been a bigger success. It won't now be a general strike, or anything like that.

But isn't this almost inevitable for a first attempt? Why can't we make the best of it, and learn lessons for the future — make the contacts between peace campaigners and experienced trade unionists that will permit better planning next time?

Second, SW argues that "those behind the women's day of action have not made the links between the question of the Bomb and the other questions worrying millions of workers — jobs, living standards, the cuts and so forth."

Making links

This is *not* true. The Greenham women have long been making such political links. On June 6 they blockaded the Stock Exchange, on September 22 they sent a contingent on the NHS pay demo with a banner saying 'Hospitals not Holocaust', they demonstrated against the Falklands Victory Parade, and they have made links with Lucas Aerospace shop stewards.

The East Midlands leaflet for May 24 says: "By withdrawing our labour . . . we will make a powerful statement about our opposition to all weapons of mass destruction, whilst at the same time drawing the links between low pay, unemployment, the cuts and the increasing amounts of money being spent on nuclear weapons."

And in Haringey, north London, to take another example, women will be holding a rally outside the threatened Prince of Wales hospital specifically to make a link between the Bomb and cuts.

On the other hand, SW's attitude has often been not simply to try to link the fight against the Bomb with the working class economic struggle, but to *dissolve* it into that struggle. Repeatedly in SW there has been the suggestion that the Bomb is an effete middle class issue, while the real working class issues are jobs and wages. (The highpoint has been a letter from a SWP supporter saying that the Greenham women are just concerned about the effects of nuclear war on "their middle class life-styles". So working class people aren't bothered about the effects of a holocaust on their "life-style" . . . ?)

SW also criticises May 24 for being a *women's* day of action, just as it has criticised previous specific women's events organised by the Greenham women. This will cut across working class support, says SW.

But the Greenham women have had more impact among *working class* women than SW (or SO) has ever had. May 24 is an effort to turn that impact into *action*.

"Are women workers to strike while men workers go in . . . Or are opponents of the Bomb supposed to try and picket out both men and women? If so, why call it a 'women's day of action'?"

The Greenham women have explained: "Men are asked to take supportive strike action and to organise creches in workplaces, and look after the children at home, so that women can be free to take action". Yes, this way of putting it may well make it more difficult to get men out.

But the Greenham women wanted a day on which *women would take the lead*. Hasn't their success so far shown that this sort of action is a valid element in the movement?

The Greenham women start from a call for *all* women — unwaged and waged — to take action on the 24th, and propose strikes in this context. This is different from the usual trade unionists' approach to industrial action. But that doesn't make May 24 a matter, as SW puts it, "that workers are simply one group alongside others to be won in support of a mainly middle class movement."

CND is a channel for rallying working class support behind a middle class movement as long as and in so far as it remains focussed on UN disarmament sessions, petitions to government, and general appeals to the conscience of the world. But the Greenham women have decisively stepped away from that focus.

May 24 is a further move towards an active anti-Bomb movement of women and the working class. Socialists should support it.

By Judith Bonner

THE Labour Party National Executive Committee, TUC Women's advisory committee, NUPE, ACTT, SE Region TUC, Scottish TUC Women's Advisory Committee, Labour CND, CND National Committee and NALGO are the main bodies offering support for the May 24 'women all out for disarmament'.

It is an international women's day of opposition to nuclear weapons (women in 25 other countries are supporting it), and the call came from Greenham in January.

Women everywhere in paid employment, in unpaid domestic work at home, and at college are being urged to take action against the bomb. Women are in the forefront of the struggles against cruise and the new call for action is a logical extension.

So what's going on and where? The national May 24 Coordinating Committee has issued an action pack and has managed to establish regional contacts in most areas of the country. Women's centres, local union branches, Labour Party women's sections and councils are initiating action.

NALGO branches

NALGO Equal Opportunities Committee is supporting the event. NALGO has issued posters calling 'women all-out for peace'. Although NALGO is not officially supporting strike action, the leadership will 'consider' requests for strike action from local branches.

Several branches, including Haringey, Brent, Ealing and Southwark have applied. NALGO members in the Labour Party have backed this by demanding their councils take no action against strikers.

So get your resolutions to NALGO nationally now, calling for strike action.

In Scotland the May 24 organisers have planned a tour of factories with the slogan 'Jobs not Bombs'. There is also to be a rally in Glasgow.

Similarly in Manchester there will be a factory tour. In Bury there will be a march to the Town Hall, and the plan is also to petition and leaflet locals in the precinct. The Rochdale co-ordinating committee is planning similar activities, including a leaflet in Urdu.

War Museum

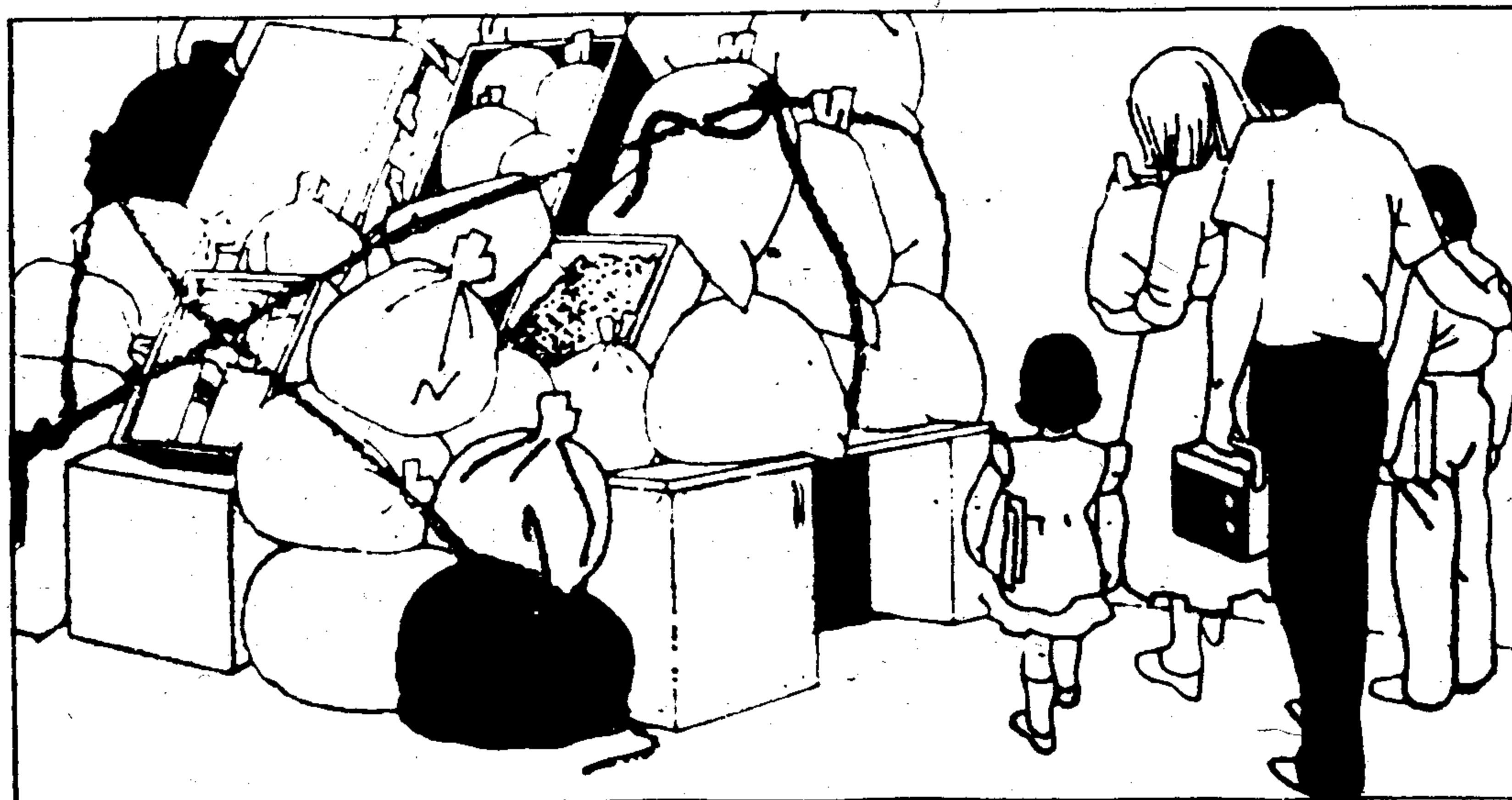
There will be an all-London event starting at 6pm in Trafalgar Square, besides all the local events. In Haringey there will be rallies at Wood Green Shopping Centre and at the Prince of Wales Hospital. The aim here is to directly link the action for disarmament with an ongoing fight at the hospital against closure.

Islington has organised — a picnic! This will be joined by a joint Camden/Islington demonstration which starts at Kings Cross.

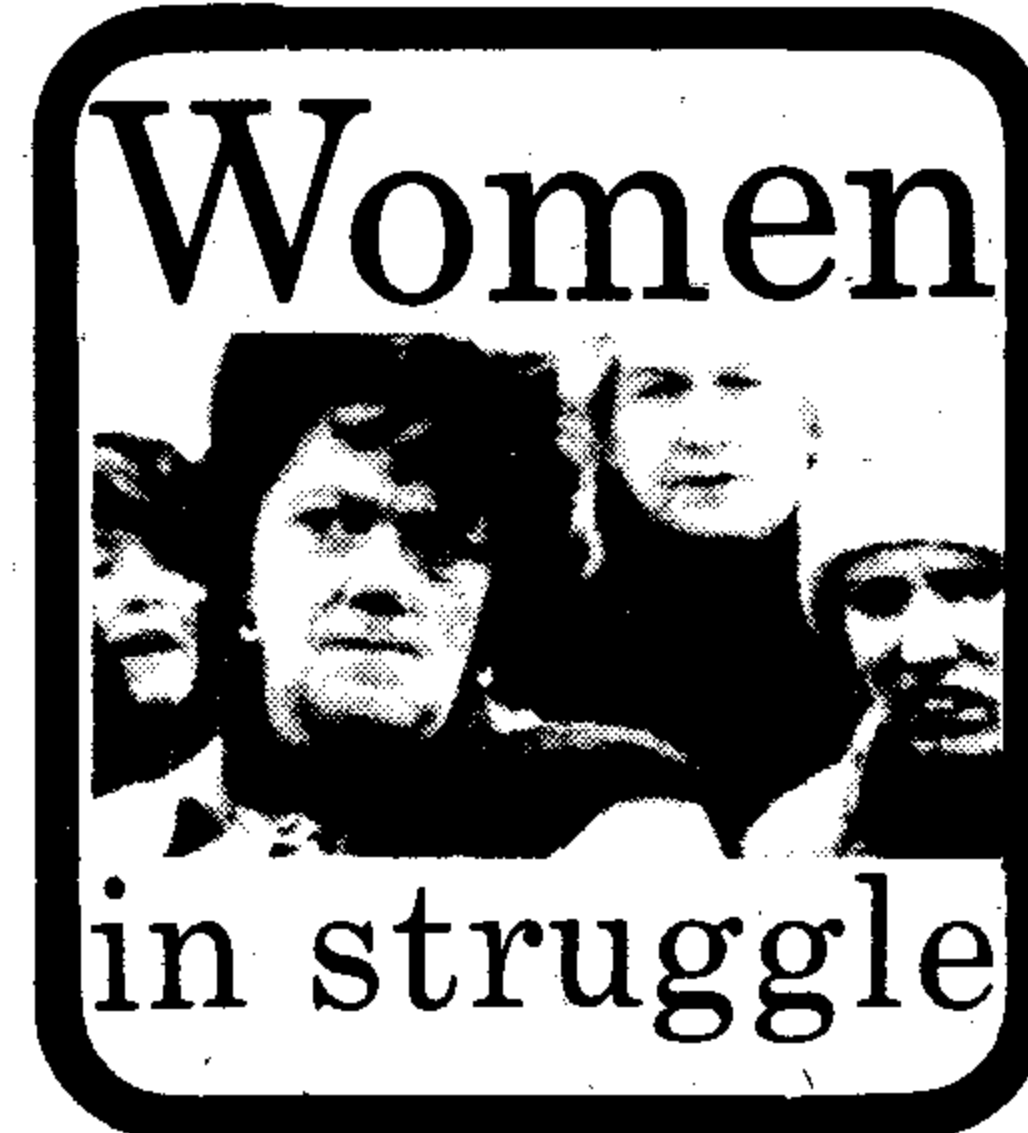
In Southwark, peace campaigners will march on the Imperial War Museum.

In Coventry both the women's centre and the Labour Party women's section are planning events. A die-in is scheduled

Women all-out for peace



The Nuclear Family



during the day and a rally in the evening.

The People's March for Jobs, which passes through Coventry to Leamington Spa, will be leafleted and more action is planned by Leamington women's groups.

All these are only a few examples of the range of action nation-wide.

Fighting sexism

Half the battle in getting supporting action on May 24 has been fighting the sexist, derisory attitudes of all sections of the organised labour movement. May 24 offers huge scope for action.

A favourite key phrase of the left is to "build links, link the struggle" with the labour movement: that's precisely what we should do and should have done.

Groups like the SWP and Militant who regard themselves as a leading part of that organised labour movement should have responded by being in the forefront.

Instead they chose to negate such action, because its grass roots were in feminism and women's self-activity, not the shop floor.

Historically the labour movement and its organisations have often been hostile to taking up women's issues. We have a legacy of the fight for a family wage and sacking part-time workers, scabbing on women's struggles besides a general opposition to allowing women to take leadership positions.

The Labour Party Young Socialists refused to support the event, saying in a patronising way that it was doomed to fail.

Instead of asking themselves how they concretise their influence in the labour movement to link with the obviously successful cam-

paigns of women in the disarmament movement, they denounced it as 'separatist, divisive, and middle class'.

Not counterposed

The self-activity of women in the disarmament movement is not counterposed to workers on the shop floor taking action against the missiles. Look at the demands being made against military spending, against closures of schools and hospitals from Greenham.

Women at Greenham, over nearly two years, besides giving CND a new momentum, have highlighted the organisational potential of women. No labour movement body has matched their ability to build mass action against the Bomb.

If the trade unions and the Labour Party which support unilateral disarmament can be turned

towards such movements, then wresting power from the bosses and generals becomes more realistic.

It is not too late to prepare activities for May 24. Get those resolutions into your trade unions and CLPs. Find out from your regional contact what is happening and join in.

For more information phone the May 24 Organising Committee (Laura, 0273 604265).



TARZAN: "That Banana chewing little creep"

What to do for May 24

What you can do:

■ Find out from your Regional Contact what has already been planned, offer your services and suggestions. Phone Brighton (Carmel or Laura) 0273 553466 for your regional contact.

■ Raise support for the day of strike action in your union, workplace, estate, shopping centre, school college, nursery, just anywhere you go.

■ If your local council has a nuclear free zone policy, and many do, demand that the council gives over office space for organising for the 24th. Sheffield and Leicester City Councils have already done so.

■ Plan action for the day itself — we can do ANYTHING, occupy, encircle, decorate, die-in, blockade at military bases, banks, armaments factories and supporting industries, nuclear bunkers, Ministry of Defence Offices.

■ Leaflet everywhere, so there can be no excuse for not knowing what's happening on May 24. If you don't have local leaflets, they can be obtained nationally from the London Greenham office.

■ Demand the support of men. Ask them to take supportive strike action as well, and to help organise creches so children can be looked after and the women are free to take the main action on the day.

■ Pressure to get unions to support May 24 must now be generated in local branches. Trades Councils can arrange for every delegate to take support for May 24 into their branches and arrange for speakers from Greenham Common to address meetings.

■ Help set up local organising meetings, including women's centres, women's groups, minority ethnic women's groups, trade union women's groups, anti-cuts campaigns, etc.

■ Labour Party Women's sections can take up the call and show that there are Labour Party rank and file members who are determined to commit the Labour Party to campaign on conference resolutions.

Let's make May 24 the biggest, most successful action yet!

Interview with Pat Arrowsmith

"I certainly hope everyone will vote Labour"

How do you see unilateral nuclear disarmament being achieved eventually?

I don't think it's going to be achieved without some political party in this country having it as its policy. That doesn't mean it's just a matter of persuading a political party.

The most effective way of achieving it, and the most certain way, would, I think, be mass industrial action. But I don't know that we're into that ballgame yet in this country.

If a Labour government comes in at the next general election, what do you think are the chances of it carrying out unilateral nuclear disarmament?

It will depend quite a bit on the extent to which the pressure is kept up. CND National Council has decided to have mass action around Westminster as soon as the election is over, regardless of which party wins — with this in mind, that Labour may well have to be kept to its policies.

In that context, how do you see the independent unilateralist candidates?

I've stood three times as a quasi-independent. I think there are problems at a general election. You don't get the publicity you hoped for, because there's much more about the main parties. You don't, in my experience, get a lot of people piling in to help in the campaign, because they all want to stay at home and work in their own constituencies.

You do of course get the advantage of the election address, and you get a relatively receptive audience at general election time, prepared to think about and discuss political issues.

But in this instance I think the situation is quite different because Labour — give or take a bit of fudging over Polaris — is committed to a unilateralist policy. In the past, when it wasn't, perhaps there was a case for fielding candidates. But now you have a unilateralist candidate — like for example Rebecca Johnson, standing against Heseltine — where there is a unilateralist Labour candidate in that constituency. I don't see the point of an independent standing and splitting the vote.

It's more difficult if you have a Labour candidate who is equivocal on unilateralism — or Healey, for god's sake — but even so, I guess if we want a Labour government returned, committed to carry through this policy, we've

got to vote for Labour candidates even if they're not ones we particularly fancy. Independents just divert people.

It was very different before Labour had a unilateralist policy.

There's been a bit of argument in CND about how much priority to give to the labour movement orientation.

At the moment the election itself is a priority. I would agree, as a CND member, as distinct from being a Labour Party member, that CND can't specifically call for people to back any one party.

I'm a latecomer to the Labour Party — a sort of entrant on the CND issue. But we only achieved a unilateralist policy in the Labour Party, we can only maintain it and see it carried out, with much wider pressure throughout the country. The women at Greenham Common going onto the runway yesterday is part of that. The action we're having at an arms factory in Enfield on May 12 is part of that. Marches and lobbies and public meetings are all part of that. There is no one single way of achieving our objective.

