

Socialist ACTION

SOUND AROUND GREENHAM!

Come to USAF Greenham Common on 11 December



See pages 2, 6 and 7

Thatcher's racist police



Police protecting cruise missiles at Greenham



Photo: SHEILA GRAY (Format)

IF YOU want to know what Britain is really like look no further than last week's report on the Metropolitan Police.

Commissioned by the police themselves it showed:

- Rampant racism among the police
- Flagrant and probably illegal violation of the Sex Discrimination Act
- Widespread bribery
- Physical threats and intimidation of those arrested.

This is the real face of Britain's police. Not an invention of 'red moles' but the official facts on the defenders of law and order.

Think about that next time you see the boys in blue arresting women at Greenham Common. Or wading in to attack a picket line. Think about it next time you see the cops arresting and harassing black people on the street.

Racism

Naturally the Tory Party think the police are wonderful. They should do. They share the same values. It is the racism of the Tory Party's Immigration Acts that feeds and covers the racism of the police.

It's press and Tory support for mass nuclear weapons that creates the atmosphere for the police to wade in and beat up CND and Greenham demonstrators. And it's Tebbit and King's anti-union laws that provide the respectable excuse for

the police to intimidate and attack pickets and trade unionists.

A police force is a good mirror of a society and a government.

Ours is a sewer.

MODERN TIMES



I can't understand why Mary Whitehouse wants The Day After banned ... there can't be a lot of sex in a film about the aftermath of the bomb, surely?

Socialist ACTION

Nasty One Nigel

That was the *Daily Mail's* headline on Nigel Lawson's autumn financial statement last week. The *Sun*, the *Express*, the *Times* and all the other normal backers of Thatcher's government joined in a ferocious public attack on the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The reason was not hard to find. A Tory government elected in 1979 on a pledge to cut taxes has now systematically increased them since taking office. Lawson slipped through another *de facto* tax increase last week in the form of an increase in government determined gas and electricity prices. In this situation even a hint by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that taxes might go up yet again in next spring's budget was enough to send a rocket through the roof. The whole row was attributed to the supposed 'bad luck' now affecting the Thatcher government.

Only the *Financial Times*, which considers itself above vulgar political considerations expressed quiet satisfaction, and unequivocal support, for Lawson's measures.

The reasons for the row are now hard to find. Probably more significant than Lawson's statement itself was a little reported story which came out three days later. The government's 'longer term leading economic indicator' — the index which predicts the performance of the economy in twelve months time — has now moved downwards for the third successive month. Britain is now having a small economic upturn based on consumer spending. But darkening clouds are already gathering on the economic horizon and threatening to burst in a year's time.

Lawson's claims of economic success — because of a prediction of three per cent growth this year — are laughable. They ignore the 'small' fact that this three per cent growth is after two years — from 1979 to 1981 — when the economy actually declined uninterruptedly. Even if the 'optimistic' Treasury predictions are realised this year the British economy will have grown at an average of only half a per cent a year between 1979 and 1984. This is easily the lowest rate of growth for any period since the Second World War and one of the worst in British history. The results of that stagnation in terms of unemployment, decline of the welfare state, and the crisis of the cities can be seen all around.

Far from being a 'success' the Thatcher government's record has been an economic disaster for Britain and its people.

It was a nasty one Nigel, with much worse to come.

The revolt of the cities

NO PART of British society has taken a greater pounding from the Thatcher government than the big cities. They have the highest levels of unemployment. The worst and most vicious racist police forces. They have suffered the biggest cut backs in their finances from central government.

This situation is still getting worse. Next year 'rate capping' will be introduced to stop councils maintaining their services by increasing rates. The metropolitan councils and the GLC are to be abolished — which among other things will make London the only capital city in Western Europe without a democratically elected local government.

What is also happening however is that the simmering anger in the big cities against these policies is pushing forward quite different types of Labour Parties than have been seen for a long time. It is also helping create a new type of support for socialist ideas and policies.

It is not an accident that Ken Livingstone and David Blunkett — two of the most popular left-wing Labour Party figures in the last twenty years — came out of the local government of the big cities. Liverpool is now the first council to openly defy the government. A huge political fight is continuing to take place between left and right over control of the Manchester Labour Party.

The black ghettos of the big cities exploded in riots once before in 1981. Anger is still spreading among under layers of the population. The fight over the future of the big cities is now one of the most important issues for socialist action.

If the Labour Party is looking for a mass campaign to win the Labour Party they need look no further than Liverpool, Sheffield, Manchester and London.

Greenham Common: concentration camp



Photo: JENNY MATTHEWS (Format)

ONE WEEK after the arrival of cruise missiles Greenham Common airbase now looks like a concentration camp. The fence surrounding the perimeter of the base is covered with huge bales of barbed wire. As you drive round the base you see small piles of sand bags placed to protect soldiers who wish to lie down and fire.

Spotted along the route every 20 yards or so stands a cop or a paratrooper. At various points watch towers have been built, just in case someone slips through unseen.

It's amazing to see just how far the process of 'military' defence has gone. No expense has been spared to provide the American forces with adequate security to protect the missiles from the terrible Greenham women.

By Valerie Coultas

When 141 women were arrested at the different gates last Tuesday there were hundreds of police on hand — including women constables. The horses were in use. Paratroopers and American soldiers watched from inside the fence as van load after van load of women were driven away to Newbury to be charged.

On Saturday 29 October — when the Greenham perimeter fence had been cut down — scores of women arrested were taken inside the base to the special detention centre.

Here one woman I spoke to told me that women had been asked to strip before they were searched.

The Newbury magistrates are getting more and more disillusioned with the view that the protests will stop now cruise missiles have arrived. Women after woman comes up before the bench and says she will refuse to pay the fine for obstruction or criminal damage.

The fines for criminal damage for cutting down

the fence also now vary enormously and arbitrarily. One woman was fined £25 while the woman on her shoulders was fined £1500.

Harassment is also being stepped up. Publicans and taxi drivers in the Newbury area have withdrawn their services from any woman who looks like a Greenham woman — one taxi driver had a notice on his car saying 'No lesbians or drop outs'.

Missiles

The cruise missiles may have arrived but they still have to become operational and they still have to be taken out on the roads for trial runs.

When the missiles come out of the base on their road-wide lorries the ingenuity of the Greenham women will once again be given full reign to blockade and protest.

Greenham is going to continue to dominate the anti-missiles movement for weeks to come.

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The Greenham message spreads



Photo: BRENDA PRINCE (Format)

THE LEADING ROLE in the campaign against cruise played by the Greenham women has been recognised by many people in CND. The demonstrations outside the Houses of Parliament, and against Michael Heseltine, show that the Greenham message is spreading.

But Greenham women still have the edge on imagination. On Sunday 11 December they plan once again to surround the cruise missile base. It will be to mark the fourth anniversary of the NATO

decision to install a new generation of nuclear weapons in Europe.

This year women are being asked to bring pots, pans and whistles to make as much noise as possible. They are also being asked to bring mirrors to 'reflect' what's happening outside the base — where the trees and land are still untouched by the military preparations within.

On Monday 12 December CND plan to 'commemorate' the precise anniversary of the NATO decision by a day of lobbying and action to 'refuse cruise'.

CND will have leaflets and posters available for the Greenham women's action by Friday.

Crisis in El Salvador as US prepares Nicaragua war



Salvador's army is in a state of collapse

WHEN AMERICA'S United Nations delegate Jean Kirkpatrick came back from El Salvador in January she told Reagan that the Salvadorean government was on the verge of collapse. Reagan responded by boosting US forces in El Salvador, and by preparing the invasion of Nicaragua.

The reasoning behind these moves was that in the short term it would be difficult to impose a complete defeat on the guerrillas in El Salvador, but a devastating blow could be struck at the revolution in the whole region by invading Nicaragua.

Throughout this year US-backed 'contras' have stepped up their attacks on Nicaragua from Honduras and Costa Rica. At the same time a massive 'pacification' project was launched in the San Vicente province of El Salvador — planned by the US.

The total collapse of the US counter-offensive in El Salvador has now become apparent. In the last month the FMLN guerrillas have taken the offensive in nine of the country's sixteen provinces. US advisors are talking about an imminent collapse of the Salvadorean army.

The facts speak for themselves — even the facts from US sources. Since September more than 60 town garrisons have been attacked. These attacks have opened up a huge corridor in the north of the country in which the guerrillas can move freely. So great is their freedom of movement that US sources say guerrilla columns are now moving by day in trucks, rather than at night by foot.

The most disturbing fact for the United States is that the 24,000 government troops and National Guard are showing less and less willingness to actually fight. Two weeks ago the FMLN attacked

the garrison at Tejutepaque, 37 miles north of the capital. The 180 soldiers fled to nearby Ilobasco and changed into civilian clothes.

By Phil Hearse

A US military advisor commented: 'A 180-man unit in defence position should be able to hold out if they have their positions and stay and fight'. Two companies sent to reinforce the fleeing troop were ambushed on their way.

The same sort of thing happened the following day in the large town of Ciudad Barrios in San Miguel province. The 80 National Guardsmen fled from the town six hours after the attack began, and unwittingly wandered into guerrilla-held territory. Two companies who were sent to relieve Ciudad Barrios — 'elite' brigades who had just returned from training in Honduras — were ambushed in the same way as the relievers in Tejutepaque.

Worst of all is the total collapse of the US project in San Vicente province which was advertised as a 'make or break' Vietnam-style operation to create fortified villages, feed the

population and concentrate military fire power to drive out the FMLN. This project was meant to 'show what the El Salvador army could do'. Unfortunately for the US it has done just that. 'The whole thing just sort of fizzled out' said one US advisor 'the guerrillas have come back to San Vicente'.

The frustrations of the army are however creating a new upsurge in the activity of the right wing death squads. Hundreds of people have been found butchered in the streets of San Salvador in the last few months.

Last week a new brutal massacre of 180 peasants by the 'elite' Atlacatl brigade was uncovered in the San Nicolas area. John Carlin reported from the hamlet in last Friday's *Times*: 'As our group of journalists approached a small house some 30 startled vultures — a sight common in El Salvador — flapped out of a hole in the roof.'

'The floor of the house was covered in putrified human remains ... we counted about 20 skulls among the carpet of well-picked bones. A guerrilla accompanying our group, automatic pistol in belt, told me that the slaughter was "a symptom of the army's agony at its inability to defeat us on the battlefield".'

A further symptom of the decay in the army and government has been the silent 'coup' carried out by right wing officers in the army. The army has long been a battlefield for faction fights between pro-American officers and

even more ultra-right groups, many of whom have direct links with the fascist ARENA party and the death squads.

Now the pro-American army leader Casanova finds himself surrounded by right wingers, and virtually powerless to control the army's actions. San Salvador has been swept for a month by rumours of an impending military coup to overthrow the government of President Magana.

Obstacle

One response to the deteriorating military position has however been the massing of troops from Guatemala and Honduras on the border with El Salvador. They could be used to invade the liberated zones in the north of the country, trying to catch the FMLN guerrillas in a pincer movement.

While reeling from these setbacks, the US has been pushing ahead with its plans for the overthrow of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. In addition to its 6000 troops in Honduras and its two battlefleets on either coast of Nicaragua, the US now plans to send 1000 troops to Costa Rica — thus completely surrounding Nicaragua. The Costa Rican President has declared his country to be 'neutral' and stated he will not allow it to be used in wars between neighbouring states.

But his government has shown itself powerless to stop the activities of the ARDE anti-Sandinista guerrillas operating from

their territory for two years.

The former ARDE commander, Eden Pastora, in a surprise development has warned the United States against invading Nicaragua and stated that 'any invasion will be resisted by all Nicaraguans'.

Inside Nicaragua preparations for an American-backed invasion are extensive. In addition to the introduction of conscription, the local Sandinista Defence Committees (CDSs) are organising new civil defence brigades. The civil defence brigades are learning the techniques of fire fighting, air raid defence, and making arrangements for looking after children, the old and infirm when an attack comes.

The truth about the defeats being suffered by the US-backed army in El Salvador makes an attack on Nicaragua more, and not less, likely. Reagan is thought to want a Nicaraguan 'provisional government' in place by the New Year in a captured Nicaraguan town.

The people of Nicaragua can hardly prevent thousands of marines, backed by hundreds of planes, coming across their borders. But an invasion will meet a people determined to resist to the last. There is no hope at all for Reagan for a quick military victory.

Defending Nicaragua is now the key task for all those who support the fight for the people of Central America for social justice and progress.

US fleet for Iran attack?

THE HUGE build up of American military might off the coast of Lebanon may not just be for use against Syria and the Palestinians. There is increasing evidence of an attempt to put military pressure on the Iranian government, deeply embroiled in its long and bloody war with Iraq.

So far at least a quarter of a million people have been killed in this war. Yet neither government has been brought down.

The immediate danger for the West is that if the Iraqis attack the Iranian oil terminals at Kharg Island, then the Khomeini regime has threatened to close the straits of Hormuz. Over 40 per cent of Japan's oil and a similar amount of US oil go through the Straits.

The threat to the Iranian installations comes from the Exocet missiles and Super-Etendard planes recently supplied to Iran by France. Diplomatic observers claim that France fully consulted the United States before making these sales.

Iran is in a much better situation to fight a prolonged war than Iraq — it has three times the population and its economy has not been so hard hit by the war. Iraq therefore needs a rapid strike in order to

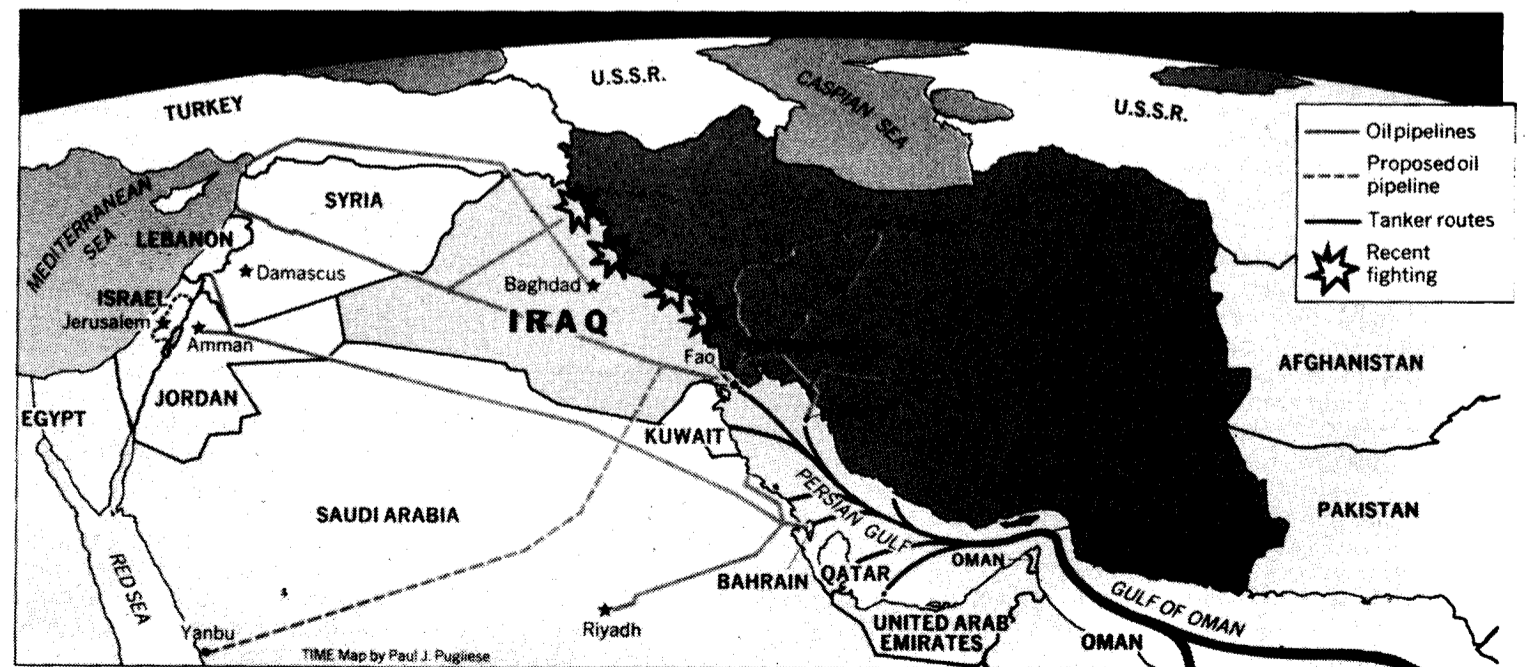
strengthen its position in any settlement.

By Paul Lawson

The United States and the other Western powers have probably given up the hope of bringing down the Islamic government in Iran — in the short term. Trade between many Western states and Iran is expanding rapidly, as the Iranian economy begins to recover. But the West does want to stop the war and force Iran to negotiate.

Iran is a powerful ally of Syria, itself a strong ally of the Soviet Union. So the West certainly does not want to allow a crushing Iranian victory, which would strengthen the Syrian-Iranian axis.

Moreover, the West sees the whole war as a fac-



Map shows how oil from the Gulf states passes through Straits of Hormuz

tor which destabilises the region. For example, Turkey, a member of NATO, has territorial claims against Syria and has built up links with Iran. The prospect of a

NATO power being involved in this was has horrific implications for the United States.

Both the United States and Saudi Arabia have vowed to keep the Straits

of Hormuz open. There is no doubt whatever that Egypt, itself a strong supporter of Iraq in the war, would happily allow the United States fleet to go through the Suez Canal to

attack the Iranian navy if the Straits were closed.

Socialists of course do not give political support to the Khomeini regime. But any attack would be part of America's attempt

to keep the region safe for capitalist domination and imperialist profits. It should be fought just as much as the US aggression against Lebanon and Grenada.

Sinn Fein Ard Fheis

THE CAMPAIGN behind the hunger strikers in 1981 raged throughout Ireland's 32 counties and created a new and exciting development inside the Republican movement.

A layer of younger leaders associated with the gains of the mass struggle and the influence of Marxist politics came to the fore in Sinn Fein. This new leadership, whilst being formed in a traditional Republican mould, nevertheless has actively challenged many of the assumptions of that movement particularly in insisting upon the importance of political struggle.

Understanding the need to become identified as a socialist Republican current has not taken Sinn Fein along the same path of Stalinist degeneration of the Workers Party.

Recent developments caused Tory minister James Prior to warn of a 'Cuba on Britain's doorstep' casting Gerry Adams in the role of Fidel Castro. From Dublin, MARTIN COLLINS reports.

SINN FEIN'S Ard Fheis (conference) attracted widespread coverage in both the Irish and British press. High drama was made of the transfer of power from Ruairi O'Bradaigh to the 'Belfast men' led by Gerry Adams. It was a power tussle which Adams himself tried hard to play down.

O'Bradaigh and the man most closely associated with him for the past 13 years — Daithi O'Connell — allowed the Adams team to take the reins in an unopposed election. In statements to the conference, both men described a two year battle over policies which had made their position untenable. In a gesture which almost certainly had the approval of the IRA Army Council, the feared split was averted.

It was a conference of great atmosphere and enthusiasm. Despite the absence of openly organised tendencies and factions which could give expression and clarification of divergent views, the conference was surprisingly free of the bureaucratic entanglements that dominate Labour Party or trade union conferences in Britain.

Resolutions to conference coming



from both branches and leadership were printed in the agenda which is distributed in advance. Each cumann (branch) had spent two meetings working their way through this agenda, taking an attitude on resolutions before conference and electing delegates. These delegates, mandated by the branch votes, were free to change their votes according to the debate on condition that this be reported back afterwards.

Trade union leaders and elected representatives took their place in the queue to speak alongside rank and file delegates. The decision-making process of conference was held openly before the press and TV cameras free of petty restrictions, despite the Free State Constitution which bans Sinn Fein from TV appearances.

Although there were no slates, the leadership was elected by secret ballot.

Issues however were clear. Was Sinn Fein to re-adopt the traditionalist vision of a decentralised federal Ireland, or go further along the road in deepening its commitment to a democratic socialist republic? Conference decisively chose the latter. By a three to one majority, Sinn Fein ruled out what was called a Stalinist ban on further discussion of its constitution and rules.

It used the opportunity to chart the objectives of the party along the lines of 'socialist Republican', rather than 'Christian' principles. In a symbolic move, conference replaced the

'decade of the rosary' at public commemorations by a moment's silence, allowing each individual to remember the dead in their own way.

Adams returned to the theme of secularism in his first presidential address, giving the lie to those that claim Irish nationalists are only interested in extending the role of the Catholic hierarchy to the occupied six counties. 'Protestant workers should consider', he said 'the fact that the Catholic hierarchy has spent more time warning against us, than they have against the devil'.

With 30 councillors in the South, and two in the North as well as five elected Assembly representatives and Gerry Adams MP for West Belfast, this was an occasion to evaluate electoral experiences. The last year has seen Sinn Fein displacing the collaborationist SDLP as the voice of the nationalist community in the North, achieving 45 per cent of the vote. Advice centres and local organisations were seen to be thriving in those areas where elections had been contested, deepening the base in the community.

The longstanding Republican shibboleth of abstentionism for the sake of it was further eaten away as delegates voted overwhelmingly not only to 'contest the forthcoming EEC elections in Ireland with an anti-imperialist policy of opposition to the EEC' but also to carry on that fight by taking seats if elected. Both Gerry Adams and Owen Carron made plain

their commitment that this was in no way to be seen as the thin end of the wedge.

Ruairi O'Bradaigh said that even to discuss going into Leinster House, Stormont or Westminster would be 'as alien as the IRA discussing surrender or laying down its arms'. He did not want to start 'converting a revolutionary party into a constitutional party'. Despite the motion to reaffirm the ban on any discussion of abstentionism being lost, it did not get the two thirds majority required to change the constitution.

On trade union policy there was change. For the first time, the Republican movement recognised the fact that despite its bureaucratic leadership, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions must be recognised as a mass organisation of the Irish working class. Supporters were urged to play a role in their unions, fighting for the ICTU to return to the socialist Republican policies of James Connolly if it was to act for working people. Conference sent messages of support to the Clondalkin workers in their fight against closure and condemning the patterns of multinational investment that led to 200,000 unemployed in the South.

There was, however, a note of pessimism about the significance of the wave of industrial struggles in the South, which are the most militant fightback against government austerity in Europe and create a massive

political crisis for the coalitionist Labour Party. It would indeed be unfortunate if the Republican movement were to correct past mistakes by beginning to fight for national demands inside union structures, only to ignore the potential for doing the same thing among the hundreds of thousands of rank and file workers who are in struggle.

This current has a thousand times more of a dynamic towards anti-imperialism than the trade union leaders, who talk about partition when the workers are fighting unemployment and about unemployment when workers are fighting partition.

Conference called for the British TUC to stop being transfixed by the Loyalist domination of the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU and work to end the Unionist veto. Trade unionists should, they said, inform the international trade union movement about the facts of British occupation of the North, trying to get the British TUC to support withdrawal.

Increasing organisation of Sinn Fein's trade union orientation and planned initiatives seem to indicate much scope for extending the dialogue reached through Ken Livingstone and the Labour Committee on Ireland to militant trade unionists in Ireland and Britain.

Despite the failure of Sinn Fein to campaign against the reactionary anti-abortion Amendment in the South, women have played an important role in the development of the left within Sinn Fein. One achievement of the conference was to get rid of the myth that just because Republicans don't support the Free State Constitution, they have to abstain on amendments to it. In future, it was agreed, issues and referenda would be assessed on their economic, political or social merit.