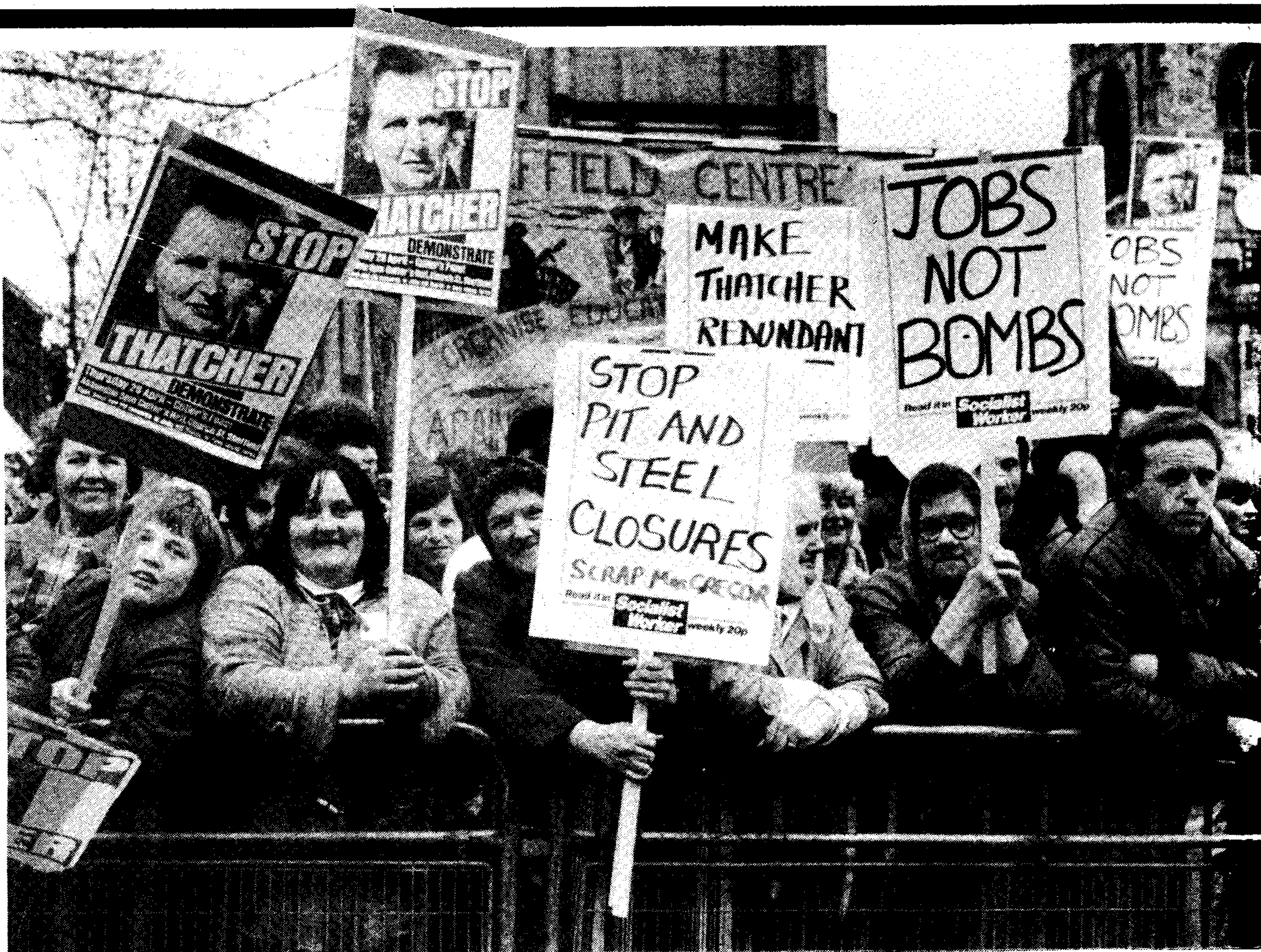
Wouldn't you say that other CND activists should draw the same conclusions about the Labour Party as you?

Yes — if you think that something is a correct line, then you should think it is correct for everybody else.

If everyone in CND were to join the Labour Party... it's an idle question, because they won't. But I would certainly hope that everybody would decide to vote Labour.

But I don't think CND can do a lot itself actually during the general election.

The peace canvass going on is a good limber-up for it, getting people to think about the issue, and at the general election local groups can of course hold meetings for all the candidates. But the work really has to be done before the general election, not during it. During it people will campaign for



Not welcome

The People's March for Jobs, 83 banner was there as 5,000 joined the Sheffield 'Unwelcome Committee' demonstration against Margaret Thatcher's visit to the city the local capitalists' annual bingle, the Master Cutler's dinner. NUR, TGWU, NUP, ASIMS, NALGO, Asian Youth Movement, and Bangladeshi community banners were also there.

their own parties. And there will be many, many people in CND helping Labour candidates.

There's been some discussion in CND and in the Labour Party about alternatives to nuclear weapons. What do you think?

I'm a pacifist. I became a pacifist because it seemed that the logic of the argument about nuclear weapons was not to engage in armed conflict at all.

But taking off the pacifist hat I can see from the point of view of people who are not pacifists that there are alternatives. You can argue that as with a country like Sweden you can have a genuinely defensive conventional force, which is purely intended to intercept a potential aggressor.

This is arguably possible. How far it's necessary depends on whether you think there is any likelihood of this country being invaded — there's a possibility we might be invaded in even greater force than we are at present by the United States if we unilaterally gave up our nuclear weapons and told the Americans to get out — and what the people of the country feel. If a high proportion of the people have ingrained into them the notion that we must have a defence, then perhaps to persuade them to give up nuclear weapons you have to offer some real form of defence.

What about citizens' defence as opposed to armed forces structured as at present but with conventional weapons?

I believe in citizens' non-violent resistance. You can organise this on almost military lines if you are so minded.

I think one of the problems for pacifists, and anti-militarists in general, on this, is that you can

get into the situation (as Tribune has) of suggesting some kind of conscription. I can't hold with that, because it takes away people's freedom.

You said that a serious move to unilateral nuclear disarmament could provoke a violent reaction from the United States. It could also bring a violent reaction from the British Army. How would you see that being dealt with?

There's a lot of evidence that massive non-cooperation can be more effective than military action. Admittedly, guerilla warfare can be very effective, but if you don't believe in killing people then you're not going to go along with the idea of guerilla warfare — many innocent people, as well as military people, get killed, as we can see in Ireland today.

A mass withdrawal of cooperation — almost an entire population, would make a military dictatorship or military takeover or invasion not viable. There are examples of this from occupied countries in World War 2. For instance, the Nazi policy of subverting the education system in Norway under the Quisling government was completely blocked by non-violent resistance on the part of teachers.

I don't think any military force can succeed if there is massive non-cooperation by the population.

Massive non-cooperation can be made less massive by military force, and then isolated and crushed...

But it's never really been attempted, apart from India I suppose.

I think you might be right about the military moving in. Britain being a so-called democracy doesn't absolve us from this poss-

ibility. I'm aware that during the miners' strike [of 1974] there were plans for a military takeover. I was at a debate at Cambridge with Field Marshal Carver and he admitted this.

This is one of the reasons why it's so important for the nuclear disarmament movement to remain strong if Labour does get in. Apart from the question of whether Labour will carry out its policy, there is also the possibility of other forces — outside or internal — trying to stop nuclear disarmament.

Finally: what's your view on May 24?

I said earlier on that I thought

industrial action was the way to achieve our purposes in CND, though I'm not terribly sanguine that this is on the cards at the moment. But May 24 is conceived of as industrial action. And I think that if and when the Tories try to implement these new defence regulations then we will see the same sort of thing by local government employees.

Without necessarily blowing a great trumpet, and saying this is now a strike, it can happen in another kind of way. And that sense May 24 is very important.

See 'Problems and Policies' page 5.

YCND conference

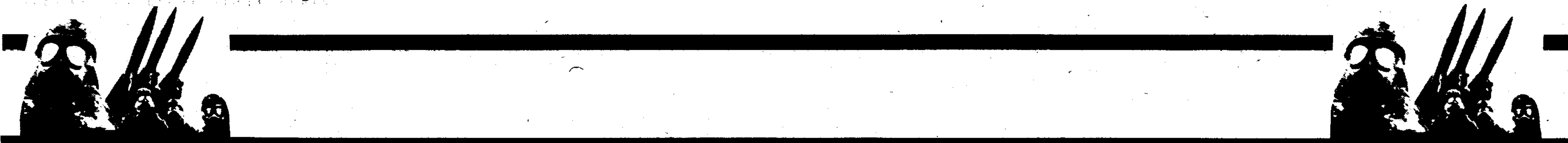


Manchester, July 2. For details contact YCND, 11 Goodwin St. London N4. To join YCND, send £1 to 11 Goodwin St.

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Origins of the arms race examined

They planned to turn the Pentagon into a hospital!

IT'S reading books like 'Defended to Death' that makes you realise just why Michael Heseltine is scared to engage in debate with the opponents of nuclear weapons.

Assembled in nearly 400 pages of closely argued text, appendices and notes, are a veritable armoury of facts and figures demolishing every aspect of conventional Tory mythology and the US propaganda justifying the present massive nuclear build-up by Reagan and Thatcher.

More comprehensive and ambitious in scope than earlier books such as 'Protest and Survive', and 'Overkill', 'Defended to Death' is described as "a study of the nuclear arms race from the Cambridge University Disarmament Seminar". And as one might hope from a group of ten capable academics, the result is, for the most part, an exceedingly thorough piece of work.

A historical examination of the conflicts between the imperialist nations and the post-revolutionary Soviet Union is marred by the fact that the Russian Revolution is mistakenly dated as 1918 – but in general does an effective job of showing why the Soviet leadership – whose territory was invaded by imperialist troops three times in the first half of this century has good reason to fear encirclement and aggression from the imperialists.

The account is perhaps excessively uncritical of the emergent Stalinist bureaucracy – particularly when it refers to the crash industrialisation of the USSR from 1928-38.

And surprisingly it makes little of the impact of Stalinist purges in decimating the leadership of the Red Army, or his foreign policy which left the Soviet Union exposed to Hitler's invasion in 1941.

Hostile

But it points out that despite its hostile environment, the USSR at the end of the 1920s was rated less of a military power than Poland – let alone comparable to the main imperialist powers.

It was in the hot-house conditions of World War 2 – in which regrouped Soviet forces bore the brunt of the fighting against Hitler's armies – that this



"If stationed in West Germany, the new Pershing II ballistic missiles, the most accurate missiles yet built, will be able to reach the USSR in 4 to 8 minutes. Faced with the prospect of Soviet missiles in Cuba, the USA declared it would not tolerate such a threat. Would it be surprising if the Soviet leadership took the same attitude towards a much more potent yet comparable threat today?"

(Defended to Death, p.208)

Harry Sloan reviews 'Defended to Death', edited by Gwyn Prins (Pelican £3.50)



Reagan

Table 7. Contractor Dependency on the Department of Defense, 1975-9 (five-year average for top companies); constant (1980) prices

	Percentage	\$ millions
Fairchild Industries	87	559
Grumman	85	1,322
Hughes Aircraft*	76	1,819
General Dynamics	67	3,518
McDonnell Douglas	63	3,247
Northrop	63	1,227
Lockheed	52	2,037
Raytheon	34	1,745
Boeing	31	2,385
United Technologies	31	3,109

*Data for two years only disclosed.

decisively changed, and the massive military apparatus developed to drive out the Nazi invaders was subsequently consolidated to avert any future threat to Soviet borders.

The emergence of Soviet military power as a dominant force in Europe coincided with the assertion of American dominance over the capitalist nations.

The fighting had taken place thousands of miles from the USA, its economy, free from war damage, boomed, with GNP doubling during the course of the war. Military victories in Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific strengthened the USA as a world power, supplemented by possession and deliberate use of the

atomic bomb.

But perhaps more significant, the USA developed for the first time a permanent and massive military apparatus. Unlike the aftermath of the American Civil War and World War 1, this apparatus was not dissolved, and the US war industries were not converted back to peacetime activity.

The authors point interestingly to the curious design of the Pentagon.

"The Pentagon is entered up gently sloping ramps. They were constructed in this way to allow stretcher trolleys to be wheeled in with ease, not in the event of an attack, but because it was intended to turn the building into a hospital when the war ended because it was no longer required for a military purpose." (p.87).

Not only the buildings, but many of the institutions we now see as inseparable from the functions of US imperialism also date only from the end of World War 2:

"In addition to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA), the State Department and each of the three services have their own intelligence offices, all created in their present forms since the Second World War." (p.87).

The sheer scale of this new apparatus and the particular relationship of government defence spending to the burgeoning arms industry gave birth to what the authors term the "Steel Triangle", the military-industrial complex which heavily overshadows policy decisions of successive administrations.



The power and influence of the armaments lobby in US society is enormous. The authors point out that in 1980, "203 higher education institutions in America were Department of Defense contractors, receiving contracts worth \$652 million." (p.146). Between 1978 and 1981, military research on US campuses has increased by 70% in dollar volume.

That is a lot of gravy – but the train of scientific people seeking to lap it up is dwarfed by the numbers making big money from the commercial research, development and production of new weaponry. As the authors point out:

"The vast cost and lengthy lead times for new weapons mean that once a contract is granted, the government cannot afford to allow the contract to fail. There are, in consequence, exceptionally attractive clauses in many military contracts. Special clauses are included which make it impossible for firms to lose money;..." (p.150).

'Defended to Death' lists the dependency of vast US corporations on defence contracts, and points out that 88.5% of US defence contracts are granted without competitive bidding. And it looks at the involvement of former high-ranking military officers in these big money-spinning firms.

Caucus

But the book does not sufficiently explain why this happened. The power and influence of this military caucus would only reach such a level insofar as its demands were clearly seen to coincide with the political aims and reactionary ideology of the US capitalist class as a whole.

Late on the scene as a world power, the American ruling class not only nurtured a fanatical hatred of communism, but also ambitions to extend their economic and political power in a new world climate, in which the old,

traditional empires were being broken up.

Imperialist

The vast expansion of the US military apparatus ran hand in hand with the strategic placement of "aid" and investment as part and parcel of attempts to consolidate capitalism in the Western countries and Japan under American domination.

In recent years the contradictions of the economic strategy have undermined US economic and political control over Europe and Japan: only in the military field is the USA undisputed leader of the imperialist nations.

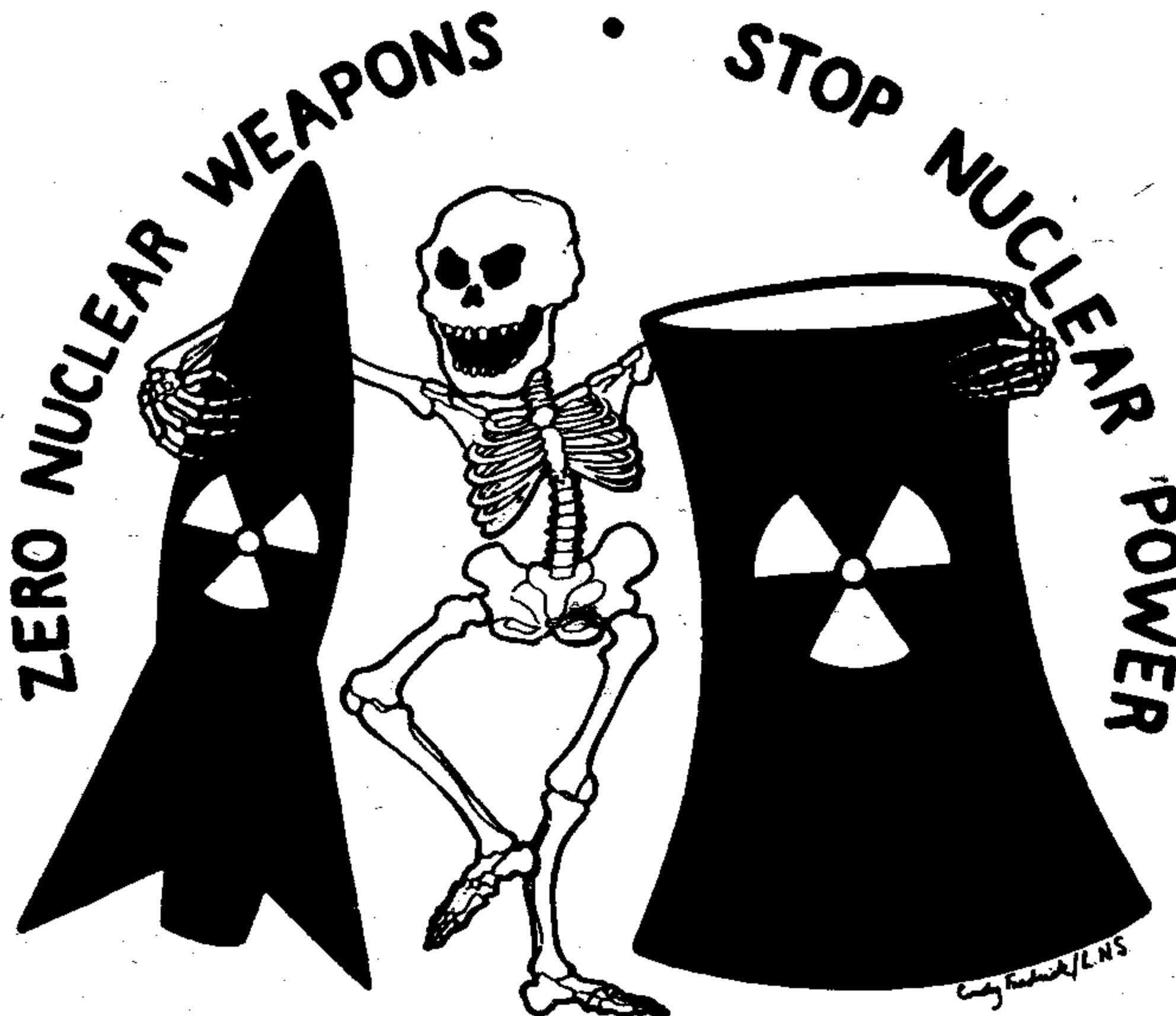
It is under these conditions that, as the authors point out, the USA has consistently set the pace of the post-war nuclear and conventional arms race, forcing the Soviet bureaucracy to respond in self-defence. Like many previous texts, 'Defended to Death' demolishes the American arguments for siting Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe.

The authors go further, and in

the chapter 'Changing Nuclear Policies' show how the development and availability of Trident, Cruise and Pershing missiles, the technology for Multiple Independently Targeted Re-entry Vehicles (MIRV) and the MX missile arose from decisions taken up to two decades ago by various long-gone US administrations – often under the influence of seriously misleading intelligence information.

Pershing

The Cruise missile started life in 1967 as a proposal for an electronic decoy device to confuse Soviet air defences, the Pershing missile was originally designed as an army missile with a range of only 100-400 miles, Trident started out in 1966 as a long range missile that would enable submarines to operate from US bases only – while the MX missile was offered as a sop to jealous Air Force service chiefs. Now each looms as a monster casting its own black shadow over the world. The implication is clear:





Weaponry absorbs a vast proportion of R&D.

Reagan is not simply physically stockpiling still more lethal weaponry today, but his switch to "star wars" research on space warfare promises a new escalation of the arms race in the last ten years of this century and into the next millennium. Reagan — now over 70 — will be long in his coffin before his nightmare weapons are produced and deployed to menace the population of the world.

'Defended to Death' has some particularly harsh words for the various phony "arms limitation" deals and test ban treaties that have been cooked up since the 1950s.

"Where agreements have been signed, they have been of two sorts: first, there have been agreements not to do things which it was unlikely that anybody would wish to do... then there have been agreements not to do what cannot be done at the time that the agreement is made." (p.125).

On the much heralded SALT talks, the authors point out that the virtues for the USA and USSR are that: "the SALT process, and its successor, constantly and conspicuously underline the special status of the superpowers in the eyes of the rest of the world community, they keep open a useful channel of communication, legitimise new weapons systems, and, by pre-empting the nascent political pressures for disarmament, neatly bottle them and render them ineffective." (p.131).

Other chapters spell out the overlap between nuclear energy and nuclear weaponry — and the common danger that each produces lethal and unmanageable waste products which technology has failed to cope with. Nuclear waste is portrayed in Britain as purely a problem arising from power stations.

"But in the USA where there is much greater freedom of information, it is possible to give figures: of 10,322,700 cubic feet of high-level waste, 10,196,000 (98.8%) is the by-product of the

Table 8. Research and Development Funding in the USA, 1973-8

	DoD and NASA contracts R & D (\$m)	Independent R & D investment (\$m)	Percentage independent R & D later reimbursed by DoD
Boeing	3,692.6	1,183.8	17.5
General Dynamics	2,507.3	159.8	43.9
Grumman	704.4	237.7	78.1
Lockheed	3,723.5	299.6	50.1
McDonnell Douglas	3,714.5	812.8	15.2
Northrop	569.5	173.1	65.0
Rockwell	7,115.2	486.3	31.7
United Technologies	1,224.7	2,030.6	14.5

nuclear weapons programme, 126,700 cubic feet (1.2%) has been produced by civilian reactors." (p.250).