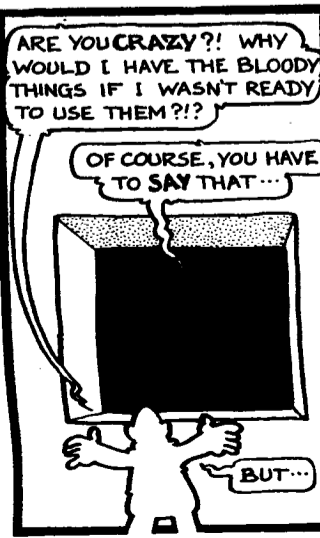
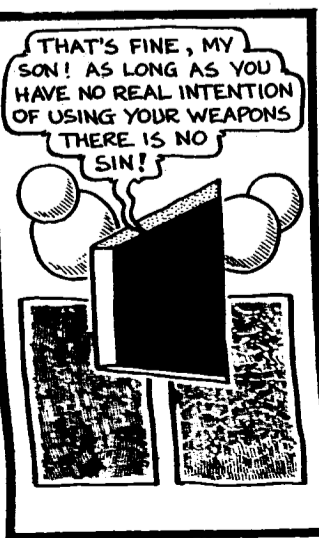
It was disappointing after that clarification that a motion to remove 'total opposition to abortion' from the programme was not carried. By a two to one majority, the section was amended, deleting the word 'total'.

A number of improvements in the organisation of Sinn Fein make it less likely that this position will remain permanent. The 'Women's Affairs' department changed its name to the 'Women's Department', in recognition of the need for the autonomous organisation of women inside Sinn Fein to combat all aspects of their oppression.

The leadership was instructed to convene a conference of advice centre workers to draw up guidelines for dealing with violence against women in the home. Sinn Fein men especially were told to get involved with the provision of childcare both in the community and in the party itself as women had identified childcare as a major factor inhibiting their political involvement and development.

Gerry Adams introduced discussion on the need for positive action, and after full discussion it was not only agreed to avoid sexual typecasting of women into traditional roles, but to actively discriminate in favour of women; to promote women as both candidates in elections and officers of the party, and to reserve at least 25 per cent of the leadership seats for women.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION



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Books

Battle for Bermondsey

PETER TACHELL's book *Battle for Bermondsey* deals with the history of that constituency from 1978 to 1983. This is when the South London party went through momentous changes culminating in the Liberals winning the seat in the by-election and retaining it again in June this year.

It became a national focus for people fighting the witch hunt after Foot's denunciation of Tatchell and it symbolised the preparedness of the local parties to fight for their rights, like selecting their parliamentary candidate. The story is both moving and useful. It describes the depths to which the national party, other political parties, individuals and especially the press were prepared to go to defeat Peter Tatchell.

Reviewed by Jane Kelly

On the other side it tells of the support and solidarity that people both inside and outside the Labour Party gave to him and his CLP. Most disgusting of all is the record of the Labour Party. They never replied to the attacks on his sexual orientation. In fact Walworth Road seemed determined he should get beaten.

First they refused to endorse his candidature, putting pressure on the party to select someone else. During the election campaign they ordered the pulping of his leaflet — because it had been printed on the *Militant's* press! Oh how the right-wing press loved that. Then they threw another gift to the press by expelling five members of the *Militant* editorial board the day before voting.

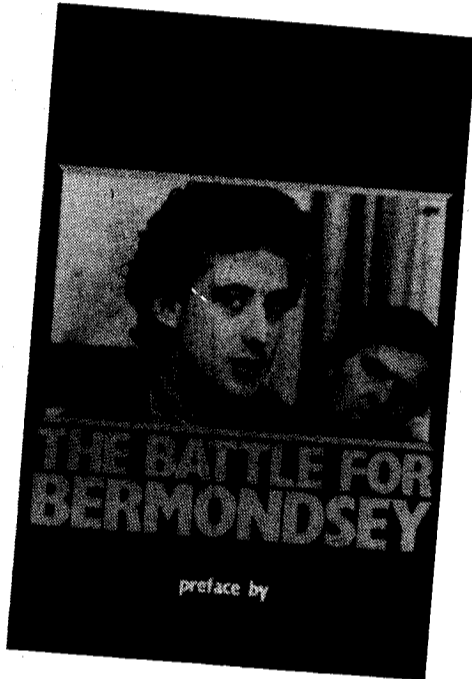
Despite all these back stabs Peter has still written a positive book. It tries to understand why these taudry episodes happened and to come to grips with Labour's decline. The book is therefore interspersed with the author's own political ideas both on the type of Labour Party that is needed and the policies it should have so that it can 're-invent' its socialism.

Two issues run through the book. They are the relationship between extra-parliamentary action and parliament, and between sexual politics and public life. The first is

what Foot got so uptight about. Tatchell thinks that it is an essential part of any move toward socialism. He sees it as a process that will complete the unfinished democratic revolution...in which the people

'to defend our civil liberties, trade union freedom and right to self determination.'

An equally uncomfortable stance is taken in regard towards his own sexuality. Feeling that it was not an 'ideal' situation, he tried to deflect attacks on his sexual preferences by a generalised support of gay rights. This was futile. The press used 'guilt by association'



have supreme power over the whole of society.

He says it would mean 'the transfer of military allegiance to...the House of Commons and remove the monarch's sovereignty over the state'. Unfortunately he is silent on how this can be done because the book does not have an analysis of class society and class struggle. Does Peter think that the ruling class will stand idly by whilst power is taken away from them and their military or while parliament is used to vote in socialism?

Despite his protestations about *Militant* this 'road to socialism' does have the smell of *Militant's* Enabling Act. His lack of a class analysis shows in his attitude to imperialist war. He tries to differentiate between the war in Vietnam which, as an Australian, he bravely refused to fight in and the last world war which he says he would have done

anyway grabbing the phrase he had handed them, 'a supporter of gay rights'.

He suffered both personally and politically from innuendo, by graffiti and O'Grady's obscene song. But he also suffered because of his own attempts to avoid a personal confrontation.

This meant he had to accept society's definition of normality. It is an object lesson, not just in how deep-rooted anti-gay attitudes are in society, but of the vital importance to face them head on. Perhaps Peter Tatchell's campaign suffered not so much from being too radical, but rather from a timidity and a lack of belief in his own convictions.

However what does come over in the book is the dignity and restraint which is to be admired and even wondered at after the vilification he had to endure.

is called a 'tongue-in-cheek' comedy series about a group of trendy lefts who take power in a fictional London borough. You only have to know that it's written by Peter Jenkins of the *Guardian* to get what it's all about.

It may as well have come straight from the SDP Central Office. Nor do you have to be a genius to realise that it's Islington council that's being pilloried. Still, socialists aren't afraid of a good joke, but it remains to be seen whether the series will turn out remotely funny.



Race and Class

racism by the state — 'the turning of cases into issues'. Examples of this are the Bradford 12 trial, the murder of Blair Peach, the New Cross Massacre and the case of Colin Roach.

While all this needs to be said, it doesn't get us very far. Turning cases into issues is certainly the stage which the anti-racist struggle is going through. This is because cases can be used to highlight racism and bring it into the open, and because black people and white anti-racists find it difficult to confront racism in general. The days of anti-racist committees and even the Anti-Nazi League are gone for the time being.

But the campaigns over cases and the activity around 'ethnic rights' have something in common, despite the fact that the former are usually militant and run by black people and the latter are usually liberal and run by a mixture of whites and black bureaucrats. Both types of

activity raise demands for democratic rights to be extended to black people and in doing so they make it more difficult for racism to be used to divide the working class.

While some of the ethnic programmes are an attempt to head off black militancy, others are a concession to it — gains won by black militancy. To reject them altogether is to hand them over to the black bureaucrats in the race relations industry who are paid by the state.

As usual the current issue of *Race and Class* suffers from too much rhetoric but the articles on police strategy are important for people who are opposing the Police Bill. However it is unfortunate that many of the accounts and insights into state racism are spoilt by the hopeless attitude that the Institute of Race Relations, publishers of *Race and Class*, has towards the working class struggle.

Race and Class special issue, Institute of Race Relations, £2.

MANY so-called socialists seem to be embarrassed to use the word 'racism' in case they sound too extreme and upset somebody. Instead of talking about racism, they talk about 'the disadvantages suffered by ethnic minorities'.

But it's not just socialists who have become pre-occupied with 'the rights of ethnic minorities' over the last few years. After the inner city riots of 1981 the signal was given by Lord Scarman that ethnic minorities were a valid area of concern for sections of the police and even the Tory establishment.

But all this 'ethnic' stuff is not just a product of cowardice by 'socialists'

who are afraid of tackling racism in the working class. What is involved is an attempt to reduce social tensions and integrate black people into British society. The attempt to create a black middle class by setting up Community Relations Councils and other such set-ups is now boosted by 'ethnic TV' and various projects of local councils.

By Ivor Evans

This is the theme of A. Sivanandan in the main article in this special issue of *Race and Class*. Sivanandan wants to 'return ethnicity to anti-racism and socialism to Labour'. He thinks the main strategy for the anti-racist struggle now is campaigning over individual cases of

Records

That's entertainment?

IT'S THURSDAY, it's *Top of the Pops* and it's 40 minutes of reheated moozack for armchair groovers. If you were at a meeting then maybe this is lost on you, but can anyone tell me what Billy Joel is doing dressed in greasy overalls singing into a spanner?

What is all this sexist Uptown Girl junk? And this guy is number one in the charts. Some people think Billy Joel's music is self-indulgent crap, but I think they are just being soft on him.

By Ian Hawkins

The rest of the programme doesn't hold a lot more hope. Still, just when you thought the British charts were in a depression the oh-so-twee Jonathan King pops up each week from the States and tries to persuade us that white American rock isn't dead when anybody can see that rigor mortis set in years ago.

Luckily for Mr King no one notices his morbid musical taste because we all are blinded by his rather lively anorak — a chic inflatable number that presumably sleeps four.

Happily there are some exceptions to the rule: Culture Club for one. Now I thought *Karma Chameleon* was annoying-



Boy George

ly catchy but Boy George has played the music business and the media at their own game. He has teased the tabloids' sexual stereotypes and smiled his way through each cleverly arranged song. The album *Colour by Numbers* shows a range and subtlety of his voice and will sell crate loads.

Where Boy George treads gently, Annie Lennox of the Eurythmics confronts a startled audience, one moment as a

man — then next as a woman and rips anyone who doubts her to shreds.

Eurythmics has let Annie Lennox show the world that she is the most powerful British singer for decades, towering over every note, making you laugh one minute, bringing a lump to your throat the next. *Right by your Side* breaks all previous Christmas rules, a single that only she could bring off. Game, set and match to Ms Lennox.

Finally by way of contrast some second-hand luke warm gossip. The Rolling Stones' — remember them — new record *Undercover* has been released with a video deemed to be too violent for TV. When asked why, one Mick Jagger said 'It reflects the situation in El Salvador'.

'But,' asks the astute interviewer: 'How much of the royalties are going to the El Salvadorians?' Mick just never got round to answering that.

TV CHOICE

Flashback
Saturday 26 November
6.30, Channel 4

FOLLOWING last week's programme on the early days of CND, the series moves to the 'year of protest'. *Street Fighting Man 1968* examines the media coverage of demonstrations and riots in Britain, the US, France and Ireland making it a must for those readers active at the time.

The programme particularly concentrates on the big anti-Vietnam war demos of 17 March and 27 October in London. It shows how the TV companies went out of their way to record any violence they could find, whilst largely ignoring the issues behind the marches.

Struggle

Sunday 27 November
8.45, Channel 4
THIS IS the first of what

R.A.F Greenham Common



Dual key fraud

AS THE DEBATE in the Commons over the installation of Cruise missiles has reached its crescendo, both Owen of the SDP and Labour's Denis Healey have advocated a 'dual key' for the missiles. The argument is that Britain and the United States should share physical control of the missiles — two parallel systems would have to be activated before the missiles could be launched.

By Phil Hearse

What Denis Healey is doing advocating joint control of missiles that the Labour Party is opposed to anyway is somewhat obscure. Healey argues that 'you demand different things of the Tories than what you do yourself in government'. He obviously didn't quite understand the irony contained in those words.

At any rate, he had no business doing anything other than opposing the missiles lock, stock and barrel.

Even some Tory backbenchers inclined towards a 'dual key'. But the problem with their position is that in reality, the United States always has control of its own nuclear weapons, and they are never subject to anyone else's veto.

It isn't just the use of cruise missiles which could land Britain in a nuclear war. The United States has exclusive say on whether the hundreds of nuclear weapons on board US bombers stationed in Britain will be used. It has exclusive say on whether the missiles on US submarines based at Holy Loch will be used. And it has exclusive say on whether the hundreds of nuclear

weapons in West Germany will be used, dragging Britain into a nuclear war.

Exclusive control of all its military forces has always been an American position, and there is no reason at all why it will change over cruise missiles.

The problem with the dual key demand is that it begins to establish conditions in which the missiles will somehow be acceptable. In any case, there are important technical doubts about whether a dual key could work at all. The speed with which a nuclear war could develop, given the eight minutes flight time of Pershing missiles from West Germany to the Soviet Union shows that. And the British government could never be sure that the United States could not find a way of launching the missiles anyway.

The motivations behind the dual key proposal are nevertheless interesting. David Owen proposes dual key as part of the co-called 'dual track' view of the Western Alliance. The proponents of dual track argue that without banding together, the individual European states will always be overruled by the US in matters of policy and strategy. Dual track means keeping the alliance with the USA, but building a powerful European political and economic unity to oppose the American colossus.

To carry through such a dual track project would require much closer European military liaison than is now the case. But there are interesting signs that this is now the thinking of political leaders in several European countries.

Last winter the French government floated the idea that its missiles, rather than United States' Pershings, could protect West Germany against Soviet attack.

German CSU leader Franz-Joseph Strauss supports the dual key demand — but as a first step towards Germany itself having nuclear weapons. And Gaullist leader Chirac has himself come out in favour of West Germany even-

tually being given its own nuclear bomb, as part of a process of strengthening the political and military independence of the European capitalist powers.

Against all these developments, the United States will of course insist on maintaining its military superiority, and its complete freedom of action. History shows that the US first of all insists on defending its own interests, without bothering to consult anyone else.

When the 1973 Yon Kippur war broke out in the Middle East, the United States put its forces world-wide on the highest stage of military alert. Henry Kissinger went to bed without bothering to tell America's NATO allies about this small development which could have landed them all in a nuclear war.

When Kissinger and Nixon decided to make a big turn towards diplomatic relations with China, the US's close ally Japan received precisely 24-hours notice of the announcement of Nixon's trip of Peking. In 1964, when the United States began the bombing of North Vietnam — which eventually resulted in the bombing of Russian ships in Haiphong harbour — there was no consultation whatever with the United States' allies.

The demand for a dual key is one which should be opposed by the peace movement. It is quite right of course to oppose Britain being turned into the United States unsinkable aircraft carrier. But dual key won't change that one bit, so long as Britain has 102 US bases dozens of US nuclear bombers and US submarines in Scotland.

Dual key is not a 'lesser evil' demand. It is a position which allows for the inestimable and unqualified evil of cruise missiles being in Britain. Neither socialists nor the peace movement as a whole can ever accept that. Reagan plus Thatcher's finger on the trigger equals war — not nuclear disarmament.





Don't freeze the missile move



Photo: JOHN HARRIS



Photo: JOANNE O'BRIEN (Format)

THE ANNUAL conference of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in December will be its biggest yet with more than 2000 delegates. But will it be its last before CND's support begins to decline?

A large section of the leadership of the peace movement is preparing for a retreat, or the 'long haul'. DICK WITHECOMBE, a leading activist from Manchester Area CND, looks at the debates within CND and argues that such a retreat must be resisted at this year's conference.

The cruise missiles have now started arriving, the general election brought back the Tories and Reagan seems hell-bent on getting back to the good old days of Vietnam. No wonder there is now a raging debate in CND — what do we do now?

EP Thompson started the first rounds of this debate, with his pamphlet *Defence of the Nation*, published mid-way through the general election. In his most pessimistic mood he urged a new direction on the peace movement: cast off fundamentalist unilateralism, distance ourselves from the Labour Party and embrace a new anti-nuclear re-armament coalition with the Liberals, SDP and wet Tories.

Since then the popular expression of this has been the freeze campaign. Countless articles have explained this position in *Sanity*, CND's monthly journal, and it was one of the main slogans on the 22 October demonstration.

These retreats are out of tune with the commitment being shown by the thousands of activists in the peace movement over the last weeks in opposition to cruise. The demonstration of 400,000 on 22 October was undoubtedly a highpoint of CND's history. During the same week more than two million people marched through Europe; in Germany and

Holland hundreds of thousands of workers took 'warning strike' action.

However, some believe that these actions are CND's swan-song. Dan Smith, writing in *Sanity*, has pointed to the need to prepare for a 'long haul' after the arrival of cruise. He urges steps to disarmament that take up, in the short term, 'achievable demands'. No, not a clear cut demand to get rid of cruise and cancel Trident. Rather the approach is to start with what is agreeable to our friends in the SDP et al.

At the moment this current of opinion has been concentrating in CND around the freeze demand. But other issues are also raised. CND, they say, should focus its campaigning on demands for a dual key, negotiations and for no first use agreements.

Former CND chairperson, John Cox, has pointed out in *Sanity* that this type of approach was a disaster in the 1960's. CND went behind the demand for a 'partial test ban treaty', and when the Americans signed such a treaty, CND nose-dived.

Freeze

The discussion about the freeze slogan will be the main debate at CND conference. A ballot of CND groups put the Scottish CND pro-freeze campaign resolution top of the poll for debate over all other issues. The freeze, it is argued, is a very achievable demand — even the US Congress and the United Nations have adopted this position, after all. The problem is that two months later the US Congress then passed the budget for the first ten MX missiles!

Adopting the freeze campaign, after the arrival of cruise, would be tantamount to saying that the campaign to get rid of cruise has to be postponed to another future stage. Try saying that to the hundreds of people arrested in actions against the arrival of cruise over the last two weeks, to the Greenham movement and to the mass of CND activists whose hard work built 22 October!

Action CND is proposing the freeze amendment to this resolution. In effect this deletes all reference to the freeze, leaving a number of excellent proposals for CND to step up its campaigning against Trident. Greater Manchester District CND has also submitted an

emergency resolution calling for the freeze to be dropped as a campaigning slogan. This is already supported by a growing number of CND groups, areas and regions.

The main weakness of the resolutions to this year's CND conference are the lack of proposals on how to campaign to get rid of cruise now that it has arrived. The fact that resolutions had to be submitted by June no doubt contributed to this!

The tendency towards increasingly diverse and localised actions will be very strong next year. The grass roots base and imagination of the movement has always been one of the strengths of CND. But it has always been kept together as a mass movement by major actions such as the October demonstrations, 6 June last year, and the 'embrace the base' and 'human chain' events at Greenham.

The current orientation of the leadership of CND to water down our demands and to change our campaigning methods to those of pressure politics, so as not to alienate a potential broad base (the SDP, Liberals and wet Tories), is a dangerous attack on the unity of the movement. This has been reflected by the increasing central control of the movement by the CND Executive which has led to the closure of Youth CND and Labour CND committees. Emergency resolutions to CND conference against these closures will provide CND activists with an opportunity to call a halt to these attacks on the democracy of the peace movement.

A resolution and amendment on *Sanity* also attempts to reverse its use as a mouthpiece for the new thinking of the leadership, by opening it up to grass roots debate and give it a more popular, campaigning appeal.

Peckham CND, in a resolution on NATO, criticise the leadership for its failure to implement the proposals to increase the campaigning for CND's position on NATO which was passed last year. Unfortunately, the other resolution attempts to change CND policy on NATO, tying British withdrawal to the dissolution of the Warsaw pact. Amendments attempt to introduce the strategy previously urged by Don Smith and Mary Kaldor, of a non-nuclear NATO.

Socialists in CND should be to the fore in arguing for and building the

maximum unity in the movement. This means-defending CND's programme and campaigning methods. Unilateral nuclear disarmament has proved to be the bed-rock for the existence of CND for the last 20 years. Our campaigning slogans against cruise and Trident have seen us grow to a mass movement in the last four years.

This also means arguing for overwhelming support for the mass demonstration of women at Greenham on 11 December, for support for the national anti-Trident convention in February and for another mass CND demonstration in June next year to coincide with the European elections and the many disarmament actions being planned throughout Europe.

Labour

The composite resolution on the labour movement, calls on CND to organise such a mass demonstration jointly with the TUC, Labour Party and the National Union of Students early next year. Both this resolution and one of the two amendments also call for the development of strike action in the form of 'warning strikes' of the sort that took place in Europe in October.

The other amendment, from TUCND, puts back such action until more education work has been done amongst union members. This tends to evade the real question: six million trade unionists are affiliated to CND and the LP and TUC conferences last year both called for a labour movement day of action in 1983. When are the bureaucrats in the labour movement going to put paper policy into the type of action that will get rid of cruise?

The CND leadership commands tremendous respect in the peace movement. For four years the movement has grown massively, and achieved many successes. It is therefore difficult to predict to what extent CND conference will call a halt to their retreats. But what is clear is that the left wing of the movement — the activists in the 1000 plus local groups, the Greenham movement and the youth — now need to start to organise to defend the unity of the movement and its programme, slogans and campaigning methods. We can start at CND conference, and by building for 11 December at Greenham.

MALE ORDER

Men's committee

IN AN angry letter to last week's issue of *Tribune* Audrey Wise revealed that the first meeting of the NEC 'women's committee' had to be abandoned.

Why? Because both Jo Richardson and Renee Short were nominated for chair and tied with six votes each. Doug Hoyle proposed that Audrey should take

the chair for that meeting only, but national agent David Hughes disagreed.

Backed by Neil 'Unity' Kinnock — well known by readers of this column as a principled defender of women's liberation — Hughes declared that the 'women's committee' had to be abandoned and a report made to the NEC.

And if you're wondering why the women's committee appears in quotation marks, it's because there are eight men and seven women on it! Mind you, that's an improvement on the original proposals for membership which would have resulted in a committee of thirteen — nine men and four women!

Ape shit

YOU WILL remember Lesley Courcouf, a delegate to the Labour Party conference from Hackney who dared to complain about sexist heckling and was hounded by the press for her pains.

Michael White in the *Guardian* 'reported': 'At the start of business there were regrettable allegations of sexual harassment in Block K where delegates representing the cream of organised labour had their seats. A bit of a stunner from Hackney complained that she had been addressed as darling and dearie...'

In a letter to *The Guardian* Heather

Downs and Colleen Ryan wrote: 'Having read Michael White's horrendous Brighton Sketch may we, as members of Hackney North and Stoke Newington Labour Party women's section, trouble you to point out that our delegate to conference, Lesley Courcouf, was not selected on the basis of her physical appearance.'

'The persistent trivialisation of the issues of sexism would seem to be in direct conflict with your alleged position as demonstrated in, for example, Naked Ape. Could this be tokenism we wonder?'

White's reply was written direct to Heather and Colleen and is most illuminating.

'Having read your well-meant but horrendous letter in today's *Guardian* may I plead guilty to having written the offending paragraph with the express purpose of trying to signal to readers other than yourselves that not everyone has completely lost their sense of proportion about women's issues on *The Guardian*, though without subjecting your friend Lesley Courcouf to ridicule....'

'As for the Naked Ape, well I am increasingly suspicious that half the adverts which now appear in the column are specifically designed to. Why pay for an ad in *Exchange and Mart* when you can get it into *The Guardian* — for free folks! Certainly many of

the items included were obviously intended as self-parody in the first place.