But having gone to town on every aspect of the warmongers' case — from the "Soviet threat" to the attacks on civil liberties; from the danger of accidents to the way decisions have been taken in top secret by a handful of people affecting the future of countless millions — the authors appear to get completely carried away with their own eloquence, or possibly overwhelmed by the fruits of their technical research.

Their chapter 'Alternatives' begins with a series of sensible unilateral moves to disarm Britain of nuclear weapons, scrap the nuclear power programme, and redirect research facilities to solving the problem of dismantling and safely disposing of the fissile and contaminated materials.

It moves on to a European scale, proposing the removal of US bases. But it proposes the maintenance of the NATO alliance on a "conventional" weapons basis.

And it goes on to discuss in detail plans for equipping alternative "conventional" defence forces — which would leave intact precisely the military hierarchy, the major arms manufacturers and the top-level cliques of civil service bureaucrats whose decisions and activities have brought us the present arms race.

In this respect the authors undermine much of the useful educational impact of the early part of the book — since they are forced to argue their non-nuclear "alternative" from the premise of reconstructing the mythology of a "Soviet threat" which they previously demolished.

Evaded

Who is to be "defended"? By whom? Against whom? In what cause? These questions are nimbly

evaded by the Cambridge dons — but cannot be evaded by the workers' movement.

We fight for the scrapping of nuclear weapons — but in doing so we also fight for the overturn of capitalist rule, for the *disbandment* of its state apparatus of permanent civil service, standing army, police and judiciary and their replacement by a workers' state that can break the imperialist mould and reconstruct the economy on socialist lines.

We have no interest in re-equipping Thatcher's armed forces with new and more deadly weaponry for "defence" which, in the event of a revolutionary struggle by the working class, would be used against us.

Nor do we have any interest in siding with Thatcher against any supposed "foreign enemy".

For us, the main enemy attacking our jobs, our living standards and everything fought for by the workers' movement is precisely the Tory leadership and the British ruling class they represent.

The defeat of that ruling class and the destruction of its machinery of class rule is, in reality, the only serious way to end the lunatic nuclear arms race, and to play a role on a world scale in struggles against oppression and exploitation. For that fight, a committed and consistent socialist leadership is needed.

'Defended to Death' is useful in that it shows quite clearly both the strengths and the limitations of the radical and reformist elements drawn around the vast CND movement.

Nevertheless, as a quarry of information the book is generally excellent: at £3.50 it comprises the best value of any of the books arguing the case for nuclear disarmament. Dig into it by all means for arguments on the arms race: but for a political understanding of what must be done, readers will need to look elsewhere.

Martin Thomas discusses

How can we stop the bomb?

HOW CAN we get rid of the Bomb?

By getting a government which scraps it. But that's not as simple as it sounds.

Despite repeated Labour Party conference votes, already the Labour leadership is fudging the issue with talk of Polaris being a matter for international negotiations. Dennis Healey has asserted that he will not serve in a Labour government which scraps the Bomb, and he shows no sign of resigning.

Even if the Labour leadership were 100% committed to unilateralism there would be problems. The US and British military, and the top ranks of the civil service, would use all sorts of dirty tricks to block unilateral disarmament. The government would need not only a firm commitment to unilateralism, but the will and ability to take on the permanent state machine.

We won't get a government like that unless it is based on and accountable to an active and mobilised working class.

Isn't the surer method, then, to focus on direct action to stop the Bomb?

Strikes, sit-downs, peace camps and marches are vital. But on their own they can't hope to defeat the centralised power of the state machine on an issue of central importance to it unless they achieve general strike proportions.

A revolutionary general strike, arising out of an overall political crisis, might achieve unilateral nuclear disarmament as part of its work. But a special effort to get a 'general strike to scrap the Bomb' makes no sense. If we could achieve the tremendous organisation and level of awareness needed to make such an enterprise successful, then we would be able to achieve our aims without a general strike.

Neither total faith in direct action, nor pure reliance on the struggle within the Labour Party to commit it to unilateralism and make it accountable, is the answer. What we need is a strategy which combines these aspects, and links them with every other struggle in which the confidence and political awareness of working class people can be raised, in the perspective of achieving a workers' government, accountable to the labour movement and prepared to take on capitalism.

Problems



and Policies

workers' government, accountable to the labour movement and prepared to take on capitalism.

Isn't this too drastic? What about countries like Norway which keep out nuclear weapons without a social revolution and without even leaving NATO?

NATO can accept that Norway is free of nuclear weapons precisely because Britain is jam-packed with these machines. To keep this or the small country free of nuclear bases is different from disarming the capitalist world's second military power.

What alternative defence policy should we support?

A people's militia, democratically controlled through the labour movement and local communities, and based on universal military training.

Isn't that conscription?

Yes — in the same sense that a picket rota, or a closed shop, is a form of conscription. But there is a difference between that sort of 'conscription' and conscripting people into a capitalist army of strike-breakers and uniformed thugs.

Is this realistic? Why not go for non-nuclear conventional defence, at least as an interim demand?

What defence policy is realistic depends on whom you're defending against what. The conventional forces of the British Army have been at war almost continuously since 1945 — defending British imperialism against liberation struggles.

Many of its commanders see the army's main future role in 'counter-insurgency' — defending the British state against rebellion within the country. And former army chief Michael Carver has admitted that "some fairly senior officers were talking about a military takeover in 1974."

Moves to unilateral nuclear disarmament could well make it not just messroom talk, but serious plans for action. And then we would need defence against the army. 'Realistically' we would have to organise some sort of labour movement community militias — against the present state the basis for our own kind of workers' state. A 'alternative defence policy' would not just be a blueprint for how to organise the State without the Bomb, but a necessary part of enforcing an anti-Bomb policy against the State.

New issue out now!

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99% of nuclear waste comes from weapons

SAVE SOUTH LONDON HOSPITAL!

Save South London Hospital Campaign meets every Thursday at Balham Food & Book Co-op, High Street, Balham at 8.00 p.m.

Women's Right to choose women doctors

SAVE SAVE SAVE

THE LONDON SOUTH LONDON SOUTH LONDON

Cops turn out to save fascists

by Mick O'Sullivan

1000 demonstrators, about 50% of them black youth, gathered outside High Cross school in Tottenham on Tuesday May 3 to protest against a National Front meeting at the school.

But cops were also present in their hundreds, and successfully marched about 30 fascists into the meeting. Throughout there were frequent clashes between cops and demonstrators, and many were arrested.

Tottenham is the scene of the only by-election in London on May 5 - caused by the elevation to the peerage of sitting GLC councillor Andrew McIntosh.

It has been an extremely low level campaign by the local Labour party. But apathy has now turned into anger and disgust at the local Labour council, who last Thursday night, 28th, agreed to allow the fascist National Front to use council property for a meeting.

This decision overturned a previous council policy, and it has been followed up with over-the-top letters to school caretakers re-

minding them of their statutory duty to allow the fascists to enter.

The response of local trade unionists, the black community, and a large section of the Labour Party including a minority of the councillors, has been in complete contrast. Large sections of the black community immediately called for a picket to oppose the Front. The caretakers refused to open the school, and the NUT has also opposed the use of the premises.

Disgust at the way that many councillors have buckled soon turned to anger inside the Labour Party, and will be expressed in demands for their resignation.

Left councillors forced a special Labour group meeting in the street outside the school on Tuesday, but failed to get the decision reversed.

Brent goes ahead

BRENT EAST Labour Party has voted by 71 to 4 to go ahead with reselection despite a National Executive Committee ruling.

In Brent East, as in Bradford and a few other places, a sitting Labour MP could well be ousted by a left candidate. But Brent East MP Reg Freeson is no Ben Ford, but a former Minister and probably to the left of centre in Parliamentary terms. Ken Livingstone is tipped to replace him.

Reselection has been delayed again and again by one device after another - and the NEC's ruling is based on saying that it is now too late for Brent East to proceed. Brent East's reply is that the delay is not their fault, and cannot be used to remove their constitutional right to reselect.

Militant escape?

QUIETLY, very quietly, Labour's right wing seems to have accepted that if there is a June election then no further action against Militant is possible before it.

Both the March and April National Executive Committee meetings put the issue off. The next NEC is May 25, and seems unlikely to rush into further drastic action.

So the situation still stands with the witch-hunt having claimed only two victims - Clare Doyle and Lyn Walsh, in Norwood. The other three Militant editorial board members are still recognised by their CLPs in Islington and Hammersmith, and the CLPs have not even

received threats from the NEC.

It shows that the witch-hunt can be defeated. But still we can't be complacent. After the election, at latest, the right wing are bound to return to the charge.



Ken Livingstone - challenging Freeson

Brent's answer to Newsline

A letter to Alex Mitchell of Newsline from Brent East.

76 Austen House,
London NW6 5YL

Dear Mr Mitchell,

At the Brent East CLP General Management Committee, on Thursday 28 April, we voted by 71 votes to 4 to proceed to reselection without the approval of the Labour Party NEC.

On the same night the following letter to Newsline was circulated.

"On April 26, Newsline, the daily paper of the WRP, printed an article by Paul Feldman, called 'Ganging up to block Livingstone'. This article smeared Socialist Organiser supporters in Brent by accusing them of preparing to gang up with Reg Freeson, the NEC, the BBC, etc against Ken Livingstone. This is part of a campaign Newsline has been waging against SO for the past five weeks.

"The article by Feldman talks of SO's 'barely concealed threat that Livingstone may not get the votes of Socialist Organiser members at the reselection meeting, while Freeson and the 'Socialist Organiser' find a coincidence of views, the right wing of the NEC is doing its level best to make sure that the reselection doesn't take place at all in Brent East."

"SO has criticised Livingstone and has differences with him on a number of questions, including his relationship with the WRP.

"Between Freeson and Livingstone, SO supports Livingstone and SO supporters in Brent East have been centrally involved in the left wing drive to unseat Freeson and in support of Livingstone.

"Newsline is here indulging in the sort of journalistic practice which led to its censure by the National Union of Journalists for a campaign which falsely alleged that SO supporter Peter McIntyre, an Oxford journalist, set up the recent police raid against the homeless there and which led Audrey Wise to describe Newsline in Tribune as 'a rag'."

"We demand that you immediately retract."

This was signed by the following: Alf Filer, Secretary, Colin Adams, Chair, Dave Statham, Treasurer, Mike Heiser, Assistant Secretary, Emma Tait, Vice-Chair, Pete Firmin, Membership Secretary, Mick Woods, Trade

Union Liaison Officer, Steve Barton, Youth Liaison Officer, Angela Wright, Press Officer, Tom Whiteside, Social Secretary, Christine Winter, Fundraiser, Jean Spray, S. Hashimi, Christine McKimmie, Alan Taylor, Mapesbury Ward, Lynda Woodroffe, Tom Wilson, Kilburn Branch, Shan Jagdeo, Brentwater Kyron Connolly, Queen's Park, Deborah Knight, Carlton, Councillor Graham Durham, Cricklewood, Chris Khamis, Brondesbury, Rosemary Deane, Sally Palmer, Women's Section, Councillor Cyril Shaw, Kilburn TGWU delegate and the Chair of Brent Labour Group, R. Coady, Brondesbury UCATT, Vince Thompson, Cricklewood NUR, Roland Brady, London North West POEU, Sheila Healey, West End POEU, Danny O'Neill, NUR, Euston No. 1, Jill Freid, North London Poly Labour Club, Paul Wilkinson, observer from Willesden Green Branch, Paul Franklin, Secretary of the Local Government Committee of Brent Labour Party (who while not a member of Brent East, asked for his name to be added to the list in solidarity with SO).

As you can see, this is by no means all those present. But we were engaged in the rather important business of defending our right to reselect at the time, and most of these signatures were obtained in the pub after the meeting.

If I may allow myself a few comments: one of your members was handing out copies of the article at the Trades Council on Wednesday 27th. When I challenged him that it was a pack of lies he refused to discuss it with me.

That morning, myself with other members of Brent East, had lobbied the NEC, and we received support from other SO supporters in the London area, as well as others.

No WRP members were present. We obviously have a very canny way of defending Freeson and stabbing Ken in the back.

To be honest, SO is fairly accustomed to allegations of being coppers' narks, provocateurs, Zionists, and state agents, in your rag, but may I ask you to keep your poisoned little pens out of the major battle in which Brent East is at present engaged.

Yours sincerely,
MICK WOODS

TILBURY dockers meet again on their pay dispute this Thursday, 5th.

They will hear the results of the three-person inquiry on the dispute - set up on the urging of TGWU full-timers who are clearly anxious to end the seven week strike. The dockers are demanding pay parity with clerical staff.

Meanwhile it has been reported that 900 Port of London Authority dockers out of the total 4000 have applied for voluntary redundancy terms proposed by the employers.

WRP enlists witch hunter

by John Campbell

THE Newsline of Wednesday April 27 quoted Glasgow District Labour Party chairperson Chic McCafferty as saying: "Whilst having many disagreements with the WRP and the Newsline, I found the Money Programme attack to be typical of the witch-hunting attacks on many sections of the labour movement in the past few years. That such attacks should come at this stage is not surprising, but that Socialist Organiser, which claims to be on the left, should join in is absolutely despicable. The left and the labour movement as a whole should be wary of the divisive activities of this organisation".

Judge

McCafferty is in a good position to judge witch-hunts. After all, he himself took the lead in

witch-hunting Socialist Organiser supporter Stan Crooke out of the Labour Party and then blocking his readmission.

McCafferty whipped up support for the expulsion by claiming that Stan Crooke wanted to bring the Labour Party into disrepute so as to drive a wedge between the 'Stop the Sale Campaign' (opposing the privatisation of the Hutesontown 'e' scheme) and the local CLP (Queen's Park). In fact, Stan Crooke had repeatedly argued for joint work between the campaign and the CLP, whilst the obstructions had come from McCafferty and others.

In March of this year Stan Crooke applied to rejoin the Party, having been given to understand that his application would be accepted. But when the application was finally discussed, two months after its submission, it was again McCafferty who took the lead in opposing it.

Thus it is McCafferty who joins in a witch-hunt - of Socialist Organiser by the WRP and the Labour Party Right.

McCafferty received his political education in the school of Gerry Healy, leading figure in the WRP, formerly SLL, to which McCafferty lent his support. Some people went through that school and left it with their integrity and powers of rational judgment still intact. Others remain scarred for life. McCafferty's outlandish attacks on Socialist Organiser prove him to be one of the latter.

Protest at police violence

PICKETS protested outside the court on Tuesday May 3, as four tenants from the Broadwater Farm estate, Haringey, north London, appeared on charges of 'obstruction' and 'criminal damage' to the local police station door.

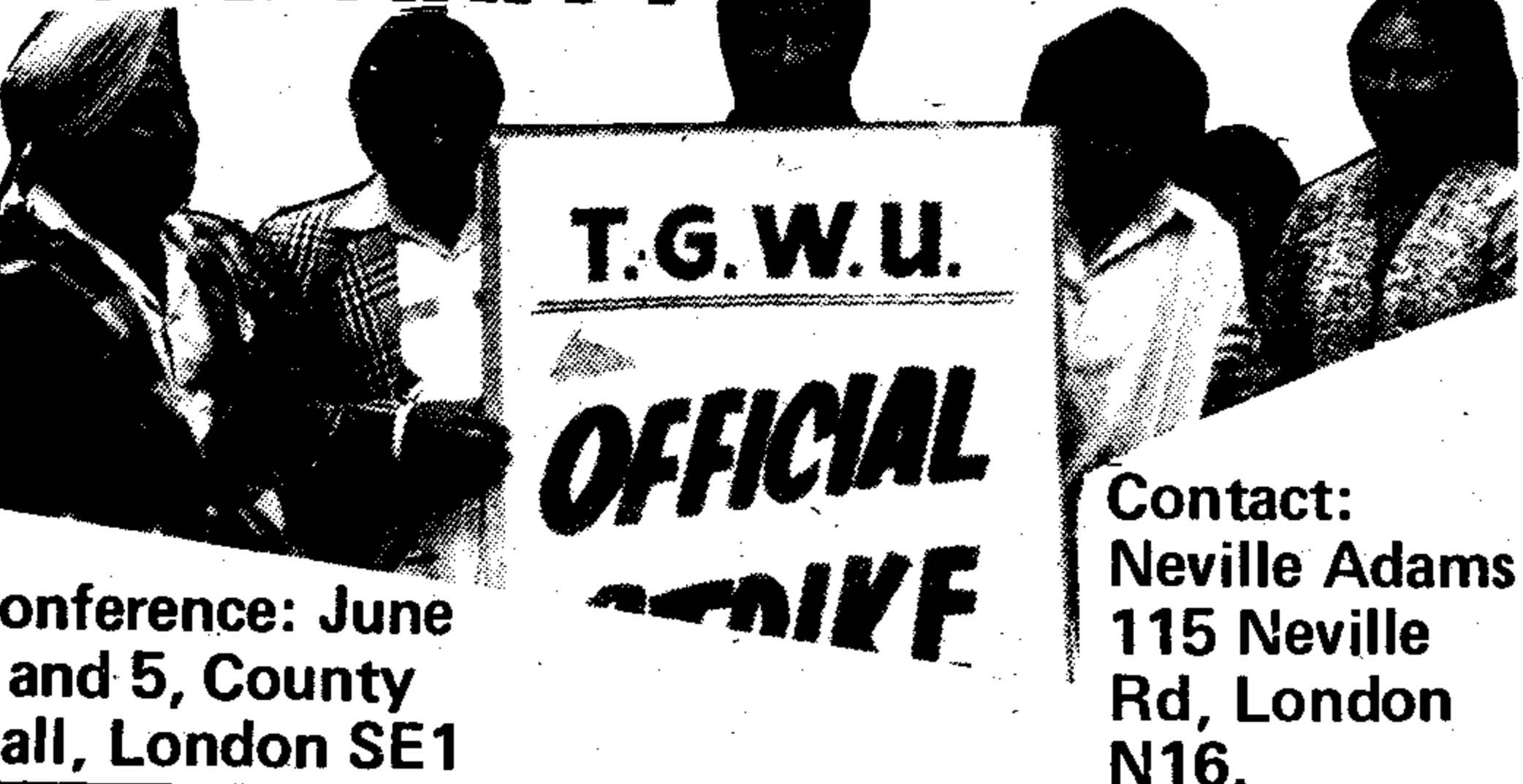
Broadwater Farm is a large housing estate where the majority of tenants are black and unemployed.

As with black people everywhere, police harassment is a major problem, especially for youth.

At the end of last year the police arrested a black youth on the estate. That wasn't unusual. What was different this time was that tenants from the estate went down to the police station to demonstrate and protest the innocence of this youth.

After about two hours the IRU [Instant Response Unit] turned up and laid into the picket. The president of the tenants' association had his nose broken, and three other people suffered bruises. The police then arrested the four who were injured, and charged them. Subsequently they released the youth originally arrested without charge.

Black trade unionists SOLIDARITY



Conference: June 4 and 5, County Hall, London SE1

Contact: Neville Adams 115 Neville Rd, London N16.

DEFEND THE NEWHAM 8!