Tokenism

'And finally to tokenism: I can't speak for the Editor or the Women's Editor (is Naked Ape still edited by a man?) but I do know that if half the stories of social deprivation in your part of London are true, then to have wasted time complaining about being called "dear" or "darling" at Labour conference is what I call real tokenism. I hope the voters of Hackney forgive you. I am in no hurry to.' (Heather Downs and Colleen Ryan)

DIARY

(These listings are free for all major labour movement and campaign activities — up to maximum of 50 words. Semi-display advertisements cost 5p per word and must be paid in advance. Send to: *Diary*, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday, one week prior to publication).

International

● **Yolocamba I-Ta** (direct from El Salvador) and **High Life International**: Central America and Africa meet in concert at Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1 on Fri 25 November, 7pm. Tickets £3/£2 unwaged from ELSSOC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1, 01-359 3976. Benefit for El Salvador and Chile Solidarity Campaigns.

Advertisement



For a Reagan-free Caribbean

Reagan Free Caribbean badges in yellow, black and red. 25p each (plus postage); bulk orders 20p each. Money with orders to PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8. Cheques/POs payable to Hackney Book Club.

● **An Evening for El Salvador** Sun 4 Dec, Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, 7.30pm. A cabaret with Julie Christie, The Flying Pickets, The Jokeys, Leon Rosselson, Peggy Seeger & Ewan MacColl, Emma Thompson, Yolocamba I-Ta, Andy de la Tour. Tickets £4 or £6 from ELSSOC (see above).

Socialist ACTION

Join the fight for socialism

If you want more information about Socialist Action or to be put in touch with local supporters send this form to Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1.

● **No Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean (NICAC)** is a broad based coalition of solidarity groups, human rights orgs, aid agencies and political parties. More details from NICAC 20/21 Compton Terrace, London N1 01-226 6747.

● **Hounslow Socialist Forum** series of meetings on the internationalisation of the world economy and of conflict: 27 Nov **The crisis in Israel and its effects on the Middle East** introduced by Moshe Machover (member of *Khamsin* editorial board); 11 Dec **The orchestration of violence and repression** with speakers from Southern Africa, Latin America & Palestine. All meetings Sundays, 7.15pm, George IV pub, 185 Chiswick High Rd, W4 (Turnham Green tube).

● **Nobody's Backyard** — week of action on Central America, 27 Nov to 3 Dec. For details write to Nobody's Backyard, 4 Replingham Rd, London SW18.

● **The Nobody's Backyard Party** with Latin American food, drink, disco and music with Barricada. Sat 26 Nov, 8-12pm, St Matthews Hall Brixton Hill, £1.50.

● **Memorial Assembly** to pay tribute to the Cuban and Grenadian construction workers killed by US forces. Sun 27 Nov, 6.30pm, County Hall, London SE1. Organised by the Political Cttee of CRS London Region.

● **From War in the Third World to the Third World War** — new pamphlet published by El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 50p. Order from ELSSOC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1 01-359 3976. ELSSOC have also produced a 1984 calendar showing scenes from life in the liberated zones, £3 from same address.

● **Labour Group for Human Rights in Sri Lanka** public meeting with Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Rajes Balasubramaniyam (Labour Group/Tamil Women's League) John Chocwatt (ASTMS) & speaker from EELAM Solidarity Campaign. Thur 1 Dec, 7pm, Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, NW3

Advertisement

Critique public meetings

MARXISM AND NATIONALISM
Baruch Hirson, Alan Freeman, Duncan Hallas
Friday 2 December

DECLINE OF BRITAIN: THE END OF THE LABOUR PARTY?
James Hinton, Andrew Glynn, GAE Smith
Friday 6 January

HAS THE WORKING CLASS ANY FUTURE?
Michael Kidron, Barry Hindess, Richard Hyman, Hillel Ticktin
Friday 3 February

WHAT IS MARXIST ABOUT MARXIST POLITICAL ECONOMY?
Simon Clarke, Ben Fine, Sue Himmelweit, Hillel Ticktin
Friday 2 March

THE LIMITS OF LOCAL COUNCIL SOCIALISM
Robin Murray, Scott Meikle and others
Friday 6 April

Meetings chaired by Ahmad Ghotbi
All meetings at 7.30pm, ULU, Malet Street, London WC1
Critique: 31 Clevedon Rd, Glasgow G12 0PH

● **Labour Committee on Palestine annual national conference** Sat 26 Nov, Lambeth Town Hall. Speakers from PLO and Lebanese National Movement. For details contact Penny 01-274 8775

● **Grenada and Central America** public meeting Wed 30 Nov, 7.30pm, Acton Town Hall. Speakers: Fennis Augustine (Grenadan High Commissioner) and from Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign plus film 'El Salvador — Another Vietnam?'. Organised by Ealing-Acton Labour Party.

Ireland

● **Exhibition on plastic bullets** at Islington libraries: Manor Gdns 14-26 Nov; Finsbury 28 Nov-10 Dec. Organised by Islington TOM with Islington Council.

● **Labour Movement Conference on Ireland** — Peace through Democracy. Sat 26 Nov. Speakers include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, and Clive Soley.

● **Fighting for Irish freedom** Liverpool Irish Freedom Movement conference, 26 Nov. Speakers from Ireland and Britain on show trials, PTA, solidarity work etc. Transport available. Registration £1.50/£1 unwaged. For details phone 01-274 3951 or write to IFM, BM IFM, WC1n 3XX.

Disarmament

● **National CND Conference** in Sheffield, 13/14 Dec. For details contact CND 01-272 8896.

● **Women against cruise hearing** begins in US Federal Court — 21 Nov actions in USA and Britain. For details phone 01-720 1374.

● **Youth CND national day of action**, 26 Nov. For details contact YCND 11 Goodwin St, London N4 3HQ 01-272 0101.

● **'Sound around Greenham'** 11 Dec. National action at Greenham Common, women only. For details ring Manchester 061-225 7352 or 236 3112 or London 01-251 3133/226 6258.

Lesbian & Gay Liberation

● **London Lesbian & Gay Young Socialists** meet every four weeks on Sundays at 6pm, Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont St, WC1. Next meeting 11 Dec. Further details from Martin 01-263 9484.

● **London Labour Campaign for Gay Rights** Further details from Mike 01-659 2983 or Bob 01-341 0666.

● **Gay NUR group** just forming. For details of inaugural meeting write to

Gay NUR c/o 119 Southwyck, Coldharbour Lane, London SW9.

● **Lesbians in the Labour Party and trade unions** next national meeting Sat 26 Nov, 2pm, A Woman's Place, Victoria Embankment, London WC1 (Embankment tube). Creche available. Further details from Sarah Roelofs c/o Gays the Word bookshop, Marchmont St, London WC1.

● **Nottingham Labour Campaign for Gay Rights** meets monthly. Next meeting 21 Dec, 8pm, Salutation Inn, Maid Marion Way. Details: Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton 0602 780124.

Women's Liberation

● **Women and Unemployment** — a conference for unemployed women & women workers at Centres for the Unemployed in the south east. Sat 3 Dec, 9.30am-5pm, Congress Hse, Gt Russel St, London W1. With Jo Richardson MP, theatre, and workshops. Full details from Celia Minoughan, Guildford Unemployed Peoples Centre, The Old Police Station, 3a Leapale Rd, Guildford, Surrey 0483-33942.

Civil Rights

● **Southall Campaign against the Police Bill** public meeting. Speakers: Paul Boateng (Chair GLC Police Cttee); Jim McAllister (Sinn Fein); Baldev Gill (Southall Campaign against the Police Bill). Sat 26 Nov, 7pm, Mangat Hall, Villiers Rd, Southall. Contact the campaign at 01-843 0343.

● **Affront to public decency?** Come to the Gays against the Police Bill launch meeting at County Hall, 30 November, 8pm. Contact for details: Gay London Police Monitoring Groups on 01-278 6215.

Miscellaneous

● **Camden Labour Briefing Xmas social** Sat 10 Dec. The Cock Tavern, Charlton St, London NW1. 7pm to midnight, £1.

● **The political crisis in Britain** Camden Socialist Action forum with speaker John Ross. Wed 7 Dec, 8pm, Camden Labour Club, Carol St, NW1.

Anti-cuts campaigns

● **London Health Service Campaign**. 34 Dalston Lane, London E8 3AZ 01-249 8086.

● **Hayes Cottage Hospital Occupation Cttee**, Grange Rd, Hayes, Middx 01-573 5593.

● **Defend our public services! Defend the GLC!** Public meeting Wed 30 Nov, 7.45pm, Heathlands School, Wellington Rd Sth, Hounslow. Speakers: Ken Livingstone, Alf King, Joan Oxley and Peter Pitt. Organised by Feltham & Heston CLP.

Hands off Grenada!


The New Jewel Movement and the Grenada Solidarity Campaign appeal for support on pickets every Tuesday and Thursday, 5-7pm. These will take place at:

US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London W1
Eastern Caribbean Embassy, 10 Kensington Ct, London W8
Barbados Embassy, 6 Upper Belgrave St, London SW1

Advertisement

24 hour picket
FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER 5.30pm -
SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 5.30pm
Outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Square

RELEASE NELSON MANDELA!



Release all Political Prisoners in South African Jails!

This Picket marks the anniversary of the 86-day Picket and we would like all those who took part to come along and join those who have since participated in our activities. ALL WELCOME!

MUSIC GROUPS - STREET THEATRE -
SPEAKERS - SINGERS - DANCERS

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A unique package

WHEN YOU buy a copy of *Socialist Action*, you are really getting quite a unique package. It's the only paper of the left that has supported the Greenham women through thick and thin. It's the only paper that devotes so much of its coverage to explaining what's behind the international war games of Reagan and Thatcher.

Whether it is from the Lebanon, Grenada, Bolivia or Ireland, *Socialist Action* will say what's going on. We do this because we don't think it is possible to see the tasks of socialists today from a narrow, insular viewpoint.

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The 'nightmare' ticket and the witch hunt that goes with it means every militant has to see the important contribution that papers like ours continue to make.

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C Carey	2.50
E Griffiths	5.00
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Liverpool	70.00
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South West London	207.00
Haringey	12.00
Hounslow	12.00
Camden	134.00
Islington	69.00
Aberdeen	140.00
Southampton	60.00
Bath	22.50
Leicester	35.00
Nottingham	65.00
Bristol	40.00
Huddersfield	25.00
Liverpool	40.00
Middlesborough	40.00
Oxford	120.00
Hemel Hempstead	25.00
Leeds	50.00
Coventry	40.00
R Rae	4.00
E Coleman	6.00
J Hartley	5.00
M Silver	1.00
Blanco White	40.00
C Potter	15.00
Total	£2886.00

How the IMF robs Latin America

THE INTERNATIONAL DEBT crisis which hit the world in September 1982 shows the power that lies in the hands of the International Monetary Fund. It is the last resort for the debt stricken countries who have been deliberately underdeveloped by their imperialist masters.

It can and does impose the most stringent and fearsome conditions on those nations that need its assistance — countries like Argentina owe \$1500 for every member of their population. The burden of these astronomical debts falls on the poorest sectors of the population.

The rich get richer and IMF policies make sure that the multinationals and the world banks get a bonanza. The IMF perpetuates and makes worse the systems which created underdevelopment in the first place. A valuable aid to understanding the why, and how, of IMF policies, is the book *The Poverty Brokers: the IMF and Latin America*.*

ALAN FREEMAN examines the analysis and conclusions of this important book.

'SOME ROB YOU with a six-gun, some with a fountain pen.' So runs the *Ballad of Pretty Boy Floyd*, popularised fifteen years ago by Joan Baez. The Latin America Bureau's excellent book shows how the fountain pen has served the grey-flannel suited cowboys of the International Monetary Fund — and why they are now reaching for the six-gun.

The book is the latest from the non-profit making Bureau, set up in 1977. Other titles include *Jenny*

DEBT FIGURES, RESCHEDULING & IMF ASSISTANCE — 1982/3

	Total Debt (US\$ billion) 1982 (1)	Short-term Debt (US\$ billion) 1982 (2)	Debt Service in 1983 as a % of exports (3)	Sum Rescheduled (US\$ billion) May 1983 (4)	IMF Assistance (US\$ billion May 1983) (5)
Argentina	38.5	19.0	154	5.5*	1.6 (standby — 15 months)* 0.5 Compensatory Financing Facility
Brazil	84.0	19.0	117	4.7	4.9 Extended Fund Facility* 0.5 Compensatory Financing Facility
Mexico	80.0	31.0	126	19.7*	3.8 Extended Fund Facility
Total	202.5¹	69.0²	—	29.9	10.3
Chile	17.0	5.0	104	3.4*	0.5 (standby — 2 years)* 0.3 Compensatory Financing Facility
Costa Rica	3.5	0.8	n.a.	0.7*	0.1 (standby)
Colombia	10.3	4.0	95	—	—
Ecuador	6.5	2.5	102	2.9*	0.2 (standby — 1 year)
Peru	11.00	4.8	79	0.3*	—
Uruguay	3.5	n.a.	n.a.	0.8*	0.4 (standby — 2 years)
Venezuela	28.5	15.0	101	13.0	—
Total (10 countries)	282.8	101.1	—	51.0	11.5

+ still being processed.
1 represents 68% of total for whole of Latin America.
2 represents 66% of total for whole of Latin America.

Pearce's *Under the Eagle* and her joint book with Martin Honeywell on the Malvinas war.

Between 1970 and 1978, foreign investment in the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) earned \$2.3m for every million invested. This explains why they stay underdeveloped, why they can't pay their debts, and why the banks who staked all on exploiting them are going bankrupt.

Vicious dictators like Nicaragua's Somoza and Chile's Pinochet offered sky high profits with no strings to foreign investors. The West propped them up provided they imposed 'sensible' economic policies on the poor of the countries concerned, thus maintaining profits.

Strenuous

Foreign money wasn't always spent according to the strictest Western accounting standards. In 1979 Somoza was lent \$60m despite strenuous representations from the Sandinistas just before his overthrow. When he left, he cleaned out the banks and took the cash with him. This didn't really faze the IMF, however, who demanded repayment from the new government on pain of worldwide boycott.

This kind of approach got high returns, and gave the illusion of growth and even stability in countries like Brazil and Argentina, said to be escaping underdevelopment and catching up with the West. Indeed, during the Malvinas war, several British socialists 'discovered' Argentina had become an 'imperialist country' in its own right. The example of Jamaica to which the authors devote a chapter,

shows how such growth was often built — almost literally — on sand.

Foreign investment in the LDCs is organised around the drive for cash exports, which yield foreign currency and — during the boom — high returns. Local industrial production, usually in branch plants of multinationals or under foreign license, could not expand beyond the narrow limits set by the poverty and low purchasing power of populations living on starvation wages.

Spectacular

Video tape recorders, for example, are not exactly the coming thing in the shanty towns of Buenos Aires. The spectacular growth of many LDCs did not stem from the balanced development of a local economy, but from the greed of western multinationals to exploit cheap labour or scarce resources in the production of goods for western markets.

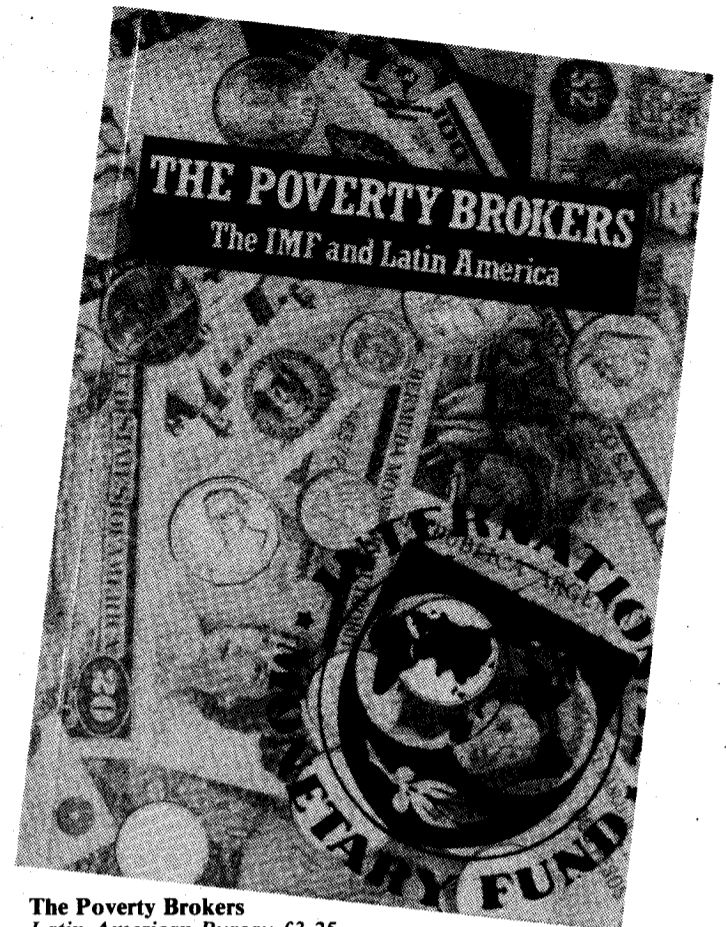
Jamaica went through a 'boom' in the sixties based on soaring world demand for aluminium. The bulk of Jamaica's 6.7 per cent growth came from bauxite, into which went 57 per cent of all foreign investment. Bauxite (the raw stuff of aluminium) brought foreign currency, high tax returns and high profits. But it employed only 5000 workers. Farming stagnated. Bauxite workers averaged J\$9326 per year while agricultural workers got an average J\$219. Agriculture grew by only 2-3 per cent per year, so Jamaica had to import food to live.

The reckoning came with the onset of world slump in 1974 which slashed western demand, causing commodity prices to fall — the classical indicator of a fullblown cyclical slump of the type analysed by Marx. Bauxite prices dropped 30 per cent. The bottom fell out of the Jamaican economy. Popular resistance propelled the radical government of Michael Manley into office, but the CIA and multinationals set about bringing him down.

Conditions

And this is where the IMF comes in. Strictly speaking, the IMF applies 'impartial' conditions to its loans. But these impartial conditions turn out to be viciously hostile to any moves which interfere with the profits of foreign investors.

Manley did not mobilise his popular support among the poor, and rejected socialist methods against these attacks and the IMF's demands, claiming a 'third way' existed. The IMF imposed a draconian package. The Jamaican dollar was sharply devalued. The price of imported food shot up by up to 50 per cent each year.



The Poverty Brokers
Latin American Bureau £3.25

DEBT PER CAPITA: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1982¹

	1960	1970	1980	1982 ¹
Argentina	62	106	690	1,392
Brazil	34	50	575	707
Mexico	33	78	557	1,144
Bahamas	n.a.	n.a.	357	n.a.
Barbados	n.a.	67	639	n.a.
Bolivia	54	112	526	536
Chile	73	270	893	1,552
Colombia	23	90	269	394
Costa Rica	44	133	1,118	1,578
Dominican Republic	2	72	370	n.a.
Ecuador	22	61	460	813
El Salvador	14	37	192	312
Guatemala	13	35	126	214
Guyana	87	165	944	n.a.
Haiti	11	11	76	n.a.
Honduras	12	59	513	540
Jamaica	n.a.	103	752	n.a.
Nicaragua	29	119	870	1,032
Panama	56	202	1,497	n.a.
Paraguay	13	71	426	473
Peru	26	81	503	660
Trinidad and Tobago	25	119	709	n.a.
Uruguay	53	133	621	1,209
Venezuela	49	90	800	2,044
Average	36	79	555	911

Sources: Table 2 and 3 for total debt figures. Population figures from IDB Annual Report 1982.

1. 1980 population figures used.

The IMF's prescriptions for financial solvency did not explain how to persuade foreign investors to put money into making food in Jamaica which no-one could afford to buy. Unemployment rose to 31 per cent.

Results

Manley summed up the results in 1979: 'having met all the terms and conditions demanded, and having worked to mobilise the nation to rise to the central challenge of production, we continued nevertheless to stagnate ... It was as if the medicine could arrest the disease, but the diet could not provide the foundation for recovery.'

Yet the IMF doctors were also digging their own grave. You can't squeeze more blood from a body than it's got. The underdeveloped countries now owe so much that they can't hope to pay their debts. Three Latin American countries — Argentina, Brazil and Mexico — owe more than \$200bn of a total world debt estimated at around one thousand billion dollars. This approaches \$150 for every person in the world. 'Imperialist' Argentina owes \$1500 for every inhabitant. Repayment would require 154 per cent of its exports.

The entire banking system is embroiled. US banks lend out up to \$28 of non-existent money for every \$1 of reserves. A major LDC default — now being contemplated by Brazil — could trigger a world run on the banks and a near total collapse of the banking system.

Proposals

The book finishes by looking at proposals for 'reform' of the IMF as a larger-scale lender to help out the banks. This would simply send 'bad money after good'. The underlying problem is that the productive capacity and markets corresponding to the existing debt simply don't exist, or exist only in the mind of city slickers who think of the third world as the conquistadores treated the famed 'Aztec Gold' of the new world four hundred years ago.

Poverty Brokers finishes by saying 'There is a fundamental conflict of interest between the vast majority of people living in the LDCs and the powerful elites which control the western nations'.

If you want to understand why this conflict is now exploding into a war across three continents — read this book.

OUTSTANDING BANK LOANS TO LATIN AMERICA

US BANKS (US\$ billion)

	Brazil	Mexico	Venezuela	Others ⁺	Total	Total as % of Banks' Equity
Citicorp	4.4	3.3	1.1	1.1	9.8	203
Bank America	2.3	2.5	2.0	0	6.8	148
Chase Manhattan	2.4	1.7	1.0	1.0	6.1	222
Man. Hanover	2.0	1.7	1.1	2.0	6.8	245
Morgan Guaranty	1.7	1.1	0.5	0.8	4.1	150

+ Includes disclosed exposure of more than 1% to Argentina, Yugoslavia and Chile.

Source: *The American Banker* (quoted in *The New York Times*, 18 March 1983).

BRITISH BANKS (£ billion)

	Total Loans to Latin America	Equity Reserves	Total as % of Banks' Equity
Barclays	2.3	2.9	79
Nat. Westminster	1.8	2.6	69
Midland	3.6	2.0	180
Lloyds	3.6	2.0	180

Source: Published Accounts and International Bank Credit Analysis (quoted in *The Financial Times*, 31 May 1983).

Rover battle begins

THE PROPOSED rationalisation of the Land Rover group in British Leyland, with the loss of 1560 jobs, is yet another move towards privatisation in BL.

When Land Rover was organised as a separate group within BL, the workforce was reduced from 14,500 and 9000.

Productivity in the last year alone rose by 14 per cent. The latest management plan is to centralise Land Rover production at the Birmingham Solihull plant — with the closure of six Midlands plants and a major component plant in Cardiff.

This plan is to be phased over eighteen months and completed by 1985. In Cardiff, an

area of high unemployment, 600 more jobs will go with the BL closure.

By an AUEW member, Cardiff

Privatisation in Land Rover and British Leyland has so far taken the form of closure of plants and purchase of components from outside sources.

But with separate plant accounting — through the Altered Plant Status, APS — we cannot rule out the sale of whole sections to private industry at some stage in the future.

Management has been up to dodgy tricks already. After the closure announcement on 11 November, the Cardiff plant was leafleted by management tell-

ing the workforce that any resistance to closure would put redundancy payments at risk.

To date no details of the closure schedule have been given to the trade unions.

Opposition to the Cardiff closure is solid, with the workforce fully supporting the plant leadership. An initial response by the stewards to the closure announcement has been to press for support from Labour MPs and the Cardiff City and County Council.