The Newham 8 - Asian youths aged between 15 and 21 - face charges of conspiracy as well as threatening behaviour and actual bodily harm.

They were arrested on September 24 1982 after an incident with plain-clothes police officers. In the previous week there had been three major racist attacks on Asian schoolchildren at Little Ilford School, in Newham, and an incident where 60 or 70 white youth with iron bars and sticks went on the rampage in East Ham and Manor Park.

Send invitations for speakers, or resolutions of support, to Newham 8 Defence Campaign, c/o PO Box 273, London E7 9JN.



Time is short for socialist campaign

'Socialists for a Labour Victory' will be producing its first campaign leaflet this week - on incomes policy.

Details for bulk orders can be obtained from the SLV trade union committee (c/o Wendy Mustill or Jeremy Short, at 01-928 7507, days), or from the central SLV address at c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Other leaflets are in preparation on nationality and immigration and on the Bomb.

But if Thatcher does go for a June election, then Labour activists who rely exclusively on the national machinery of the SLV for election literature will find

themselves with too little, too late.

Local preparations have to start now, too. Local leaflets arguing left-wing policies can be 'syndicated' through different Labour Parties, and thus provide a supplement to national SLV material.

Union

In some areas campaigning is beginning to get underway. In Haringey, north London, a local SLV organising meeting has been called for May 10, with speakers including one from the tenants' association in Broadwater Farm,

a local mainly-black housing estate where a struggle is currently in progress against police harassment.

In the Wirral, support for the SLV has been won from Wallasey CLP, Wirral Trades Council, and the TGWU 6/88 branch. In Islington, the two new CLPs formed by boundary reorganisation have both affiliated to SLV, and their election campaign committees will be meeting soon. In Southwark, a joint meeting on election campaigning of the three CLP executives is planned.

Socialist Organiser will be running regular coverage to keep readers informed on the struggle to get Labour campaigning on left wing policies.

Send in reports on your locality to SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Socialists for a Labour Victory

The Socialists for a Labour Victory campaign, launched last month, has now done its first mailing to Constituency Labour Parties.

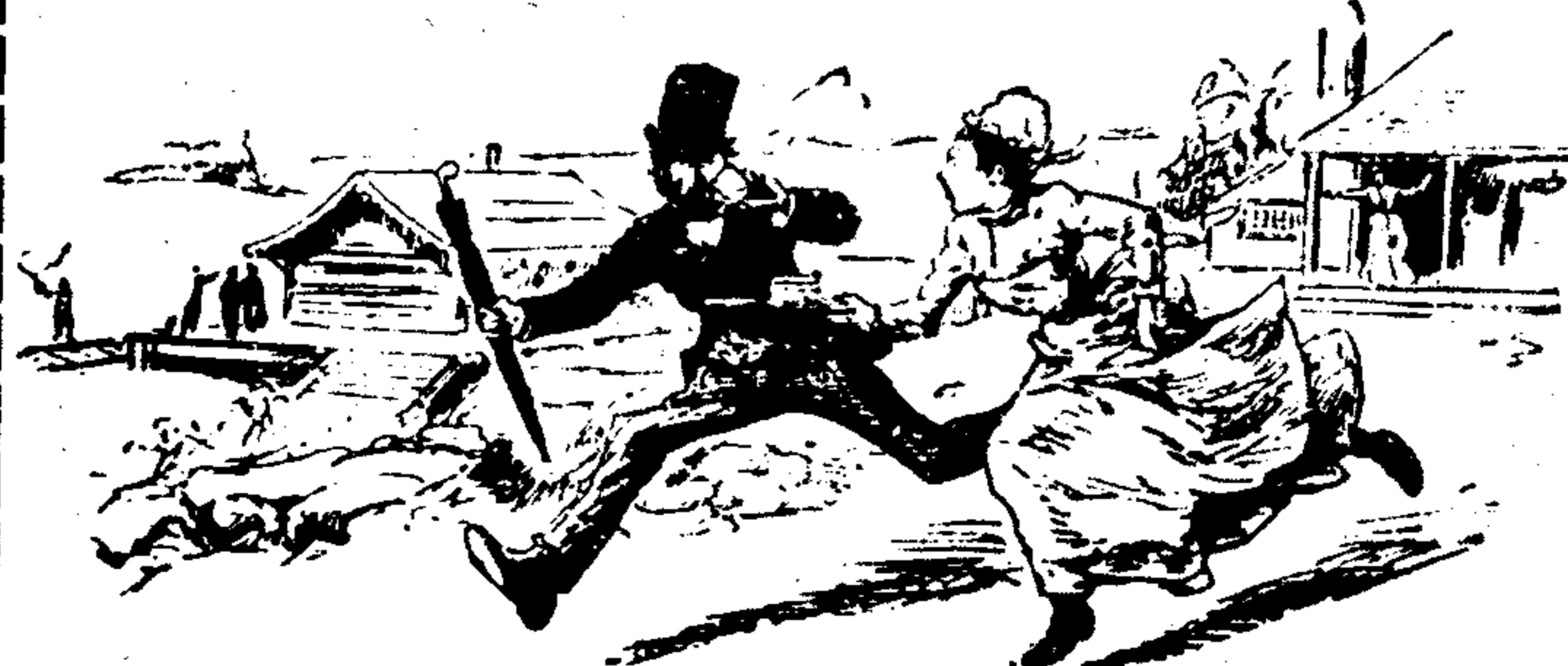
A letter from campaign secretaries Mandy Moore and Andy Harris calls on CLPs to affiliate, and says that SLV will be publishing leaflets for CLPs to use in campaigning.

SLV will also produce suggestions for election activity, and try to help link the Labour Party with struggles like Greenham Common and protests like the People's March for Jobs. And it is preparing a statement for MPs and Labour candidates to sign, committing them against any Labour/Alliance coalition.

Affiliation to SLV is open not only to CLPs but also to trade union bodies, Labour Party women's sections, etc. It costs £5 for organisations, £3 for individuals.

Affiliations to, or copies of the mailing from SLV, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

No time to lose!



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

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

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

Fight Glasgow witch hunt

IN OCTOBER of last year Stan Crooke was expelled from individual membership of the Labour Party by a majority decision of Queen's Park CLP, Glasgow.

Pretext for the expulsion was that he had written an article for Socialist Organiser with the alleged intention of bringing the Labour Party into disrepute. This accusation is belied by both Stan Crooke's record in the Labour Party and also by the fact that the gist of the article can be easily verified by reference to the books, 'The Dampness Monster' and 'Change and Conflict' by Richard and Barbara Bryant.

In December of last year the Labour Party Scottish Executive's sub-committee which heard his appeal had a two to one majority against expulsion. But when this verdict came before the right wing dominated NEC organisation sub-committee for endorsement, it was summarily overturned and the expulsion was confirmed.

When Stan Crooke wrote to the CLP to ask if it wished to stand by the expulsion he was informed that if he simply re-applied for membership, he would be accepted back in. Stan Crooke duly re-applied, only to find his application rejected at the April meeting of the Crosshill branch.

An ad hoc committee has now been set up to campaign for reinstatement. It appeals to branches to pass the following motion and send copies to the NEC in London:

"... (1) condemns the expulsion of Stan Crooke from individual membership of the Labour Party, refuses to recognise that expulsion, and demands his immediate official reinstatement (2) demands of the NEC that it allows Stan Crooke to appeal to the 1983 Labour Party annual conference against the expulsion".

Further information from, and donations and copies of resolutions passed to: Ad Hoc Defence Committee, c/o Stan Crooke, 114 Dixon Ave, Glasgow G42.



Rail workers on the London May Day demonstration

May Day round-up

IN "socialist" Poland, May Day saw the nauseating spectacle of armed police using tear gas, water cannon and baton charges to break up workers' demonstrations - while the facade of "communism" was held up by stage managed events attended by the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

The unofficial demonstrations by the banned Solidarnosc trade union mobilised tens of thousands of workers, including an estimated 20-30,000 in Gdansk, over 10,000 in Warsaw, and over 20,000 in the steel town of Nova Huta, where the police operation was particularly savage. The Jaruzelski regime admitted that demonstrations took place in another 17 towns including Wroclaw, Poznan, Gdynia, Lodz, Szczecin, Bydgoszcz and Cracow.

Over 1,000 demonstrators were arrested - and many more

brutally clubbed by riot cops.

And there has been further police violence against unofficial demonstrations since May 1, as the bureaucracy seeks to assert rigid control well in advance of the scheduled visit by the Pope next month.

Meanwhile, in Moscow, Jaruzelski's "Big Brothers" in the Kremlin organised a much more tightly-run May Day - with Red Square ringed with ranks of police and KGB men admitting only bona fide bureaucrats to the ritualistic celebration of what ought to be international workers' day.

In France, too, May Day was turned into a travesty, as Socialist and Communist Parties joined forces to march in Paris in support of the Mitterrand government - currently engaged in an austerity programme designed to

shore up French capitalism at the expense of the working class.

The Papandreou government was not so lucky in Greece, where a 100,000-strong demonstration shouted slogans against the PASOK government's pay freeze - despite the fact that the march was run by the pro-PASOK General Confederation of Greek Workers.

In Latin America a huge 100,000-strong May Day march in Uruguay (equivalent to 1.7 million in Britain!) was the first legal demonstration for ten years. Marchers shouted "The people united will never be defeated!" and calls for the end of the military dictatorship.

But in Chile, marchers in Santiago who defied a ban to stage a May Day demonstration suffered 100 arrests, and violent attacks by club-wielding assailants which left 10 injured.

Cutting the cant

TORY/LIBERAL controlled Bradford Council last week became the first of 152 nuclear free authorities to reverse its decision.

The Tories blocked with two of the Liberals to produce a 43-40 vote to disband the zone and scrap the Peace Action Group.

Heseltine was quick to respond, stating his appreciation for local Tory efforts and that "any use of rate payers money for propaganda and party gesturing on defence policy is wasteful and irrelevant."

Controversy at the meeting centred around remarks by Councillor Barry Turner, an SO supporter, who during the debate accused British troops of beating down the Catholic nationalist population in Northern Ireland.

The comments came as part of a speech, replying to a Tory

motion falsely claiming that the nuclear deterrent was responsible for "the longest period of peace that this country has enjoyed this century".

Councillor Turner catalogued a list of wars in which British troops had been involved since 1945, including Palestine, Greece, Malaya, Kenya, Suez, Cyprus, Aden, the Malvinas and, of course, Ireland.

The role of British troops, like that of US forces, was cited to illustrate the oppressive nature of imperialism, and counter the lies that the Eastern bloc is the major threat to world peace.

Roar

Following these remarks, the meeting voted and broke down in uproar, with the Tories and Liberals baying their support for the troops.

Much to the delight of the local press, the leader of the Peace

Action Group, ex-Councillor Colin Hunter, accused Councillor Turner of being responsible for losing the vote.

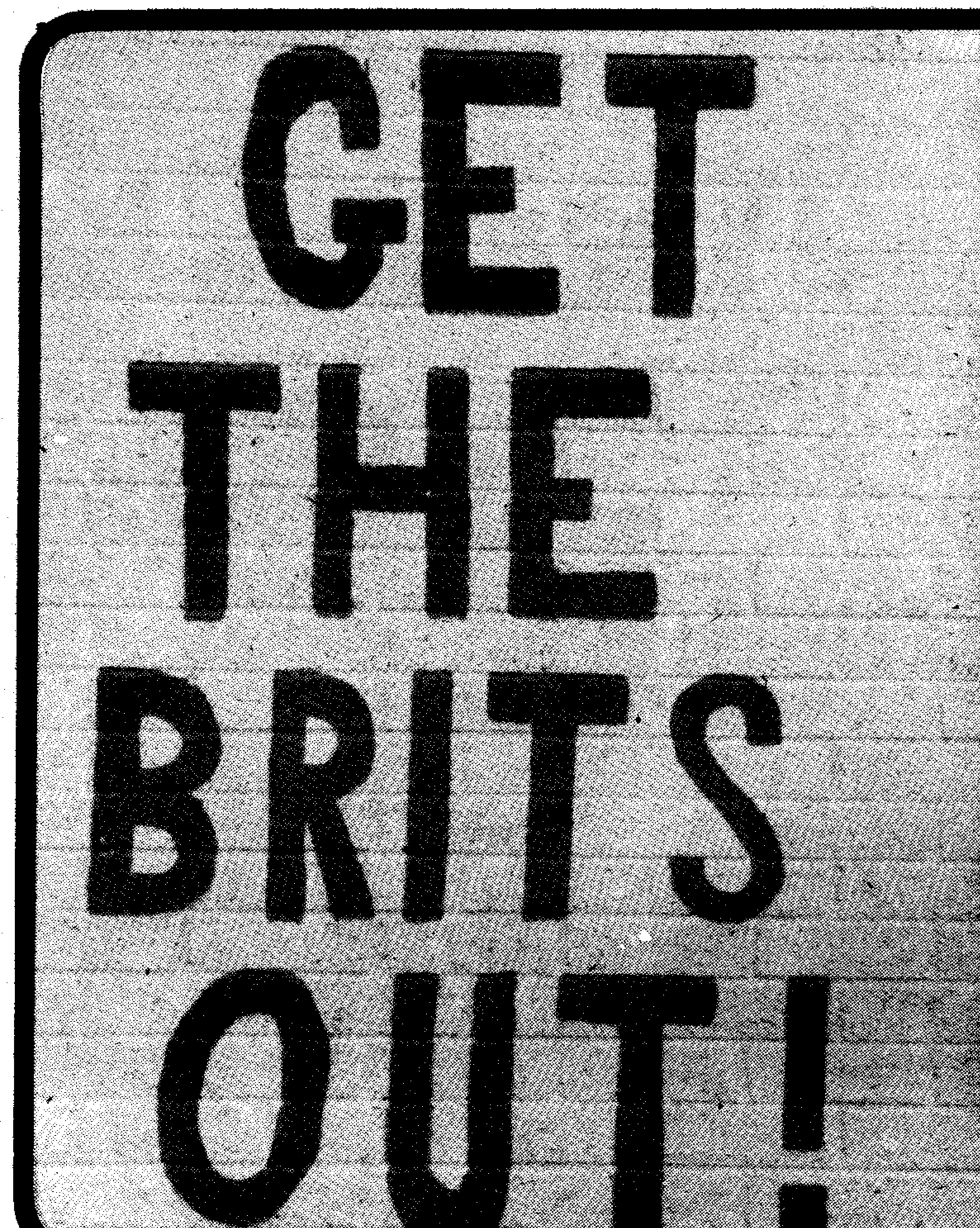
This wild accusation was immediately refuted in a letter to the Telegraph and Argus by eleven Labour left councillors.

The Labour Leader, Danny Coughlin, buckled in the face of mounting media pressure and disowned and attacked Councillor Turner's speech, agreeing in the Guardian (28 April) with the Liberal leader saying "I am inclined to agree with him, we were appalled at Councillor Turner's remarks."

Needless to say, Coughlin had no mandate from the group to make such remarks. Councillor Turner will doubtless be asking at the next Labour Group precisely which aspect of his socialist attack upon an imperialist army of occupation were so "appalling" to the group leader.

"VOICE OF SOLIDARNOSC" is the fortnightly bulletin of the Solidarnosc information office in London. It includes English translations of many statements and leaflets put out by Solidarnosc in Poland. Support its work, subscribe: £8 for 6 months to Solidarnosc Information Office, 314-320 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP (01-837 9464).





PHOTOGRAPHS BY CALLUM MACRAE

Report from the Derry front line'

"A new mood of political optimism and determination to apply lessons"

WHEN someone painted "H.M.P. Rossville" on one of the few bits of the Rossville Flats not already covered with a mural, they obviously struck a sore point with the Housing Executive. It was immediately painted out.

You would have thought the Executive would have known better. It was promptly painted in again — this time in bigger letters.

When we left the tit-for-tat painting was still going on. The local paper, the *Derry Journal*, quoted one Rossville tenant as explaining the similarity with a prison: all the residents want out.

The Housing Executive's determination to remove the slogan was curious, because they left untouched all the other murals which are painted the length of the flats, and on virtually every other piece of available wall in the Bogside.

The murals, often painted with considerable skill, are, for visitors, the most immediate symbol of the war which has been waged in the North for

By
Callum
Macrae

the past thirteen years. Portraits of the hunger strikers, and memorials to the dead volunteers of the Derry Brigade, are painted side by side with warnings to the RUC to 'keep out' and appeals to youth to join Na Fianna Eireann (the Republican youth movement). Above all, however, the theme is support for the Provisionals and (not as often) the Irish National Liberation

Army. Above the Bogside the old city walls still dominate the skyline. Down in the Bogside, however, there have been dramatic changes. Whole streets have been demolished, many of them burnt out during the battle of the Bogside. Free Derry Corner, where the words were painted, "You are now entering Free Derry", is still there, but the street has gone. The gable end now stands between the sides of a dual carriageway.

The significance of the monument is not lost on British soldiers. It has recently survived both pots of paint thrown from passing army trucks, and a presumably drunk British soldier who rammed it in a Saracen.

There have been many other changes in the past thirteen years. The increasing sophistication of the methods of repression has been expressed not just in technology, but also a realisation by the British Army that some of the original methods — like frequent foot patrols and permanent road blocks — were costly, dangerous, and in many ways counterproductive.

Nowadays it is perfectly possible to walk freely about the centre of Derry without being stopped and searched every few hundred yards at a checkpoint.

This apparent lessening of repressive activity is deceptive. Permanent surveillance by hidden cameras is more effective. The raids in Republican areas and the random checkpoints have the advantage of surprise.

All of this, of course, is backed up by the criminal

charade which is called justice in the North. So farcical is this system that you can see why a whole generation believes that, since innocence is no defence in a no-jury court, you might as well make sure you really are guilty.

The most effective weapon recently in the security forces' arsenal of repression has undoubtedly been the 'supergrass'. In Derry, Raymond Gilmour has been a serious problem for the Provos. Nevertheless the Provos were able to supply an impressive colour party (which included a women's section) on the recent Easter commemoration march in Derry.

The march was eloquent testimony to the popular support enjoyed by the Provisional IRA. Held simultaneously in many areas throughout Ireland to commemorate the 1916 Rising — when James Connolly and Patrick Pearse proclaimed the Irish Republic, in Dublin — and to honour the Republican dead, the Easter marches are in unequivocal support of the armed struggle. As one Bogsider told us, "This is the Army's day".

This year's Easter Sunday was a bitterly cold day, and the two or three thousand who gathered at Free Derry Corner were soaked by driving sleet as they waited for the colour party to arrive.

After a while, to applause from the crowd, they marched in formation from a side street. Another loca, a socialist, critical of many of the reactionary traditions in the Republican movement, turned to me and said, "One thing they cannot deny — this is a people's army".

At one point, as we marched from the Bogside towards the

Republican plot in the cemetery, an armed unit of two men and a woman materialised from the Brandywell estate. They stood in armed salute to the march as it passed by.

All the time the Army helicopters hovered above, unable to do anything but film the scene below.

At the cemetery wreaths were laid in honour of the Republican dead, and the proclamation of the 1916 Rising was read by Mary Nelis (the first time it has been read by a woman in Derry).

Mary Nelis was one of the founders of the Relatives' Action Committees and has a son still in prison. Her house was one of the dozens raided yet again in the Creggan and Bogside in the week before the march.

Until just before the end of the ceremony there was always one, and sometimes two helicopters, hovering above the platform.

Mary Nelis had told us before the march began not to expect to hear much of the speakers. "You watch the speakers today", she said. "You'll have to wait for next week's Republican News to find out what they said".

Roar

The continuous roar of helicopters is so much a part of life in the republican areas that locals seldom comment on it. It is nonetheless yet another side to the harassment and intimidation of the British system of repression.

That was probably most poignantly clear when the people defiantly observed a minute's silence in honour of the dead, while overhead the

deafening roar of the helicopter continued unabated.

During the time we spent in Derry, we were able to speak informally to a few members of Sinn Féin, and were impressed by the left turn that seems to be taking place.

Union

We spoke to members of Sinn Féin's trade union department, who have taken the organisation into Derry Trades Council for the first time. The Trades Council until now has been a small body dominated by Militant supporters. When they organised a demonstration a few weeks before Easter less than one hundred turned out, and that included Militant supporters bussed in from all over the North.

A couple of weeks ago, at the Trades Council AGM, Sinn Féin stood for election for the first time. Two Sinn Féin members were elected to positions on the executive, along with a few other supporters.

As for the mood in the movement generally, we felt it was significant that in spite of military setbacks caused by Raymond Gilmour's 'evidence' we detected a real feeling of political optimism and a determination to apply the political lessons that, as one Sinn Féin member put it, "we have been learning for the past ten years".

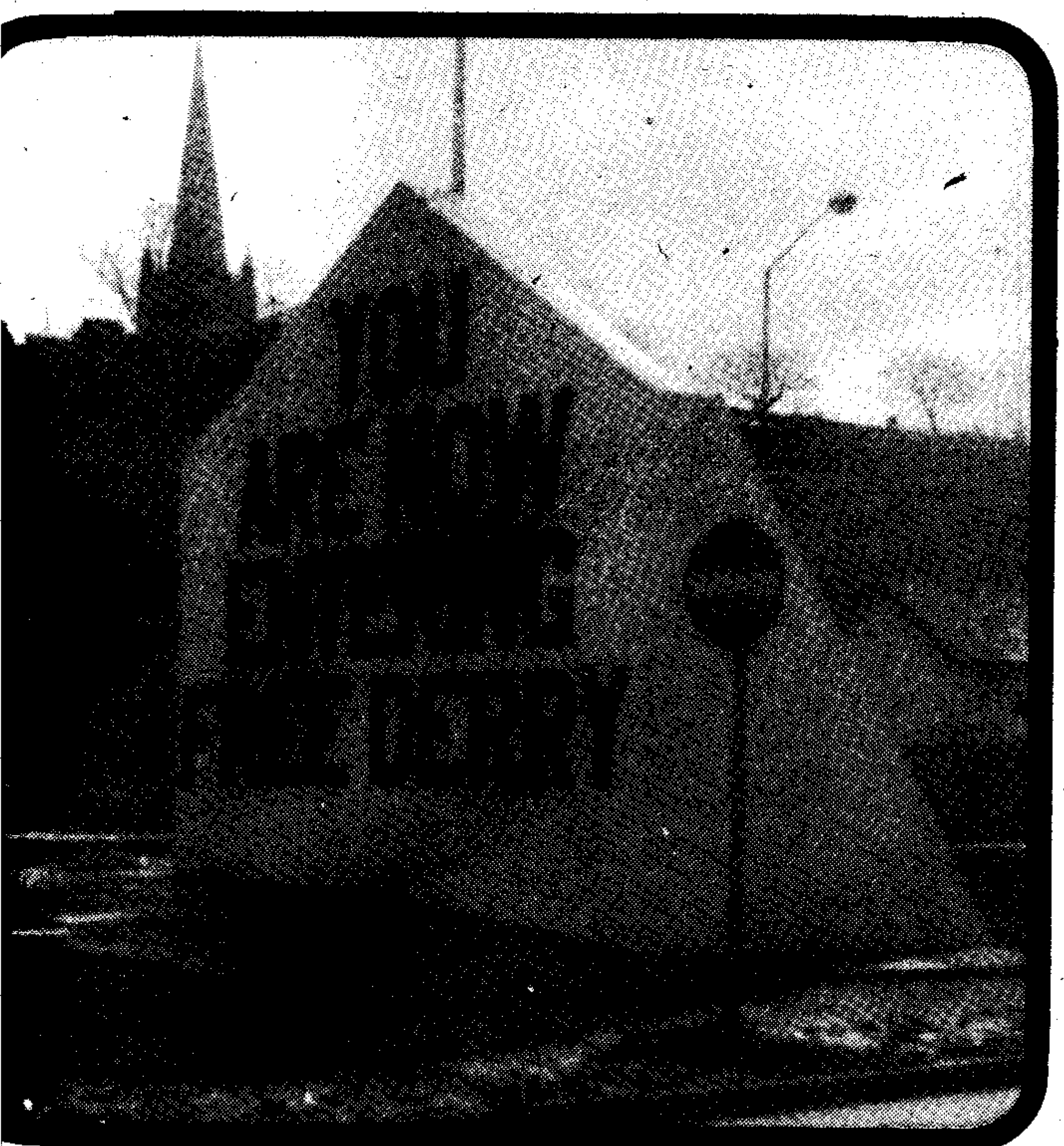
A fading slogan painted on the old city walls reads, "God made the Catholics — the Armalite made us equal". As a piece of black humour it stands the test of time. As a description of the politics of the Republican movement, it is increasingly inadequate.



Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine: recalled first national conference. Saturday May 21, 11am. County Hall, London SE1. Details: c/o 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd, London N16.

Campaign on Palestine

In Bogside there have been changes



Spy in the sky

RISES incongruously above Derry's old city walls — a high pylon topped by TV cameras, constantly filming the Catholic Bogside and the sprawling Creggan estate beyond.

Controlled electronically, the cameras can scan the area and zoom in for a close-up of a hopper's face, or even into the front room of anyone who gets to close the curtains.

A recent report in the Belfast Sunday News has exposed another network of cameras hidden in the nationalist areas, disguised as ventilator grills or even as chimney pots. Designed to transmit their pictures by radio, these closed-circuit cameras are usually installed by the Royal Signal Corps at night, working under cover of diversions arranged by other troops who mount arches or road blocks.

The Heli-Teli sky-spy helicopters are well known, and now in regular use in London. In the occupied North, however, the British Army use cars with headlamps replaced by cameras and wing rotors concealing aerials.

Darkness brings no relief from constant surveillance for people of the nationalist areas. Whole areas, particu-

larly round army and RUC bases, are permanently flooded in invisible infra-red light, and infra-red cameras film constantly.

Elsewhere the army have hidden 'low light level' cameras which need only the illumination from a distant street lamp or even the moon.

As the quiet of the night is regularly shattered in the Catholic areas by the drone of the surveillance helicopters, there is little they cannot see with the aid of infra-red 'nitescan' searchlights.

However, the nationalist population can draw a little comfort from the fact that occasionally things do go wrong for the army.

Recently a whole flock of unmanned army surveillance drones gave themselves away to the people of Craigavon. These radio-controlled craft, apparently equipped with night-time 'thermal imaging' systems, exposed themselves by flashing red lights. Their whole advantage was supposed to be that because they are silent they could be used undetected.

Local residents were quoted in newspapers as thinking that the North of Ireland was being invaded by marauding aliens. They weren't far wrong.



The fact we needed passports seemed ironic

A visit to Long Kesh

IT'S a long car drive from Derry to Long Kesh. I wouldn't want to have to do it regularly, especially in a bus like most of the relatives.

There are no signposts to the prison, and we relied on the people with us to show us the way. We turned down a side road and someone said, 'we're nearly there'. By slightly bizarre coincidence, a blue road sign with a large 'H' on it flashed by. It meant there was a hospital nearby.

We approached the prison and drove past the gun turrets into the car park.

Before we were allowed into the waiting room, we had to show our passes and passports. Given what the war in the North is about, the fact that we needed passports seemed more than a little ironic. I thought of pointing this out to the guard, but he didn't look as though he would see the joke.

Inside we sat until called up the corridor to a cubicle for a body search by two wardens. I was treated very civilly (perhaps because I was a 'Brit').

During this search they remove the contents of your pockets, though for some reason they give you your money back in a sealed envelope which is checked again on the way out when the rest of your possessions are returned.

After the search we walked on to the next waiting room. Occasionally a screw approached and called the names and numbers of a few more prisoners.

I was waiting, along with two of his friends from Derry, to meet Geno McCormick in H3. Eventually his name was called and we walked through the door to a waiting van.

We were crammed inside the blacked-out interior and the doors were locked. For a remarkably long time we were driven across the camp. You could peer through a scratched-out section of the black-out, but see frustratingly little.

The van stopped and a screw opened the door. He counted us and closed it again. We drove on. When we stopped again we were led into another waiting room. This wait is the longest.

Eventually we were called. We went through to the visiting room in H3. Wooden partitions lined each side of the room. Screws marched up and down.

We walked over to Geno's cubicle. The first thing you notice is that the prisoners look well. They have recovered, physically at least, from the horrors of the years of blanket protest and the dirty protest.

Geno invited us to sit down at the table. He indicated

three packets of crisps he had bought for us. It seemed strange taking crisps from a man who earns only £2 a week in prison wages.

You could not fail to be impressed by Geno's spirit. He smiled and joked throughout the visit. He told me that the situation in the prison has undoubtedly improved since the hunger strike.

Although they obviously don't want to be there, as long as they are 'treated with dignity', they believe that the prisoners should not be the focus they were.

Certainly significant concessions have been won. For example, the prisoners were all wearing their own clothes.

As Geno pointed out, one thing the prisoners do have

plenty of is time, and they are using this for an education and propaganda drive.

None of this means that they are conforming. For example, while we were there they were planning an Easter march in the compound, to be followed by a cultural and educational evening of song and discussion. This would of course be punished by at least seven days loss of privilege and could also endanger their remission.

The half-hour visiting period seemed very short. It was no time before the visit was over.

Geno disappeared down a corridor on the other side of the room. We started off on the complicated business of getting out of the prison.

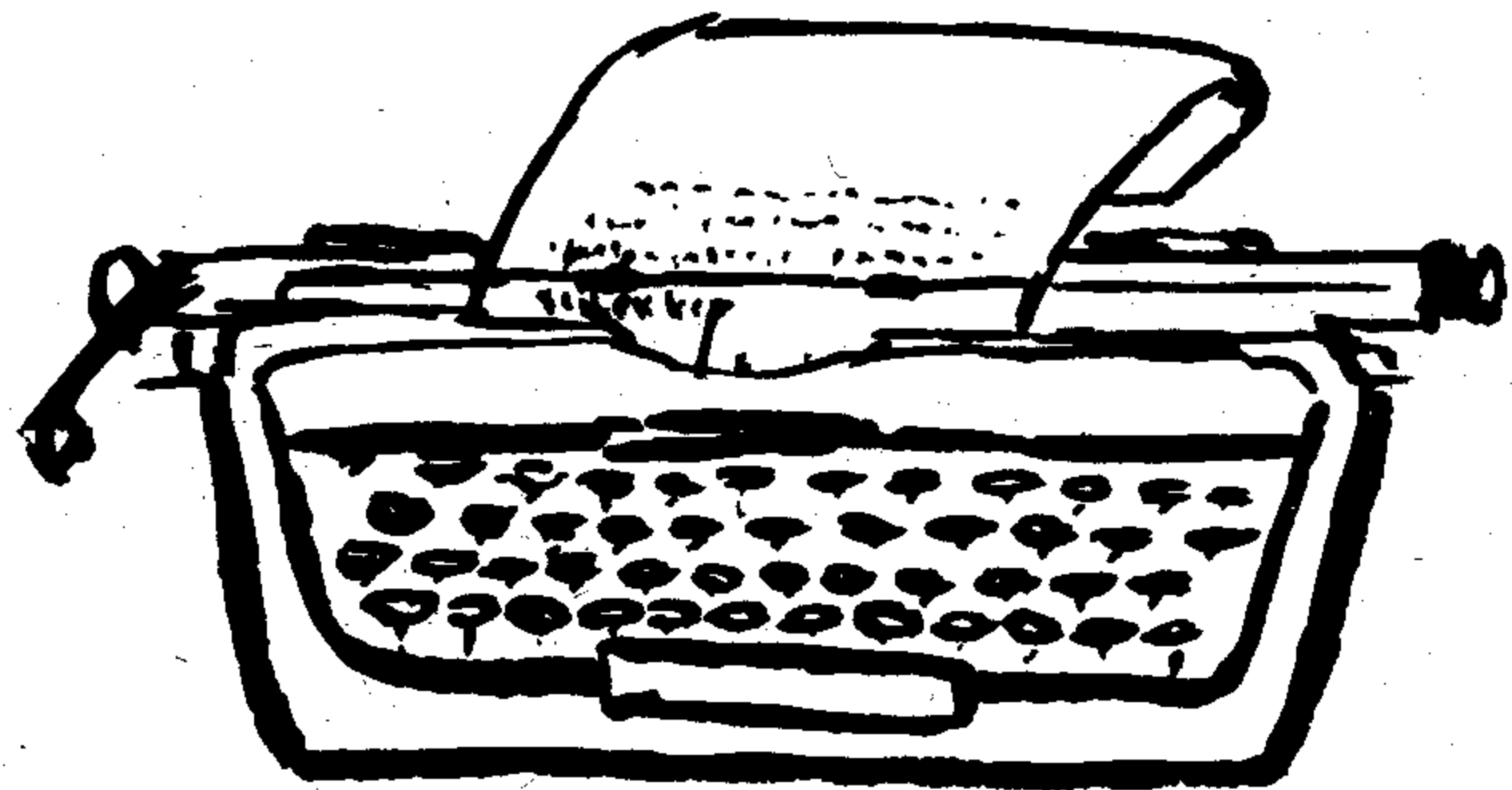
TROOPS OUT NOW!

Join the Labour Committee on Ireland!



I was treated civilly - perhaps because I'm a 'Brit'

Writeback



Moscow peace campaigner

ALEX SIMPSON,
Cambridge.

Leeds Campaign Against the Police Bill.

We reply:

Move on

**Drew Garlick,
Rochdale NGA.**

Closing time in Cowes

I hope will have the guts to let me have a reply, however brief. So far only one Labour leader, Len Murray, has done so. Perhaps you will be the second!



Victor Serge's 'Midnight in the Century'

An insistent note of hope in the midst of darkness

"How do you say son of a bitch in Marxist terms? A filthy, humiliated animal who has been beaten, kicked in the belly, fed on scraps, and is only good for biting poor people? You're educated: tell me the scientific term. What would Hegel have said if he had seen this bureaucratic scum sucking the blood of the victorious proletariat? And Vladimir Illich, what would he have said?"

"I think Lenin would have said the same as you," Varvara replied seriously.

It is partly this very immediate sense of outrage at the theft of many of the gains of the October 1917 Russian Revolution by the bureaucratic caste around Joseph Stalin, and partly its insistent note of hope in the midst of darkness, despair and defeat which single out *Midnight in the Century* as a very special novel.

It deals with perhaps the bleakest period of human history: reeking of defeat and betrayal, the mid 1930s saw fascism stalk Italy and Germany; worthless careerists and bunglers in the Kremlin purge the Communist Parties of militants loyal to the spirit and programme of Lenin and Trotsky; and the workers' movement internationally, denied revolutionary leadership, falling victim to successive attacks by the capitalist class — the most crushing of which was to be the fascist defeat of the Spanish revolution.

The central figures of Serge's novel are Marxists, in the hardest place in the world to be Marxists — the degenerated Soviet Union, in which the "infallibility" of the line laid down by the leadership had to be imposed by a vast apparatus of repression, intimidation, incarceration, exile and execution.

Ravaged

This was the Stalinist period of crash industrialisation, in which through bureaucratic decree and the most brutal methods imaginable, the backward and ravaged economy of the USSR was force-marched into expansion. Industrial output grew from 7% of the level of the USA in 1928 to 45% in 1938 — but at what a cost.

Having accepted the isolation of the Russian Revolution and renounced any hope of extending it into the industrialised countries of Europe, the Stalinists set out to construct "socialism in one country" by lifting the whole country by its own bootstraps and exploiting to the utmost the human and material resources available at home.

New towns were constructed, new regions opened up and exploited, new industries created: the forcible collectivisation of agriculture drove millions of middle and prosperous peasants from the countryside into the towns. Urban living standards dropped like a stone — by half

by
Harry Sloan

Published by Writers and Readers at £6.95 (hardback).

between 1928 and 1932.

Millions of potential opponents of the regime were arrested. In the purges of 1936 to 1939 hundreds of thousands were executed, and millions despatched to labour camps.

Resist

Against this savage bureaucratic approach, Trotsky and the Left Opposition argued consistently for an internationalist policy and for a planned industrialisation and collectivisation of the economy which would convince the more reluctant elements of the peasantry and mobilise the proletariat through political leadership rather than the police truncheon.

Though Trotsky was exiled, and the Left Oppositionists subjected to terrible repression within the USSR, they continued to resist, to organise, to argue and develop their political positions.

Serge's novel deals with these largely forgotten people giving a "worm's eye view" of the political struggle between Trotskyism and Stalinism.

Experience

Serge writes from experience. He himself participated in the early work of revolutionary reconstruction in Russia after 1917, was active in the formative Congresses of the Comintern, took up a critical line towards Stalin's leadership and was expelled from the CP, persecuted, imprisoned and eventually expelled from the USSR, stripped of Soviet citizenship in 1936.

He was during that time a supporter of the Left Opposition — though his political abilities were considerably less than his



literary gifts, and soon after his expulsion from the Soviet Union he was to break from Trotskyism and argue against the Left Opposition on a number of issues including the Spanish Revolution and the relationship between Leninism and Stalinism.

Waters), to which the Trotskyist prisoners have been exiled, exhibits contradictory signs of resurgent life in the barren coldness of the Steppe.

Here we meet the resisters who have not given up:

"We have the right to think a

... Indignation, anger, revulsion? Yes, even temporary weariness. All this is human, only too human. But I will not believe that you have succumbed to pessimism... This would be like passively and plaintively taking umbrage at history. How can one do that? History has to be taken as she is, and when she allows herself such extraordinary and filthy outrages, one must fight her back with one's fists.

Leon Trotsky, February 1937

Yet Serge's novel is filled not with self-pity or despair: rather it is an astoundingly courageous statement of confidence in the ability of the working class eventually to throw off the parasitic bureaucracy. Nor is it a dry-as-dust political tract or polemic.

It deals with revolutionaries as human beings — beings who exist not only in the man-made hell of Stalinist society, but also in the natural environment of sea and earth, changing seasons, harsh frost, spring blossom, love and warmth, the passing away of the old, the emergence of the new.

Comfortless

While the Moscow of the opening chapter — 'Chaos' — is the hub of bureaucracy, a comfortless city peopled by stool-pigeons, careerists and turncoats, the town of Chernoe (Black

little. We're paying for it. And the right to speak, since we're already deportees — and not the kind who repent, who approve of everything, who say polite thank yous when the boys from Security tickle them in the butt with a boot toe. We're the only free men on socialist soil — fresh out of jail and ready to go back in, required to register every five days...

And Serge's novel draws a link between the integrity, the inner dignity, the resilience, of the political opponents of Stalinism and previous generations of religious dissidents who had stood out for what they believe against moral and physical blackmail and pressures.

He shows in this respect that revolutionary commitment is more than simply a set of intellectual theses held together by logical argument: it is a commit-

ment to a completely different set of social values, an attachment to what is most vital and precious in human life, and a refusal to relinquish it in adversity.