Jim Callaghan, MP for Cardiff South, has spoken out against the closure and pledged his support. Plant and public meetings with Labour leader Neil Kinnock, Jim Callaghan and Tony Benn are being discussed as part of a defence campaign.

A plant defence com-

mittee of shop stewards and local AUEW members has been set up, which met on 19 November in Cardiff.

For Cardiff to win, opposition will be needed across all the Land Rover Group. Resistance is being coordinated with the Midlands plants to prevent isolation.

The stewards see a similarity between their struggle and the anti-privatisation battles in the National Health Service, British Telecom and other areas of the public sector.

They look to the possibility of building an alliance across the different public sector unions.

Resistance to the Cardiff closure is to be taken right across South Wales, through the AUEW and the Labour Party.



Rover workers in the Midlands have already lost jobs in plant closures

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Network)

Residential social workers

Decisive action needed to win

ALMOST 1200 NALGO residential social workers are on all-out strike and a further 24,000 are taking selective action in support of a national claim for improved pay and working conditions. Under the slogan of 'be fair to those who care' they are demanding parity with most other public sector workers — a 35 hour week and unsocial hours and shift payments.

At present the average residential social worker takes home no more than £60 a week while an officer-in-charge of a medium size children's home takes home no more than £80.

Because of the varying responses from the different local authorities, and the different strengths of the action locally, the old hot potato of 'local negotiations' has recently entered the arena. One local settlement has already been made in Wolverhampton against the policy of the union.

Some strong 'left wing' branches in London argue, as they did in the 1978-9 dispute, that strong branches should negotiate locally. They reason that good local settlements would push other employers to settle nationally or locally.

But during the last dispute the rejection of the 'local settlement' tactic by other sections of the left was vindicated by the outcome of many poor local settlements and by the disastrous drawn-out strike in Tower Hamlets. Only a good national settlement will benefit the bulk of the members.

Despite the support for local settlements from London branch leadership, the 17 November National Delegate Meeting of residential workers and branch officers ruled out local settlements. The

meeting responded to the call from the 'Shire' counties not to leave weaker areas to fight alone.

By Carolyn Sikorski (Newham Nalgo, personal capacity)

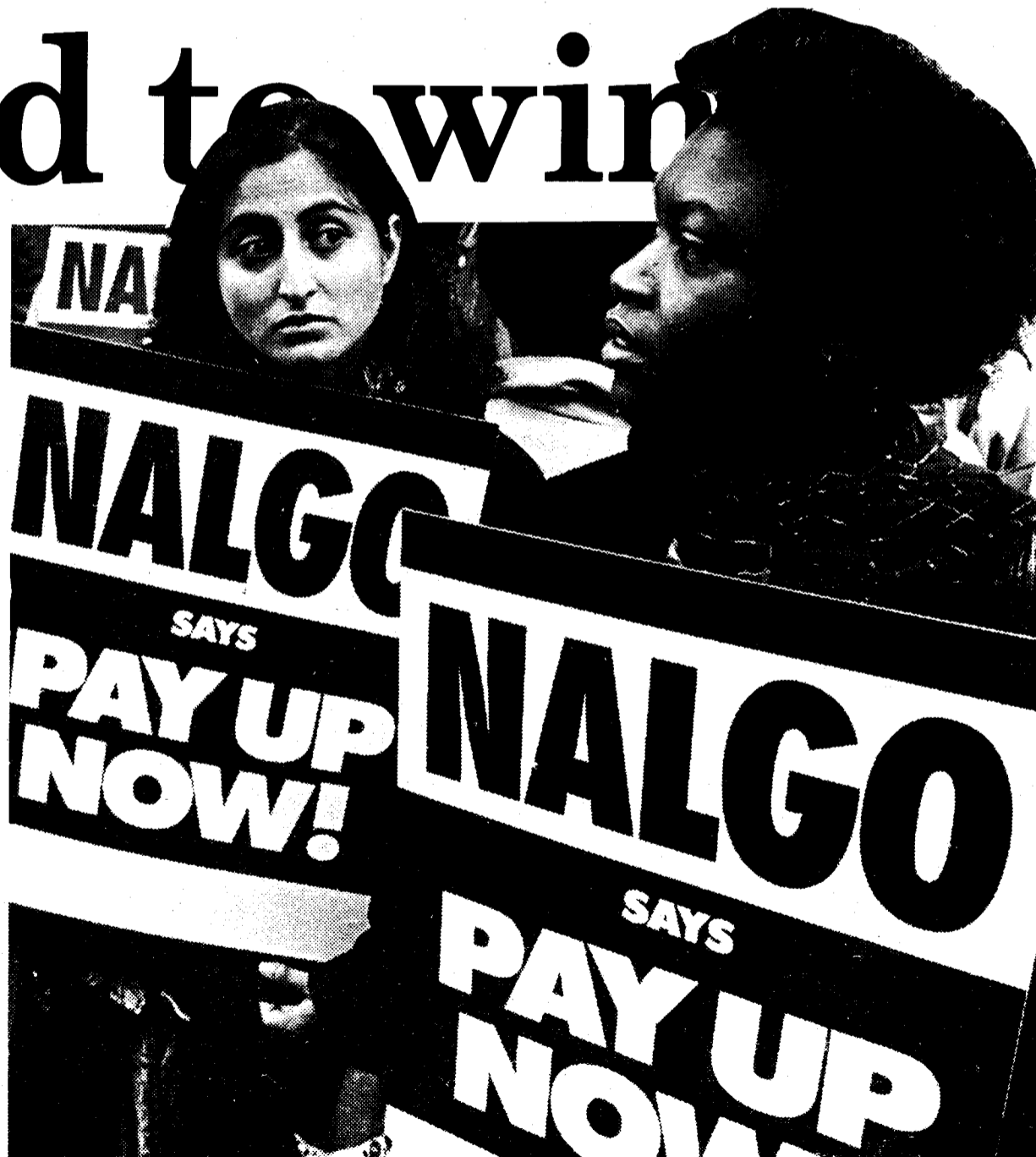
Delegates also called for ballots for national escalation of the action — for 'social hours only' working and a day of action on 7 December.

The meeting also agreed that the action would continue until a steward in the Kent County branch, sacked for supporting the strike, is reinstated.

Problem

The problem faced by the residential social workers is the same as that faced by the health workers last year and the POEU now. Can selective action defeat the Tories? The experience of other workers shows it can't.

The residential social workers are part of a 700,000 strong union. But the NALGO leadership has abstained from bring-



Residential workers demand better pay and conditions

ing the whole union behind the claim.

The dispute will be difficult to win. Despite the fact that the claim is five years old, the employers are refusing to negotiate nationally and are no

doubt weighing the cost of a national settlement — both in financial terms and in terms of consequent strengthening of union organisation.

The local authorities will try to make public sec-

tor workers pay for the cuts by covering for vacant posts and cooperating with closures and compulsory redeployment.

The dispute will be won by giving the residential workers the support

they need from the rest of NALGO and the rest of the labour movement to build towards an all-out strike.

Ironically this year's NALGO national pay claim will almost certainly

include a £99 per week minimum wage, but this is not being linked to the social workers' fight.

Unfortunately in many cases the support from local Labour councillors has been at best lukewarm. Even left-wing Labour councillors have denounced the claim as 'excessive' and put themselves into a position of acting as 'tough' employers. At worst some Labour councils have used disgraceful tactics to break the action.

Police

Two of the worst examples are the 'left' Labour councils of Southwark and Lambeth. In Southwark police were called to be on duty for 36 hours to enforce the closure of a children's home. The Instant Response Unit (SPG for short) was used to remove children from the home and management then vandalised the premises.

It is not at all clear what the comrades on these local councils think they are doing by attacking a trade union dispute in this fashion. It is certain, however, that when the time comes they will discover that the only way they can protect their services from destruction by the Tories is a joint campaign with the public sector unions.

It is going to be difficult for the left in NALGO to convince the membership of the need for this, after their claim was attacked by 'socialist' councillors.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Network)

NGA takes on Tebbit

THE NATIONAL Graphical Association is now locked in a bitter battle against Tebbit's anti-union law.

NGA members in the North West have been picketing advertising newspapers of the Messenger Group, whose owners are obstructing union recognition and closed shop agreements.

These pickets have been ruled illegal by the courts, which have now fined the union £50,000 for contempt.

The NGA leaders refuse to be intimidated and are ignoring the judge's threats to seize union assets.

Instead they are turning to the TUC to implement the decision of the 1983 Wembley conference to give financial and industrial backing to trade unionists resisting Tebbit.

TUC leader Len Murray has given these requests a cool response, preferring cosy chats with Tebbit's successor King.

The TUC General Council meeting on 23 November will decide whether to defy the courts. They would do well to listen to the demands of the Warrington pickets.

PETE EVANS reports from the picket line and explains the background to the dispute.

Several hundred NGA pickets from as far away as Newcastle converged on the Warrington printing plant of the Messenger newspaper group last week.

A three day mass picket, aimed at preventing the distribution of the weekly Messenger newspapers, is the latest stage in this long dispute. Twenty weeks ago, six members of the NGA employed by the Stockport Messenger, walked out in defence of a closed shop agreement.

The paper's owner said he intended to go non-union and employ non-union labour at the Bury office.

The NGA decision to escalate the dispute, by using mass pickets at Warrington where all the papers are printed, is having an

effect.

The owner, Eddie Shah has again turned to the courts, seeking to enforce an injunction granted under the 1980 and 1982 Employment Acts to stop the picket. This could be the first major test of the labour movement's ability to defy and defeat the anti-union laws.

Mass

The pickets understand what is at stake. For most, this is a first taste of mass picketing. Initial friendly banter with the police soon turned sour at 2am on the morning of Wednesday 16 November.

The police, backed by a private security firm, viciously attacked the

picket in order to allow the first vanload of papers out.

Six pickets were arrested and a further three had to be taken to hospital for treatment. From then on newly arriving pickets were told by the NGA officials 'to be very disciplined and not to talk to people — ie the police — who are likely to kick your head in any minute'.

Spread

Militancy grew after attacks on pickets at 8am and 11am, with more arrests. Nineteen pickets had been arrested by Thursday morning.

Comments spread through the picket like 'we need thousands next

week', 'the TUC must act', 'let's get the whole union out'.

A huge cheer greeted a message of support from striking Shell workers in Liverpool. These Engineering Union members explained that the two struggles are part of one battle of the whole working class against the Employment Act.

The NGA can only defeat Tebbit's laws with the support of the print and newspaper unions and



NGA members applaud their successful mass picket at Warrington

the full backing of the labour movement as a whole.

Already NGA officials are using the example of Grunwick to illustrate the type of picketing needed. Every pressure should

be placed on the TUC to make sure that they do not repeat their sabotage of the Grunwick struggle.

● Union bodies, especially in the North West, are encouraged to send delegations to the 24 hour

mass picket on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at Winwick Quay, Warrington.

Messages of support to Arthur Clarke, Graphic House, Greek Street, Stockport.

POEU militants step up the fight

POEU BRANCHES responded quickly and angrily to the attempt of their national executive to sell out the industrial action against privatisation.

The resolve of the 2500 strikers and their branch leaders points the way to winning the dispute for Telecom engineers.

ANN FIANDER, an engineer from the POEU City branch, explains.

Last week the NEC voted by 13 to 10 to send back to work 1000 of the 2500 engineers on strike.

British Telecom, sensing the union's weakness, locked out all 2500 strikers. An unofficial meeting of the London branch leaders took place immediately.

It called an unofficial national meeting for Monday 21 November. This will decide next steps in the campaign.

The events that led to this situation show the strength of the rank and file against the timidity of the union leadership. Last week the NEC recommended, by a 14 to 9 vote, to connect private Mercury lines into the national BT network.

While delegates at the national conference voted for this motion, their overwhelming feeling was that the union should continue to fight privatisation and should stop the 49 sackings threatened by BT.