Idiocies

Serge examines the idiocies of bureaucratic planning, the brutish characters drawn into power and influence by the consolidation of bureaucracy, and the plight of the people of the USSR, caught in the middle of a situation not of their making. Chapter Two tells of the varied types that came together in the Trotskyist opposition — the types that would not be gagged, like Rodion, the young factory worker who got up at a Party meeting to question the inequality of wages.

"He stopped short, unable to recapture the idea which had come to him out of the heap of words in a pamphlet on Hegel. 'Hegel said: the worker in our factory can't live on wages like these, that's all.' His face beamed with satisfaction while the Party activists, following each other to the platform at a signal from the cell secretary, called him a demagogue, a careerist, an egotist who thought only of filling his belly, a Trotskyite, and a panic monger. The truth was buzzing inside his skull, he didn't understand a word of the arguments they were assaulting him with. Only at the end of the meeting, amid the scraping of benches, did he stand up and say loudly — and everybody heard him — with a broad smile, 'Talk all you like! You know very well I'm right.'"

Solidarnosc

It is precisely this kind of spirit which — on a mass scale 20 years later — was to animate the anti-Stalinist revolts of workers in East Germany and Hungary; which re-emerged as a threat to Stalinist rule in the "Prague Spring" of 1968; and which reached a peak of organised expression in the vast Solidarnosc movement in Poland of 1980-81.

But Serge's central characters could expect no such mass movements in their lifetime. They could look back with nostalgia at the heyday of revolutionary struggle after 1917: they could prepare as best they could politically for the future — passing on the political analysis and the fighting spirit of Trotskyism from the older Bolshevik cadres to the younger generations of opponents of the regime, but they knew precisely the odds against a short-term revolutionary movement sufficient to topple the Stalinists. The best they can do is to plan their hunger strikes in the prison camps and to dream:

"Let me live long enough to see a single socialist prison dynamited, just one. That's all I ask of

the permanent revolution".

Serge, however, remains convinced that the Soviet working class is not crushed but merely sleeping: the reason for the frenzied Stalinist political repression is the fear that the powerful ideas of the Left Opposition could strike a chord in the masses and create conditions for struggles that will defeat the bureaucracy.

In the chapter 'Messages' he shows how the arrival of clandestine correspondence from the Communist Left of the Verkhne-Uralsk Prison brings new vigour — and new dangers to the exiles in Chernoe. And the concluding declaration of optimism, 'The Beginning' sees Rodion, the worker, bearing the knowledge and the spirit of the Trotskyist circle, break out of the township and rejoin the proletariat.

Irony

The supreme irony is that the job Rodion is given, on a construction site, is assembling the only brick-built building in town — a new District Headquarters for State Security. The breakneck labour of the construction workers building the apparatus for their own repression is an excellent symbol of Stalinist parasitism.

Serge does not offer a transitional programme for political revolution: he does not offer a detailed economic or political critique of Stalinist policies.

But he points to the kind of forces that are key to the struggle of the working class to recapture political power in the Soviet Union. He underlines that this cannot be based on political texts alone, but depends upon an attachment to life itself, to human values and a freedom of spirit which — however relentlessly attacked by Tsarism, Stalinism, fascism or other forms of oppression — must sooner or later re-emerge in revolt.

There is no other time to fight but here and now. So fight we must. Any workers feeling deterred or pessimistic after the recent succession of defeats and betrayals by the leaders of the British workers' movement should look for inspiration at the real-life tenacity of men and women beset by infinitely worse conditions which inspired this brilliant work of fiction by Victor Serge.

As Ivanov in jail laboriously copies out clandestine notes from one Trotskyist prison cell to another, he rejects the view that, in a few years 'no-one among the seventy million citizens of the Union will be able to imagine what freedom of thought is.'

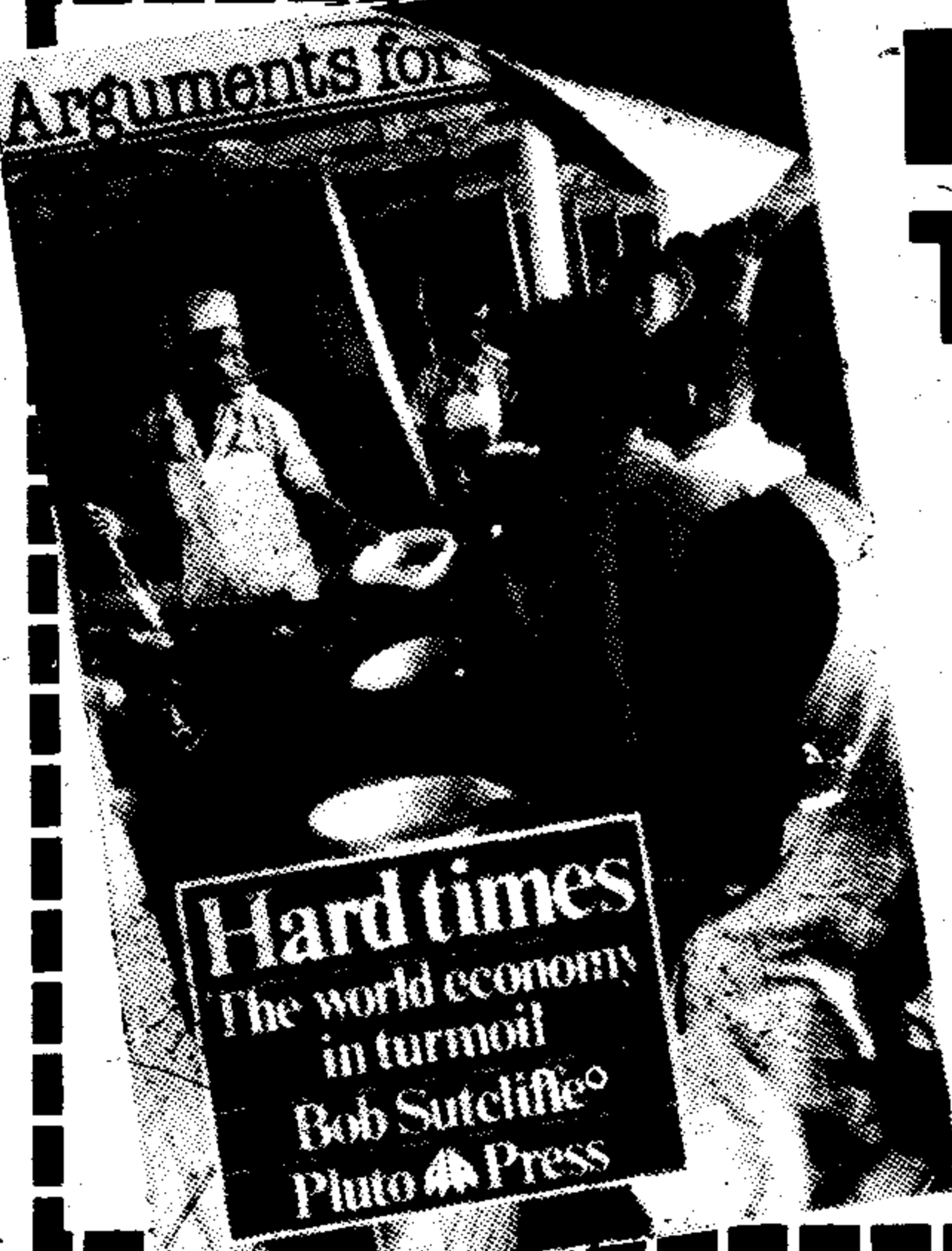
"No. It'll all explode one fine day. Deep inside man there will always be..."

"Then you believe in the irrational?"

"I believe in the proletariat."

HARD TIMES

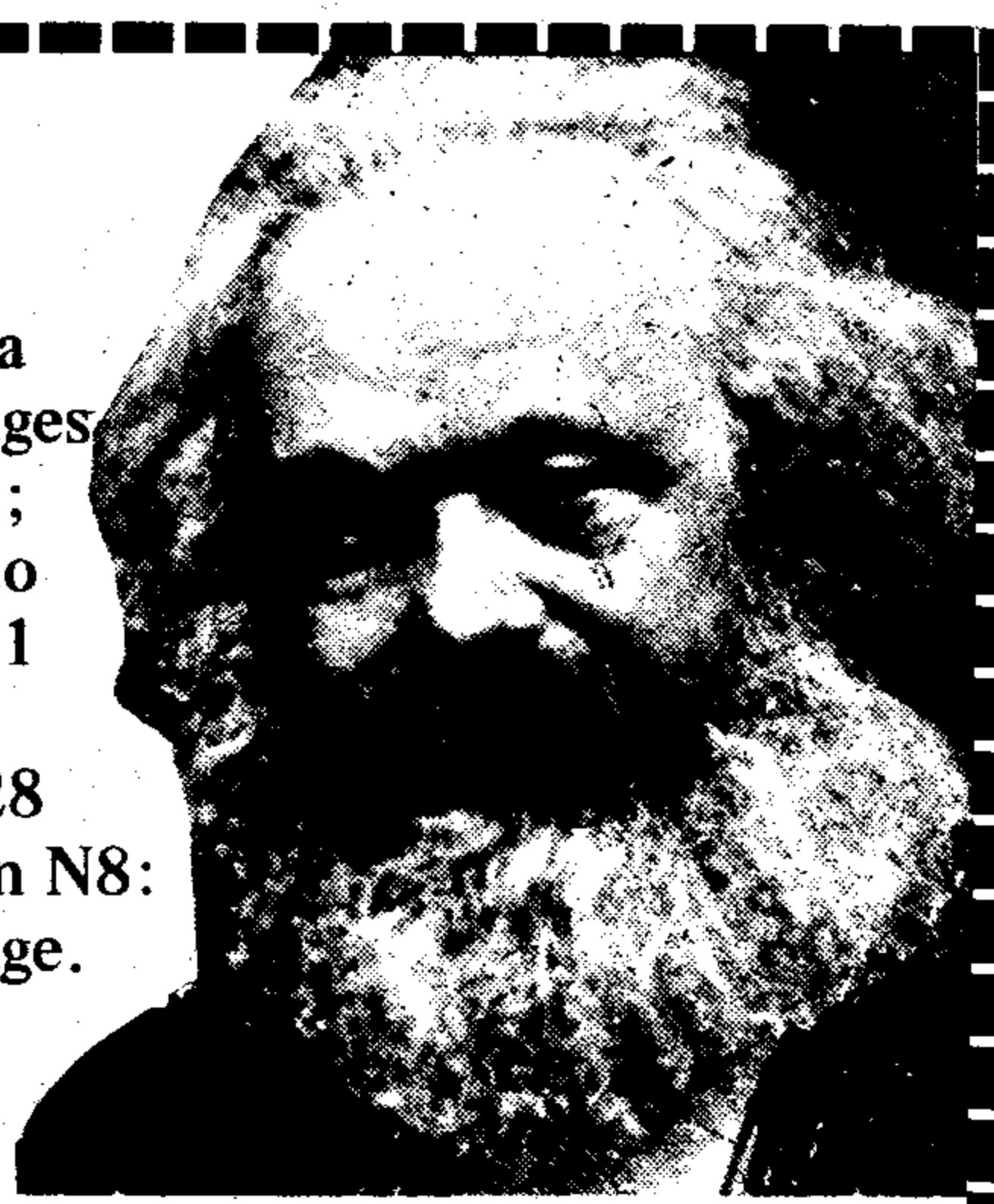
Just out from Pluto Press: an analysis of capitalism in crisis from regular Socialist Organiser contributor Bob Sutcliffe. £2.50 from bookshops, or (with 50p post and packing) from Pluto, The Works, 105a Torrione Avenue, London NW5.



BOOKS

Critique of the Gotha Programme, 30p; Wages price and profit, 40p; Communist Manifesto 60p; Capital volume 1 £3.95. Available c/o Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8: add money for postage.

by **MARX**



Trotsky, March 20, 1938

Agenda

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

SOUTH London CND/labour movement conference, Saturday May 21, 10am to 5pm, at Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, Battersea. Registration £2 per delegate, £1 unwaged, to Nick Guttman, Battersea CND, 16 Chivalry Road, London SW11.

NEWHAM 8 Defence Campaign. Details of activities, speakers and model resolutions from PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7.

BENEFIT for the May 7 Britain out of Ireland demonstration. Saturday May 7

7.30, Co-op Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, N7. £3 waged, £1.50 UB40.

LABOUR Movement Campaign for Palestine: recalled first national conference, Saturday May 21, 11am, County Hall, London SE1. Open to members and to delegates from affiliated organisations. Membership £5, conference fee £2, to LMCP, c/o 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Road, London N16.

Labour CND West inaugural meeting, Sunday June 26, 2.30pm, Taunton CLP meeting rooms, 24 East Reach, Taunton. LP members only.

CONFERENCE of Socialist Economists conference 1983: The World Economy in Crisis. July 9 to 11 in

Sheffield. Details from 25 Horsell Rd, London N5.

ROACH Family Support Committee: march and rally 'For an Independent Public Inquiry into the death of Colin Roach in Stoke Newington Police Station'. Saturday May 14, 12.30pm, Bethnal Green Gardens, near Bethnal Green tube station, E2.

'IRELAND and Labour': public meeting called by Islington South Labour Party. Speakers: Ken Livingstone, Clive Soley. Tuesday June 7, 7.30pm, Islington Central Library, Fieldway Crescent.

'THE Fight Against the Police Bill': national conference Sunday May 15, 10.30am to 4.30pm, Hackney Town Hall. Credentials free from Room 116, Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, London E8.

'POPULAR Planning for Social Need': conference 'to develop a democratic Alternative Economic Strategy'. Saturday May 21, 11am-5pm, County Hall, London SE1. £2.50, £1 unwaged. Organised by CAITS.

'EL Salvador: Another Vietnam'. Norwood Labour Party public meeting. Thursday May 12, 7.30 at Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, SW2. Speakers include John Fraser MP, Jaime Lopez [FDR].

LONDON Regiona CND trade union committee: rally and factory gate meeting at Thorn-Brimar, Mollison Ave, Brimsdown, Enfield, at midday on Thursday May 12. Speakers to include Ken Livingstone, Jonathan Hammond, Jeremy Corbyn. Thorn-Brimar has NATO contracts and produces nuclear war equipment, so the theme of the rally will be jobs not bombs and conversion from military to peaceful production. Trade unions are urged to send official delegations with banners.

DEMONSTRATION against the Police Bill. Sunday May 22, assemble 11 am at Brockwell Park, Brixton, and march to Hyde Park. Called by National Campaign against the Police Bill.



Drop the charges!

'DROP the charges now!' Stoke Newington and Hackney Defence Campaign meeting, Thursday May 12, 7.30, at Stoke Newington Library, Small Hall, Edwardes Lane Entrance, Stoke Newington Church St, N16. The meeting is in support of the right to demonstrate and of the 98 people so far arrested on demonstrations demanding a public inquiry into the death of Colin Roach. Contact: SNHDC, c/o Oxford House, Derbyshire St, E2.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

• SCOTLAND

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

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

• NORTH-WEST

Wirral. Contact Colin Johnstone, 1 Wellington Rd, Wallasey. Next meeting: Thursday May 12, 8pm, at the Labour Club, Church Rd, Seacombe: 'Democracy in the unions'.

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

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

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

Rochdale. Next meeting Monday May 9: 'CND and Socialism'. 7.30 at the Castle Inn.

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

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

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

Huddersfield. Contact Alan Brooke, 59 Magdale, Honley, Huddersfield HD7 2LX. Durham. SO is sold at the Community Co-op, New Elvet.

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

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

Sheffield. Meets every other Wednesday, 7.30pm at the Brown Cow, The Wicker. SO is sold outside Boots, Fargate (Saturday 12 to 1) and the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd. Contact: Rob, 589307.

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

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

York. Contact 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, outside

the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

• WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alternate Fridays, 7.30pm, the Hen and Chickens, Constitution Hill. Next meeting Friday May 6. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Dig-

beth High St.

Coventry. Contact Keith White, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Co-op, High St. Meets on first and last Thursday of the month, 7.30 at the 'Queen', Primrose Hill St, Hillfields.

Leicester. Contact Phil, 857908. SO is sold outside Supasave (Friday 4.30 to 6), the Co-op, Narborough Rd (Saturday 11-12.30), and at Blackthorne Books, High St.

Northampton. Meets every other Monday. Next meeting May 16. Details: contact 713606.

Nottingham. Meets every Friday, 7.30pm at the International Community Centre, 61b Mansfield Rd. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11 to 1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St.

• SOUTH

Oxford. SO is sold at the Cornmarket (Saturday 11 to 1) and outside Tesco, Cowley Rd, Friday 5 to 7. Also at EOA Books, Cowley Rd.

Basingstoke. Public meeting May 16: 'Is a Socialist Revolution Possible in Britain?' 7.30, Chute House.

Socialist Organiser is not just a paper. We fight to organise workers in the struggle for a new leadership in the labour movement. If you agree with what we have to say, you can help.

• LONDON

North-West London. Readers' meetings first Sunday of month. Phone Mick, 624 1931, for details. SO is sold at Kilburn Books.

Hounslow. Next meeting Sunday May 8, on Ireland. For venue see SO sellers. SO is sold outside All Saints Church, Hounslow High St, Saturday 10.30am to 12.

Haringey. Contact 802 0771 or 348 5941. Meets every other Thursday, 7.30, Trade Union Centre, Brabant Road.

Islington. Next meeting Sunday May 15 (not May 8). For details and for childcare, phone Nik, 278 1341.

Tower Hamlets. Meets fortnightly on Fridays, 6.30 to 8.30pm. Contact 377 1328 for details.

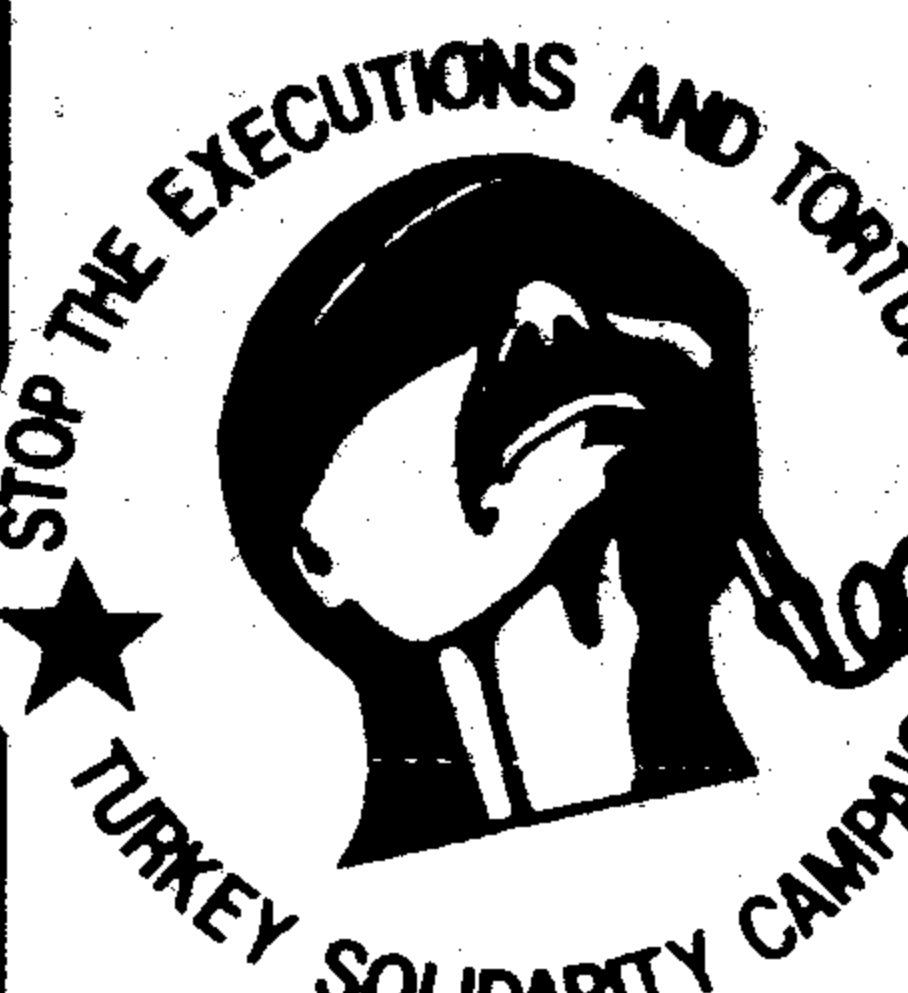
Southwark/Lambeth meets every other Wednesday at Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, SE5. Business meeting 7.30pm, open forum discussion 8.30pm. Next meeting May 11: Alan Thornett on Cowley.

SO Marxist discussion group. Sunday May 8 at 7.30pm on 'Imperialism: how the bosses divided the world'. Phone Ian on 670 3279 for venue.

Hackney. Contact Andrew Hornung, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd, N16.

SO is sold at the following London bookshops: Colletts, Central Books, The Other Bookshop, Bookmarks, Bookplace (Peckham Rd, SE15), Kilburn Books, and Reading Matters (Wood Green Shopping Centre).

HARINGEY Socialists for a Labour Victory organising meeting, Tuesday May 10, 8pm, 5 Stuart Crescent, London N15. Speakers include Valerie Veness (PPC, Hornsey), Reg Race MP, and Dolly Kiffin (Broadwater Farm Youth Association). Contact Peter Kenway, 348 5941.



BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Freeze rents and rates.

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

* The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc.), public accountability, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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By Alan Thornett

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New threat to gay people

Dangers in Tory Police Bill

IN MARLOWE's 'Tragic History of Edward the Second' an unusual and 'fitting' punishment is reserved for the openly homosexual king. Left to the devices of his murderers, the unfortunate man has a red-hot poker shoved up his anus.

That scene dramatically and graphically illustrates straight society's obsession with anal sex, which is presumed to be what 'they' get up to whenever they get the chance. Of course, this concentration on the physical aspects of homosexuality (lesbians also suffer from the 'I'll bet she's got a dildo' complex) neatly avoid any notion of feeling or love — far too dangerous!

How, you might be asking, does this relate to the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill now making its way through Parliamentary Committees?

Provisions have been laid down in the Bill for conducting 'intimate body searches' and 'taking intimate body samples' from those held in detention. Obtaining samples would re-

Stephen Spurdon of the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights looks at a little-discussed aspect of the Tories' notorious new proposed law

quire a detainee's consent, and must be carried out by a doctor. But the searches can be performed without consent by a police officer of the same sex.

The searches are meant to be for concealed property, but it does not — I believe — take much imagination to see that they can be used in other ways to intimidate or even to torture a detainee. And if that person happens to be gay, what more fitting punishment could they have than getting something shoved up their anus.

In fact, this is just what one gay man claimed happened to him when he was arrested in Liverpool at the time of the riots. The implement used by the police officer was said to have been a standard police truncheon.

Other areas of the Bill are much clearer in intent.

Only recently the Commons Committee on the Bill has accepted that constables should have a new power of arrest without warrant to prevent anyone causing "an affront to public decency".

Let me give you an example of what the police deem this to be.

"In Leeds Central railway station two lesbians were detained for half an hour by transport police after they had some parting kisses before one took a train to Bradford. Although they were not charged and were released after questioning the women were threatened with a charge of breach of the peace."

"The officer made an announcement over the loudspeaker system apologising for the 'incident' that had occurred in the station entrance hall, and for any offence it had caused passengers". (From 'Gays and the Law', by Paul Crane, Pluto



Surveillance, searches and harassment will be stepped up

Press).

It is to be noted that no member of the public had actually complained about the display of affection. In fact, it was probably only the policeman who had noticed it.

Searches

The Bill also gives the police the power — on a magistrate's warrant — to enter and search any premises for evidence of a serious arrestable offence.

This lays the homes and meeting places of gays open to searches on the whim of the police, under the pretext of 'gross indecency', 'soliciting', 'importuning' or 'under-age sex', etc. — terms used by the law to describe homosexual activities.

For instance, last autumn we had the 'Chiswick Party Raid', in which police officers arrested,

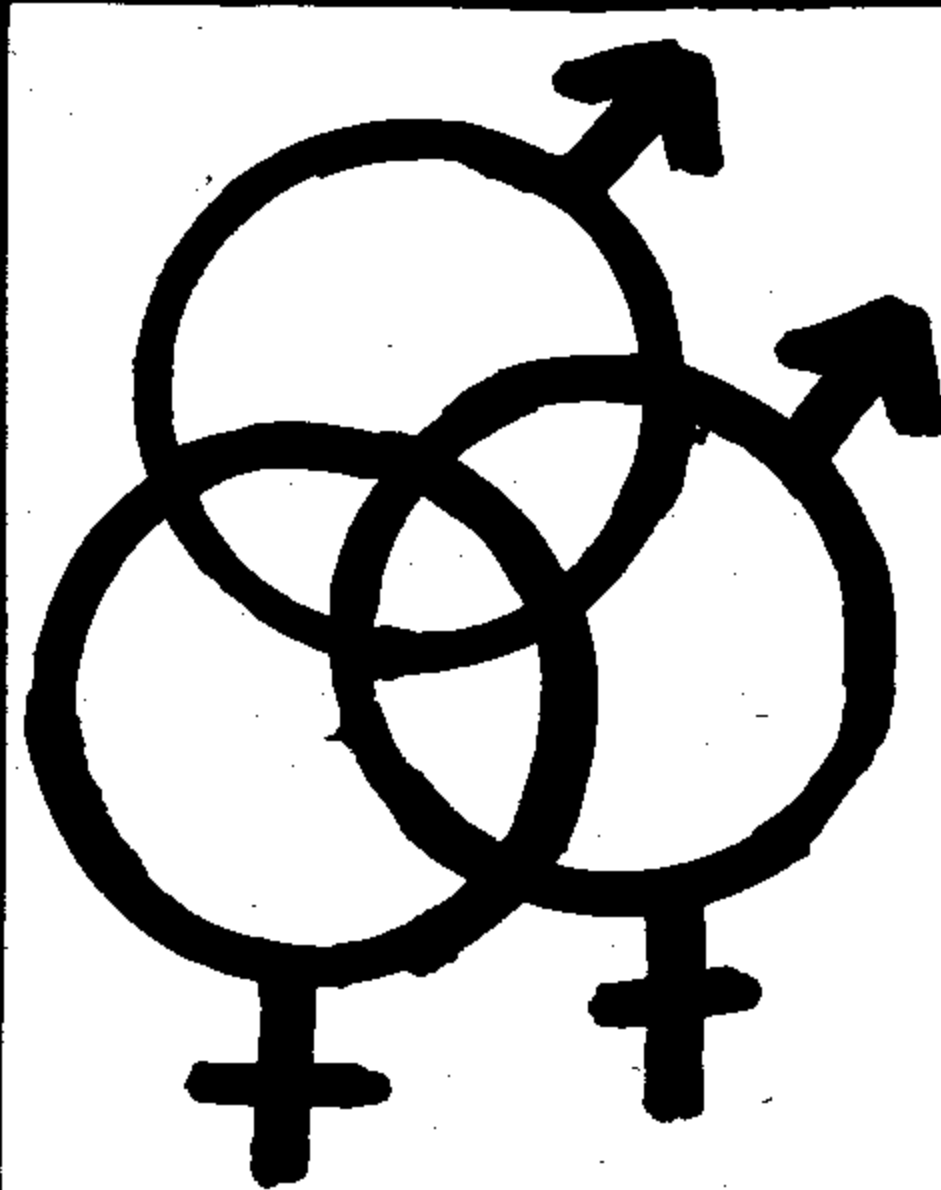
detained and questioned 37 gay men who were guests at a private birthday party. A drunk who had become abusive — believed to be a gatecrasher — had been ejected from the house. He had gone to the police with tales of under-age sex.

No charges were brought yet the men had to endure humiliating questions on intimate details of their sex lives. Added to this, they were kept in appalling conditions, with 21 people in a cell less than eight feet square with just one hard bench and a toilet with an open door. The toilet in the other cell where the remainder were kept did not work. And, of course, the police were generally abusive.

One of the reasons I have for giving all these examples is that they have all occurred before the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill becomes law. There is little reason for believing it won't, despite the numerous objections made against it from such sources as the Law Society, the Legal Action Group, the Institute of Race Relations, the Children's Legal Centre, Jack Jones (form-

er general secretary of the TGWU and member of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure), the British Medical Association and even Police Review.

We have every reason to fear that police oppression of gays will develop, with the aid of this despicable piece of legislation, into a full-scale campaign.



Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, c/o 61A Bloom St, Manchester 1

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

SINCE I wrote about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS) at the beginning of the year, more light has been shed on this terrifying disease.

AIDS is a condition where the body becomes unable to defend itself against even the mildest infections, and KS (the 'killer cancer' of my original article) is one of a number of rare diseases that have taken advantage of AIDS.

From first reports in 1978, AIDS has mushroomed, known cases roughly doubling in the last six months to 1339 by mid-April (notified to the US Centre for Disease Control), with 505 deaths (38%). Abroad, only about 100 cases have been reported so far.

When I wrote in January, scientists were divided over the causes of AIDS, but it is now fairly well accepted that it is caused by some infectious agent — probably a virus, spreading via body fluids such as blood, urine or semen.

The evidence for this is:

1. The vast majority of cases have been found in New York, Los Angeles and Miami, as if a disease were spreading out from single cases.

2. Most victims seem to do things which could allow a virus to spread.

For example, 70% of victims

are gay men with lots of sexual partners. Frequent sex can cause soreness and cracks in the skin which could allow viruses into the blood stream. Interestingly, some of the few women victims of AIDS have been prostitutes.

A further 20% of victims came from people who inject drugs. Using dirty needles is already known to cause the spread of hepatitis virus.

Furthermore, a small but growing number of haemophiliacs (people whose blood will not clot, so that a tiny cut will bleed indefinitely) are turning up with AIDS. Many American haemophiliacs receive regular injections of 'Factor VIII', a substance that helps blood clot.

Factor VIII is extracted from 'donated' blood in the US. I say 'donated', but in fact blood is bought and sold in the US, so that blood 'donors' tend to be people who need the money and hence may not be in the peak of condition. Also, no way of testing blood for the presence of AIDS exists yet, so the AIDS virus may be passed on together with Factor VIII.

Factor VIII is exported to Europe, which may explain five cases of AIDS among British and Spanish haemophiliacs.

So, AIDS seems to be caused by a virus — but what virus? And where has it come from?

The latest theory, from Dr Jane Teas of the Harvard School of Public Health (Boston, Mass.) is that the AIDS virus is a form of the African Swine Fever Virus (ASFV) which has mutated so that it is able to infect humans. A bizarre idea at first sight, but consider these facts.

1. The first cases of AIDS were found among Haitian refugees to the US, in 1978. Many Haitians were interned in Miami, where 7% of AIDS cases come from. Haitians are the other main group of AIDS victims.

2. ASF was confirmed in Haiti shortly after the first AIDS cases.

3. Both AIDS and ASF cause fever and loss of appetite and both seem to affect the immune system similarly. ASF is spread among pigs through blood, urine and faeces.

Dr Teas suggests that AIDS may have started with a Haitian person eating infected pork. If this person had a stomach ulcer or other break in the lining of the mouth or gut, the virus could have got into the blood, to be passed on to other humans in one of the ways previously suggested. This theory is now being tested by infecting pigs' blood with blood from AIDS patients.

A final twist to the story: how did ASFV reach the Caribbean from Africa?

Well, in 1971 ASF broke out in

Cuba — as a result of biological warfare by the CIA against the Castro regime. This was the first outbreak of the disease in the Western hemisphere.

It was eradicated by slaughtering all the pigs (500,000) on Cuba, but did it manage to spread across the 100 km stretch of sea to Haiti and remain dormant for a few years, before breaking out again? ASF may well have spread back to Cuba this way, as there was another outbreak there in 1979 after the Haitian outbreak.

US blood

To prevent the spread of AIDS, there have already been calls for a ban on US exports of blood products.

The British government was warned of the danger of contaminated products from the US in 1981 after 10 children had caught hepatitis, but refused to do anything on grounds of cost. There have also been calls for restrictions on gays giving blood.

It may be a good idea to restrict blood donations from high risk groups in the US, but it would be ironic if the Moral Majority and their allies were allowed to scapegoat gays for spreading something that may well be the fault of their beloved CIA!

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CPSA - SWINGING BACK TO RIGHT WING?

by Stephen Corbishley

On many accounts the CPSA National Executive Committee elections currently being held throughout the 1,000-plus branches will give victory to the right wing.

Careful campaigning, with the assistance of CPSA full-time officers, has increased the number of votes cast in the Ministry of Defence and Metropolitan Police branches, with the vast majority going to the right.

And some branches that delivered strong left wing votes in 1982 are swinging back in dramatic fashion to the right - particularly branches vulnerable to efficient targeting by the right wing machine.

However, if the left is defeated, then the major part of the blame lies with the Broad Left members themselves. At the time as the elections, the vote on the NEC's call for all-out strike from June 1 is being

over pay in 1983.

On other issues the Broad Left NEC has succumbed to the full time officers, with their powerful grip on the mechanics of the union and the lines of communication with the membership - through the union paper Red Tape, through membership circulars, and through the power of individual full-time officers to present the NEC view to branch activists.

In parallel, the NEC members have failed to use the Broad Left, or to build it to organise debate and campaigns on the issues that face the union. One exception is Nottingham Broad Left where Socialist Caucus supporters have played the leading role!

In many cases local Broad Lefts have stagnated, if not declined.

Against a right wing machine,

clearly well-financed from outside the CPSA in the same way that the legal action over the 1982 elections was financed, the Broad Left could only have fought back through a serious orientation to the rank and file. And that it lacked.

Now, as the pay vote goes against all-out strike and the election threatens the Broad Left majority, over 500 CPSA members in Liverpool DHSS have come out on spontaneous strike against the cuts. It shows that what is lacking is not membership militancy in general, but the ability of the Broad Left to organise and develop it.

The future must lie with the Broad Left orientating to the rank and file of CPSA and holding office on the basis of winning leadership of the union through struggle, not passive propaganda.

All returns show that the call for a massive defeat in even traditionally militant left wing branches not voting action.

Central is the Broad Left's failure to develop real awareness among the members on the issues facing the union, or to take up issues that members are concerned about and develop campaigns around them.

Last year, spontaneous strike action in Oxford and Birmingham came a serious struggle against the cuts, with every chance of success on the Tory government. The Broad Left NEC worked to have the whole action downgraded and finished off, on the expectation that the strike fund would be hoarded for the big pay 1983.

Many militants warned against this view at the time. Only by going ahead on the DHSS could members' morale and confidence be raised for action.

IN A recent issue of Red Tape, the fortnightly journal of the Civil and Public Services Association, general secretary Alistair Graham made the comment: "If you are a Jew, who votes Conservative, Liberal or SDP, hoping to marry a Catholic girlfriend, and you work in the Ministry of Defence, give our conference a miss, it will not be to your taste."

This was a reference to the fact that there are motions on the agenda for CPSA's 1983 Conference (commencing Monday May 9) which call for the union to affiliate to the Trade Union Friends of Palestine, the National Abortion Campaign, the Labour Party and CND.

Graham attempts to present the annual conference as having been "hi-jacked" by left wing extremists.

He ignores the great number of motions on the agenda which deal with "bread and butter" issues and neglects to remind members that affiliation to CND

is already union policy, the right wing threatened to drag the union to court if the NEC tried to carry out last year's decision to affiliate!

Thus, conference this year must vote on a rule change that will allow us to affiliate 'legally'. Also, the question of Labour Party affiliation is a reaffirmation of a decision taken at the 1982 conference for a campaign in favour of such an affiliation.

Ironically, on one big issue Graham will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Militant tendency and the Communist Party: this is on the subject of a merger with the management union SCPS.

Although it is no wonder that the mouths of the union bureaucrats should water at the idea of such a merger, it is disappointing to see that many on the left are enamoured with the concept.

They believe - erroneously - that a bigger union would automatically be a stronger force in opposing cuts, fighting for pay increases, etc.

In fact, SCPS has always been a drag on the militancy of the civil service, as shown most recently by its NEC's cowardly recommendation to its members to accept the Tory pay "offer".

SWP throws in the towel

by John Douglas

THE Executive Committee elect for the Manchester division of USDAW, Ian France, has resigned his seat because he claims he won his election "by sheer fluke" (Socialist Worker USDAW conference bulletin, 26.4.83).

He claimed that "to go on a 16-strong Executive that has only two left-wingers on it and with no real base would leave me powerless to oppose the normal round of Executive sell-outs and shabby compromises". The bulletin tries to justify his action by the fact that the USDAW conference "voted against all motions opposing incomes policy" and supported "Labour's programme of wage restraint".

Yet France had announced his intention to resign at the pre-conference meeting of the Broad Left before those votes were cast.

France had stood on a Broad

DELEGATIONS from the strike at N Greening Ltd, Warrington, have travelled over the last week to the Midlands, Glasgow, and London.

The 400 workers at Greenings - a subsidiary of Johnson Firth Brown - are on strike against moves by managements to abolish the annual wage claim, end negotiated holidays, reduce trade union facilities, and axe 89 jobs.

Messages/donations: N Greening JSSC, c/o Len Blood, 26 St. John St., Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.



Sheffield sit-in

Reports by Ram Paul and John Harris

80 workers occupying the Firth Derihon factory in Tinsley, Sheffield, against enforced redundancies and closure of the die shop and saw shop, are confident of victory.

The occupation has been made official by all the unions involved, AUEW, TGWU, EETPU, and UCATT.

AUEW convenor Paul McKee told us:

"Management have made it clear that this would only be the start of an attack on our wages, conditions and shop floor organisation. Our victory would make the employers think twice".

Firth Derihon - a subsidiary of Johnson Firth Brown - has been making profits of up to £2 million in recent years, but the Tinsley workers have been on short time for 2½ years. Over the last 15 months, 60 voluntary redundancies have been made out of a total workforce of 650 at the two Firth Derihon sites.

A call for blacking of Firth Derihon products has had a positive response at Rolls Royce, one of the largest customers.

Messages/donations to: Paul McKee, 17 Melin Way Sheffield S5. Cheques to: Firth Derihon (Tinsley) Joint Works Committee.

Holden out

THE strike at Holden's Glass, Digbeth, Birmingham, remains rock solid.

ACAS have now been involved in negotiations between management and TGWU full-timers. But the strikers are insistent that whatever the outcome of the talks, the strike will continue until full re-instatement of all the strikers is achieved.

Morale amongst the strikers remains high, despite continuing scabbing by the majority of the workforce (FTAT, EETPU plus one TGWU member), harassment from management and even an air-gun being pulled on one picket by a cowboy lorry driver from a company called W&W of Liverpool!

The TGWU, while making the dispute official from the start, has failed to produce any publicity material or collection sheets, so the strikers have now done this themselves and arranged to have a speaker at the Birmingham May Day Rally to publicise their struggle.

Donations/messages of support to: J. Johnson, 68 Jayshaw Ave., Great Barr, Birmingham 43.