Once back at union headquarters the NEC began to implement a sell out. Instead of escalating the action, to secure the 49 jobs, they voted by 13 to 10 to send half the strikers back to work. This was prior to negotiations with management.

BT management, who are following closely the Tory doctrine to break the strength of the unions, were not prepared to allow an orderly return to work.

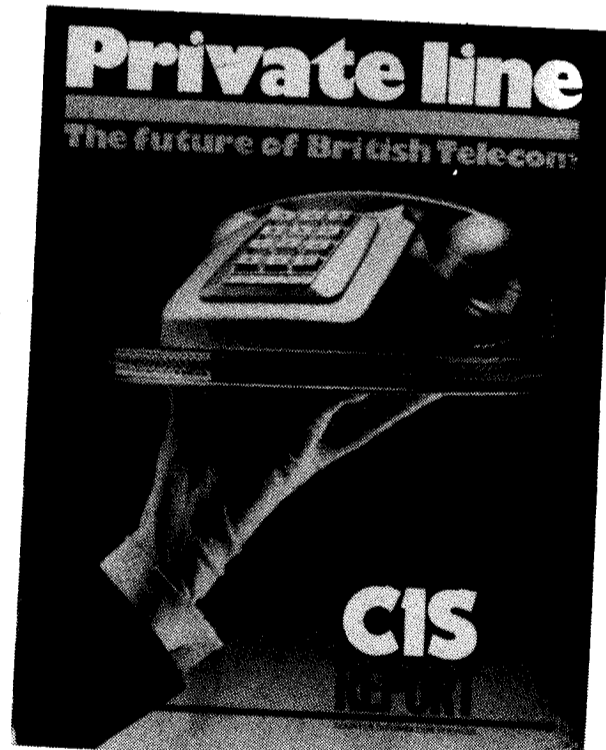
They threatened to take the union to court under the Tebbit laws for organising a political strike. Then they imposed conditions on the return to work which added up to a 'lock out'.

They told the union to call off all its industrial action and presented the 2500 strikers with documents which stated that, after their return to work, they would be on five years' suspended dismissal.

The five month old Broad Left majority on the NEC crumbled when four of the BL slate backed the right at the November conference, with the 14 to 9 vote to connect Mercury. But the basis for this capitulation was formed when the BL AGM refused to adopt a strategy for national strike action.

With the Tories out to smash the unions and ensure little opposition to privatisation, a left leadership which consistently refused to prepare its membership for a decisive fight, was bound to be disarmed by the onslaught of BT management.

On Friday 18 November the POEU NEC were totally unprepared politically for the management lock out. But the 2500 strikers and their branch leaders had already recognised the coming collapse of the NEC and lobbied union headquarters on Thursday morning.



This valuable report by the Counter Information Service can be obtained from The Other Bookshop.

Their determination to stand firm and fight the Tory attacks on their jobs and union provoked a response from the whole membership.

The London branches met on Friday to organise the campaign against privatisation. On Monday 21 November the national branch leaders will meet to discuss a proposed national rally for the weekend of 26/27 November. They will also prepare the campaign to save jobs.

It is now vital to get the widest labour movement and trade union support for the strikers and the action taken by the branches to defend their members.

● Messages of support and financial donations should go to the leading branches, c/o 72 Fore St., London EC1.

Resolutions giving total support to the locked out workers should be sent to POEU headquarters, Greystoke House, 150 Brunswick Rd, London W5.

National picket lines should be supported.

The Islington Trade Union Liaison Committee is organising a weekly Wednesday picket with Jeremy Corbyn MP at Mondail House, Upper Thames St., London EC1 7.30-8.30 am. LP and TU delegations should join this.

MOLES EYE VIEW



Your future in his hands?

ACCORDING to myth the Gods first make mad those whom they intend to destroy. But is it really a myth? A study of Ronald Reagan's antics seems to bear out that the Gods are still alive and well and up to their old tricks.

His policies have shoved the world towards a nuclear shoot-out, but does that worry the cowboy? Not at all.

He interrupted a discussion with House of Representative members on arms control to ask: 'Did you see War Games?' He then got so excited about the plot that one congress member pleaded: 'Don't tell us the ending'.

When asked if he would be visiting the Vietnam war memorial he answered: 'I can't tell until somebody tells me. I never know where I am going.' Being a literary man he even has to have the Washington Post and New York Times summarised for him — and that includes the cartoons!

Mind you he loves playing games and dressing up. So at the White House 'egg roll' he arrived with his secret service

men dressed as bunnies. He even tells how at one Thanksgiving when cutting the turkey there was lots of blood around. At first he thought the bird was undercooked. Then he realised he had cut his thumb.

People confuse him. At a meeting of mayors he didn't recognise his only black cabinet member so he went up to him and said: 'How are you Mr Mayor? How are things in your city?'

He also finds geography confusing. At a state dinner in Brazil he asked the guests to join him in a toast to the people of Bolivia.

At a meeting with the Pope he fell asleep — although you can't really blame him for that. Then at a press conference he forgot his dog's name and gave him a quick verbal sex change by calling him Lassie.

Foreign policy he delegates to guys like William Clarke who, when he was made deputy Secretary of State, was unable to name the Prime Ministers of South Africa and Zimbabwe. But then he was an improvement on his boss who is not even sure where these countries

are. One of his domestic aides Ed Meese — another bright Reagan appointee — said last year 'nuclear war is something that may not be desirable'.

But any kind of politics is just too much for Reagan. One Friday he had some very important briefings to read before the Williamsburg summit started. But Ronnie discovered *The Sound of Music* was on telly. So he pushed aside his 'boring old briefing books' and 'spent the evening with Julie Andrews'.

He is said to love to talk to children, particularly the very young, probably because his mental age is around theirs. He told a group of kids that in England 'if a criminal carried a gun, even though he didn't use it... he was tried for first-degree murder and hung if he was found guilty'.

Mind you he does try not to stick his nose in too much. Once when invited by the Treasury Secretary to join in a discussion on a new tax bill — Reagan was the man who promised to cut taxes — he said: 'Heck, no, I am leaving this to you experts.' His audacious plan for a balanced budget was everybody 'living up to the Ten Commandments...'

But he is an inspiration — every half-wit and nutter who supports American imperialism can look at Reagan and say quite rightly: 'That could be me.'

Moles Eye View is compiled by BOB PENNINGTON. Contributions should be sent to arrive by Thursday am.



Bloody alliance to smash the PLO

THE BITTER BATTLE now raging on the northern suburbs of Tripoli and the Palestinian camp refugee camp at Baddawi threatens the very existence of the PLO as an independent organisation. The hundreds of people killed in the battle have not died in pursuit of a simple inter-Palestinian dispute. What is at stake is whether the PLO will be brought under total Syrian control.

The fighting, which has already lasted more than two weeks, started with the 'rebel' attack on Narh el-Barid refugee camp seven miles to the north of Tripoli — a stronghold of pro-Arafat forces.

While many of the PLO fighters in the Bek'aa valley have gone over to the rebels led by Abu Masa, the mass of Palestinian civilians both in the Lebanon and on the West bank remain loyal to Arafat. They understand full well that the Arafat-led PLO is the only significant Palestinian force that remains independent of direct control by the Arab states.

The dispute in the PLO developed as a consequence of the defeat suffered at the hands of the Israelis last year. Many Palestinian fighters criticised the decision by Arafat to abandon Beirut. They claimed the PLO was militarily unprepared for the attack. But Abu Masa and his supporters have made a fatal mistake in developing an alliance with Syria.

Syrian president Assad is not concerned with making the PLO more powerful, only with destroying it as an independent fighting organisation. Assad wants to make Syria the decisive force in Middle East politics, the country with which the United States and Israel have to deal to

make peace in the region. Syria's occupation of part of Lebanon is vital to that project.

After the Israeli withdrawal to the Awali river, Assad systematically tried to bring all anti-Israeli forces under his own control. Syria now arms the Druze militias — it is difficult for them to engage in serious fighting without Assad's assent. The Shi'ite Muslim militias are more independent politically, but again rely heavily on Syrian military assistance.

By Paul Lawson

By making the PLO a Syrian-controlled organisation, Assad can utilise the Palestinians as an important bargaining counter to gain concessions from the United States and Israel. At the Geneva talks the pro-Syrian forces were effectively discussing a deal with the United States whereby the Palestinians would be prevented from launching attacks against the Israelis, in return for recognition of Syria's central role in Lebanon and the ending the Lebanese-Israeli peace agreement —

the so-called 'troop withdrawal agreement'. The United States seems for the moment prepared to go along with such an agreement.

With the PLO destroyed as an independent military factor the Palestinians on the West Bank will be gravely demoralised. Reagan hopes that a new puppet 'moderate' leadership will emerge on the West Bank ready to do business with the United States and the Israelis — perhaps to agree to an 'autonomous' Palestinian region in Jordan, in return for giving up the fight against Israel, for Palestinian national self-determination.

The forces now arrayed against the PLO are formidable. The Abu Masa rebels are militarily supported by both Syria and Libya. Syria has thrown its most modern tanks into the fighting, and controls the high ground overlooking the PLO positions. There is now a real danger of a massacre of the Arafat loyalist forces.

The present tragic events, with Palestinian fighting Palestinian, constitutes a major setback for the anti-imperialist struggle in the whole region.

● *The Labour Committee on Palestine supported by Socialist Action has sent a telegram of support to Yasser Arafat and a letter to the Syrian ambassador in London protesting Syria's role.*

UP TO one hundred and fifty striking Newham school students were part of a picket of 4-500 on Monday 14 November outside the Old Bailey, where the trial of the Newham 8 started last week. The Asian students have continued to picket the court all week with other groups of supporters.

Predictably, the Director of Education and the heads of the schools involved have been trying to victimise and intimidate these students. The police have also been harassing students known to be involved in the campaign.

In the last few weeks there have been further serious racial attacks at Little Ilford School, and the only response of the head has been to claim that Asian students are causing the trouble. Labour Councillors and NUT activists will be taking these issues up.

By a Newham NUT member

On the first day of the trial the defence successfully challenged the composition of the jury and it now consists of five Afro-Caribbean and Asian people and seven whites. The prosecution have dropped the charge of conspiracy, leaving charges of causing an affray and serious assault.

The defence barristers are challenging every scrap of police evidence and have begun the detailed process of tearing it to shreds, much to the pleasure of the defendants and their supporters who are filling the public gallery.

The pickets have had some problems from racist labourers who work near the Old Bailey. Pickets will continue throughout the trial from 9-11am and 1.30-2pm. For details of your day to picket phone the defence campaign on 01-555 3331 (day) or 01-534 1640 (eves).

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Gospel Hall killings Provocation against nationalist struggle

THE KILLING of three people at the Mountain Lodge Pentecostal church in Darkley, Armagh, is a provocation against the struggle of the nationalist people of Ireland. Whatever the intentions of its perpetrators, it can only serve the interests of the British state — to deepen sectarian divides and discredit the struggle of the nationalist movement.

A group calling itself the 'Catholic Reaction Force' claimed credit for the shootings. There are only two possibilities about the identity of this group: either it is a lunatic splinter group or an undercover security forces organisation.

The Provisional IRA

was quick to condemn the senseless sectarian shootings. Given the increasing mass support which the Republican movement enjoys it is inconceivable that such an action would be carried out by the active service units of the IRA — and in any case blind sectarian

assassination is not, and has never been, the policy of the IRA.

The role of the security services in South Armagh has been a murky one. The SAS has 'taken out' suspected Republican activists; it has carried out sectarian killings in order to discredit the IRA. It cannot be ruled out that the SAS or a similar outfit had a hand in this atrocity.

The British press, of course, has all but ignored the condemnation of the killings by the Provisionals

— for the press it is an excellent opportunity to attack 'terrorists' without distinctions. Neither will they inform their readers, even in passing, that the vast majority of the victims of sectarian murders in the six counties have been Catholics, butchered by the 'Red Hand Commando' and other Loyalist groups.

The self defense of the Catholic community is completely justified; blind sectarian atrocity can never be.