Cowley strong

MANAGEMENT has been in disarray in the Cowley Body Plant since the ending of the Assembly Plant 'washing up time' strike.

Many Body Plant workers had been laid off during the dispute. Most of those not laid off carried on taking their five minutes' washing-up time at the end of each shift.

The company added up this time, and deducted three quarters of an hour's pay at the end of the week.

When the rest of the plant returned last Wednesday, most sections similarly walked off the job to wash their hands as normal. The company at first insisted that the month's delay in implementing the end of washing-up time applied only to

the Assembly Plant. But it was clear that if the company took money off these sections returning, particularly the Acclaim and the Rover/Ambassador, the workers were likely to take strike action.

After two days the company announced that whilst they were discussing the situation with the Body Plant leadership, they would not stop people's money. It's clear that they want to avoid another dispute straight away.

It is also clear that although the Assembly Plant workers were sold out, all the workers of Cowley feel they have flexed their muscles and proved they can take on the company.

Self-confidence is returning to the workforce.

ASTMS conference

Broad Left challenge to Jenkins' rule

TWO years ago the ASTMS annual conference voted to support Tony Benn's candidature for the Labour Party deputy leadership, thereby giving his campaign a cutting edge in the unions (and incidentally leaving a great deal of egg on Clive Jenkins' face).

This year all the stops are being pulled out by the leadership to try and ensure there are no similar embarrassments for the TUC and Labour Party leaderships.

But the prospects are that the bureaucracy will have only limited success in its manoeuvres.

True, discussion of the witch-hunt in the Labour Party has been cleared off the agenda — though there will be a bid to reinstate the issue of the floor of conference.

The chief lieutenants to the bureaucracy in this squalid endeavour were (surprise, surprise) members of the Communist Party who were happy to deploy their range of unscrupulous talents when called upon to demonstrate their loyalty.

There has also been an attempt, which has been shaping up for a couple of years, to reverse the union's opposition to incomes policy, though the bureaucracy is still handling this issue with some care.

However, there is at least one subject close to Jenkins' heart where he has not succeeded in suppressing discussions, and that is the ASTMS seat on the TUC General Council.

Under the new rules, ASTMS

Jack Belfry reports on the forthcoming ASTMS conference.

is automatically entitled to one seat on the General Council, and the question has arisen of how the union's nominee is chosen. The left thinks it should be by election — and a rule change motion to this effect will be taken at the conference.

This is despite the efforts of the union's president Len Wells, a longtime Jenkins loyalist, to rule it out of order with a series of specious arguments. The ASTMS NEC, the rabbit to Jenkins' stoat, will oppose this motion and as it requires a two-thirds majority to be carried, there will be a sharp struggle at the conference before the outcome is known.

Meanwhile Jenkins, in common with other so-called lefts on the General Council, is trying to overthrow the automaticity principle.

The Medical Practitioners Union, a section of ASTMS with separate affiliation to the TUC for historical reasons, is being used as a Trojan horse to roll back the reform in General Council structure. Sections of the TGWU and the NUM are being used in the same way.

Nothing would better demonstrate the fraudulent nature of the commitment to democratic



JOHN HARRIS

Clive Jenkins

accountability of the "lefts" in the TUC than their bid to retain appointment to the General Council in their own gift.

There are a few other issues which the bureaucracy has not been able to close out entirely. Chief among these are women's rights in the Labour Party and nationalisation of the banks and finance institutions.

Both of these the NEC opposes and it is uncertain whether the left can make any progress.

In less contentious debate on public sector cuts, economic policy, low pay, unemployment, new technology, racism and disarmament, it is likely that the formal left positions of the union will be reaffirmed though little action will result.

Sycophancy

Michael Foot will address the conference, though this is more likely to lead to an outburst of sycophancy than to political enlightenment.

The left in ASTMS has been fairly quiescent in recent years, the revolutionary left has not got its act together, the CP has collapsed politically and the Labour Party left has not yet

developed industrial perspectives of its own.

However there are now some signs that things are beginning to stir. In a series of elections over the last few years, Socialist Organiser supporter Sue Lister, a well-known anti-cuts and women's issues campaigner, has demonstrated that there is a constituency for left politics.

In the most recent election — for one of the National seats on the NEC — Sue shocked the right wing by coming third with over 1,300 votes — only 800 behind the winning right wing candidate, and easily outstripping a less resolute 'left' candidate. This strong support — counted on a show of hands at branch meetings — is a sign that there is room for a principled left wing alternative in the union.

A recent meeting in Birmingham attended by 50 activists from around the country, agreed to launch a new Broad Left.

This organisation will hold a rally at the conference and will then move to its own founding conference in July.

This is the most serious challenge to the bureaucracy to emerge in the union for some years.

Fowler's friend passes on

ALBERT Spanswick, the general secretary of COHSE, best known for his sell-out of the 1982 health workers' dispute, collapsed and died last week.

He was visiting a branch in Yorkshire... out and about among the membership. He loved being with the members, we are now told, although he seemed less than happy to mingle with them outside the TUC during lobbies organised by Health Workers for the Full Claim.

Spanswick, a relic of supposed 'old-style' leadership, will be remembered by some for his 'benevolent' running of the union.

But by others he will be remembered for his refusal to give recognition to an independent trade union branch for COHSE employees; for his sacking of press officer Chris Perry in 1981; for his refusal to stand and fight against victimisations promised and carried by Patrick Jenkin in the 'sacker's charter' of 1981; for his delaying tactics when it came to making occupations against cuts and closures official; and for his scandalous fight against COHSE affiliating to the National Abortion Campaign, despite a conference decision to do so.

But mostly he will be remembered for his conscious sell-out and bungling of the NHS dispute last year. Even Norman Fowler has now paid tribute to him, and with good reason. Without Spanswick's help Fowler could well have lost the fight against the health workers.

Albert Spanswick had decided to retire early. No doubt there was a peerage planned to fall his way. Now he will never enter the House of Lords. Unfortunately there is no shortage of candidates to take his place.

He lacked the flair and sophistication of Clive Jenkins, Len Murray, or Rodney Bickerstaffe, and was prone to make absolutely clearcut statements revealing the collaboration going on outside the official negotiations.

At COHSE conference 1981, faced with rank and file criticism of the leadership's record on industrial action, Albert Spanswick responded with a plaintive plea to the membership to stop picking on him. "I am being persecuted", he said. He was presented with a T-shirt with those immortal words on it at the end of conference.

Now, while they shed crocodile tears for Spanswick at head office, his successor, David Williams, a vicious right-winger, will be planning the real persecutions — a witch-hunt of the left in the trade union and in the Labour Party. Meanwhile the other officials will be jockeying for Williams' vacant post.

Albert may be gone, but his



tradition of dictatorial rule and hostility to rank and file action will live on — a testimony to the bankruptcy of reformism and the lack of accountability of trade union leaders, and a reminder that the question of leadership is crucial to the fight for working class control.

Pickets stay firm

Twenty-one Asian workers at Aire Valley Yarns, near Bradford, have been on strike for seven weeks demanding union recognition. They were dismissed when Liaquat Ali signed them up into the textile section of the TGWU. The union has made the strike official.

Last week the police stepped up their harassment of strikers with the arrival of the Police Task Force (Yorkshire's equivalent of the SPG), resulting in one arrest.

Peter Booth, the union full-time official, has already been dragged before a judge to give assurances that there will be no secondary picketing.

The workers, however, have ensured that yarn processed at the factory has not been handled by other plants.

Mr Ali said that the strike would continue until they win union recognition as morale was high and support encouraging.

The workers are planning a whole week of mass picketing. Union officials have so far prevented these from taking place but with the intensification of activity by the Police Task Force, they now have no option but to step up the picketing.

Leeds Trades Council has already donated £100 to the strikers and Councillor Barry Turner won the backing of Bradford Labour Group for a resolution of support and calling for a delegation of councillors to support the picket line. The resolution will be put to the next meeting of full council.

Messages/donations to L. Ali, 34 Dirckhill Street, Bradford 7, West Yorkshire.

Timex sitting tight



TIMEX workers at the Milton factory in Dundee are still occupying to stop compulsory redundancies.

For speakers contact G. Sampson, 32 Elgin Terrace, Dundee (0382 818452). Donations to J. Kydd, 81 Brownhill Rd, Dundee.

Change in NUR attitude

by Rob Dawber

MY article last week on a strike by guards at Lincoln and the NUR NEC's response was factually correct, but gave the impression that with the election of Jimmy Knapp as NUR General Secretary, nothing had changed.

The information I've had since suggests that while the settlement of the dispute wasn't an enormous step forward for railworkers, it wasn't a complete sell-out either.

Indeed, the reaction and behaviour of the NUR NEC was a welcome contrast to previous behaviour.

As Ian Williams, an NEC member said, "In the past management would call us up to go out and settle disputes. We were like firefighters going out with two buckets of water to pour on it."

"We still go out with buckets, but now they've got paraffin in them."

The dispute started on Wednesday 20th, as a guard, obeying NUR orders not to lift the March to Spalding track near Lincoln was sent home.

On Thursday, two NEC members were present to find out what help was necessary. On Friday the NEC made the strike

official on the basis of their report and put out orders to all depots not to run trains through Lincoln.

Previously they would not have got that support, even after two days, under Weighell.

On the Monday, BR climbed down, offering a national meeting (Wednesday 4 May) to discuss line closures before going ahead with the line lifting. Previously the NUR has had no negotiating rights on line closures, rather they were the subject only of local consultation.

BR has only postponed the lifting of the track till May 9, but they have made concessions that could not have been expected before. This could be the beginnings of a change within the NUR and therefore in BR's ability to rely on the NUR to push through its redundancy and restructuring programme.

Not least significant is the fact that the guards' strike was 100% solid in Lincoln, while only last June 40% of them scabbed on the two-day pay strike.

As Ian Williams told me: "There's been a considerable change in the attitude of the NUR. Our difficulty is that many of our members are still demoralised and almost shell-shocked as a result of last year's sell-out."

"When a dispute like Lincoln occurs we are giving the people involved all the support we can,

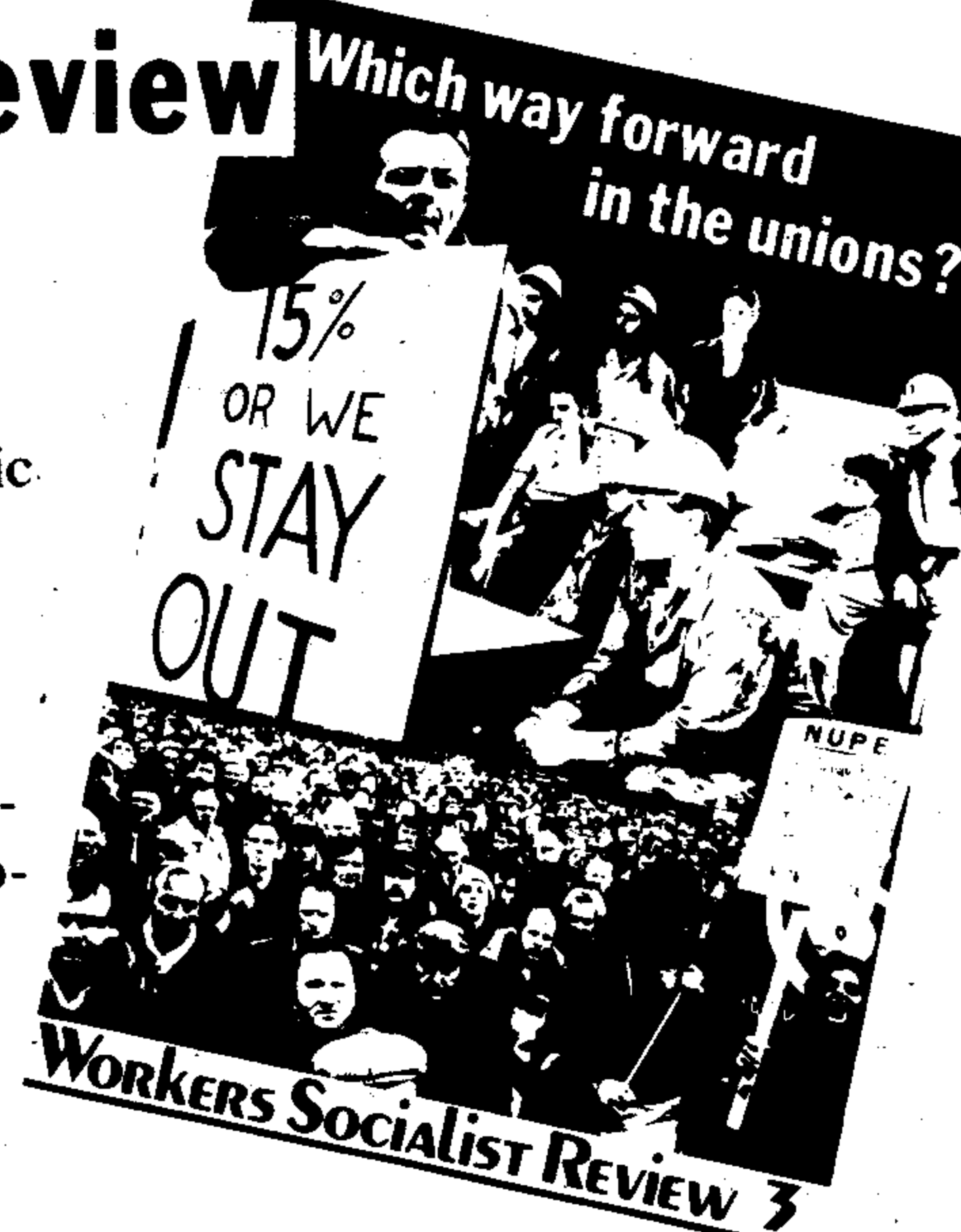
though we have to be extremely cautious until we have rebuilt the morale of our members.

"We can't call for indefinite extensions of strike action until we have guaranteed the support of our membership. That support is something we have to earn, and not something we can take for granted."

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Thumbs down for CIA's secret war



RONALD REAGAN is losing his propaganda war on Central America even amid the hardened reactionary circles of the US Congress. On Tuesday the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives voted to cut off funds to the CIA's mercenary forces in Honduras and Nicaragua, and give the CIA 45 days to extricate itself from its clandestine operations against the Nicaraguan government.

This decision came as a heavy blow to Reagan who last week resorted to the unusual and desperate tactic of a direct, tub-thumping, witch-hunting appeal to the assembled capitalist politicians of both Houses of Congress for support to his strategy in Central America.

His speech was aimed at securing funds and approval for the present combination of open military and economic assistance to the right wing dictatorships of the region, coupled with the sponsoring of counter-revolutionary squads of mercenaries, launching attacks on the Sandinista regime from Honduras on one side, and from Costa Rica on the other.

But despite Reagan's warnings of the "threat to the national security of the USA", and the need to "stand up for democracy" on their own doorstep, the assembled gathering of millionaires, lawyers and landowners from the USA's twin capitalist parties remained sharply divided on the best ways of fighting these "threats".

Minimal

Some — 'liberals' — have insistently pointed out the minimal extent of "democracy" in the right wing regimes Reagan is attempting to preserve, others are concerned that sending more military aid and advisors could spill over into sending US combat troops, and escalate into a new, catastrophic Vietnam-style conflict. Significantly, Reagan drew prolonged applause for his statement that he has no intention of sending troops to fight in Central America.

To appease the growing body of Congressmen convinced that there cannot be a military but only a political solution, Reagan's speech was carefully angled to look as if he were leaning in that direction.

He declared that the USA would support negotiations "both

among the countries of the region and within each country", and he announced the appointment of a special envoy, who will go through the motions of touting a ritualistic plastic olive branch around the capitals of Central and South America.

A flavour of Reagan's approach is given by his choice of envoy: Richard Stone, a wealthy former Democratic Party Senator who led early moves to end US aid to the Sandinista government and was previously a paid lobbyist for the right-wing government of Guatemala in its efforts to restore relations when its record of repression became so blatant that even the US government cut off aid.

Envisages

It is obvious that Reagan envisages any talks only in the context of asserting military superiority over the left wing guerrillas in El Salvador, and after a prolonged process of "softening up" the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

To achieve this he has a long, bloody, way to go. The May Day weekend saw the Salvador liberation forces take the war into the outskirts of the capital, San Salvador, and call over Radio Venceremos for the active support of the working class in the military struggle which until now has been based largely in the rural areas.

A grim reminder of the imperialistic fightback came however, in the north of Nicaragua, where Reagan's hired gunmen were back in action on May Day, murdering 11 people, including a West German doctor.

Whatever the decisions of the US Congress, the battle between the workers and peasants of Central America and the forces and agents of imperialism will continue until the brutal right wing regimes of the region are torped, and steps taken to expropriate the land, the banks and the major industries currently monopolised by multinational firms and a handful of capitalist families.

In that fight the left wing forces need not the two-faced pleas for 'negotiations' put forward by the US Democratic party, the Mexican capitalist class and the timid reformists of the so-called "Socialist" International (including the British Labour Party) — all of whom fear a left wing military victory — but full scale solidarity and material support from the international workers' movement.

An important step towards this could be the Labour Movement Conference on El Salvador, to be held in London on May 14 (details, p.13).

Yorkshire march diary : Week 1

A marcher's diary by Helen Johnstone

LEFT Keighley April 27. Sent off by two clergymen and Bob Cryer MP, plus a few others.

Some people marched all the way with us to Halifax. Arrived in Halifax at tea-time to hear the Liberal Mayor go on about unemployment, then the president of Halifax Trades Council go on about the march.

A marcher asked to speak and criticised the Liberal Mayor over council redundancies, and said that the Labour Party needed to get the working class out on the street supporting socialism. It should not confine itself to meet-

ings, otherwise nothing would change.

April 28: arrived Huddersfield, to a good welcome by 200 people. April 29: went to Bradford. Good reception, hardly any hostile reactions.

April 30: Leeds. Joined May Day march of 3000 people and remained for festival next day, which was well organised. Arrived in Wakefield on Sunday to rousing welcome by 100-odd people and some organisations. Most of the public support the march.

People's March gains momentum

THIS WEEK the Scottish leg of the People's March is in Lancashire, and the two Yorkshire/Humberside legs join up in South Yorkshire. The Newcastle leg is also under way.

In Sheffield Firth Derihon workers are occupying to stop enforced redundancies. In Dundee Timex is occupied. On May 24 thousands of women will take action against nuclear weapons. Many actions will try to make links with fights against cuts and closures, with slogans like 'Jobs not Bombs' and 'Hospitals not Holocaust'.

The People's March could be a tremendous chance to get support for these struggles and encourage others similar. The trouble is that many of the organisers want to make it 'non-political'.

Marchers shouting anti-Tory slogans have been quickly hushed. And clergymen and Liberal politicians have been prominently featured on the platforms.

Get active in your town committee now — and make sure the reception for the People's March is a real workers' reception in your area.

Send support to:
Timex occupation c/o J. Kydd, 81 Brownhill Road, Dundee.
Firth Derihon (Tinsley) Joint Works Committee, c/o Paul McKey, 17 Melin Way, Sheffield 7.

Remember the Irish Hunger strikers!

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



FUND

THE fund is still limping when it should be sprinting. This week we have £15 from Brent SO (donations, extra sales and badges), £5 from Ann Duggan, £4.25, Huddersfield SO, £1 Martin Hoare — total £25.25.

That means we need an average of £324.92 every week for the rest of this month to make our £1000 target. It's necessary — and it's not too difficult, so long as every SO supporter joins in the effort.

Send donations to the Treasurer, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.