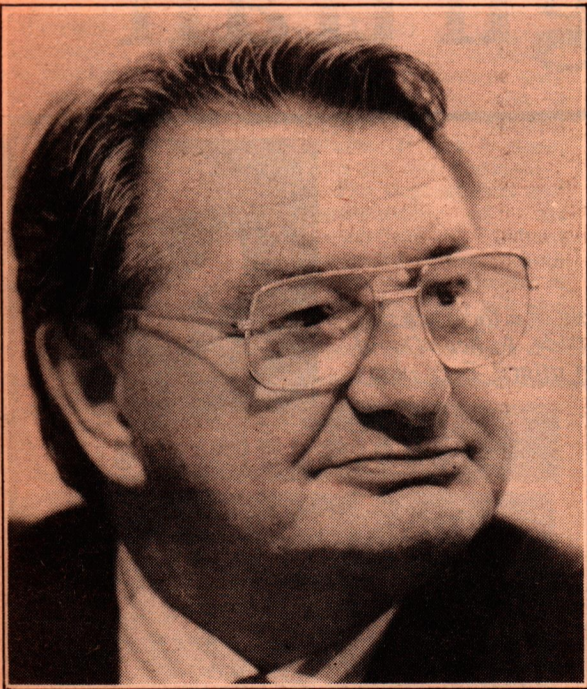


# A **SOCIALIST** ACTION

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# BACK BENN!



By  
**Eric Heffer MP**

hamstring the trade unions. Labour is committed to repealing all of it. And we will defend the metropolitan councils and the GLC against abolition, and against the Tories rate-capping legislation.

The truth is that the Tories and the Liberals/SDP are two sides of the same coin. They all believe in the continuation of capitalism. The Liberals are slightly less reactionary than the Tories or the SDP. But it is no accident that Noel-Baker recently changed sides, from the SDP to the Tories.

If Labour does badly at Chesterfield, it will help all the forces who are intent on stopping Labour winning the next general election. Labour has sound socialist policies to develop public ownership and to fight unemployment. If Labour is to make a serious impact, it needs to further advance by holding Chesterfield — by electing Tony Benn.

A lot of rubbish has been written about Chesterfield's previous MP, Eric Varley, being a moderate. The fact is that when Eric Varley was elected in 1964, it was on a clear left programme.

He was a so-called protégé of Bert Wynn, the miners' leader in the area — and Bert was renowned

for being on the left of the party. Eric certainly moved to the centre over the years, but his *Spokesman* pamphlet on workers' control of the mines and other articles are proof that when he was elected he was a man of the left.

The myth that Chesterfield is an oasis of moderation in a sea of 'extremism' — as suggested recently by Leon Brittain — is simply untrue. Like all other parties, Chesterfield party supports Clause IV of the constitution. It is not surprising they should select a candidate who is fighting for Labour's basic, socialist ideas.

I would urge all those who can give a hand in the election to do so. There is still plenty of work to be done, and you will be welcomed. By helping get Tony Benn elected, you are helping advance the cause of socialism in Britain.

## HELP!

Outside helpers for the Chesterfield campaign are urgently wanted and are asked to contact election agent Peter Coleman at the Labour Club, Unity Houser, Saltergate, Chesterfield (phone Chesterfield 208387).

**THE CHESTERFIELD BY-ELECTION** is of crucial importance to the future of the Labour Party. At present, Tony Benn is the standard bearer of the party. It is he who has to explain Labour's policies, ward off a hostile press, and develop a theme for a socialist Britain as part of the struggle for a socialist world. This is a heavy responsibility.

All of us who are active within the party must assist in every way possible to secure a Labour victory at Chesterfield. Clearly, an antagonistic media will do all it can to undermine Tony Benn.

They will try to play up any differences of emphasis which continue to exist in the party. They will seek to paint Tony as a 'loonie leftie'.

But Labour's policies are clear. We oppose nuclear weapons and bases on and around British soil. We are opposed to US in-

tervention in Central America and elsewhere. And we are opposed to Soviet policies which harm peace and suppress internal democracy.

We defend the National Health Service, and want to see it developed as a genuinely free service. We oppose privilege in education, and want good comprehensive education for all. And we support equality for women and for all other oppressed sections of society.

The Tories have introduced legislation to

## Thatcher plans new union ban

THE GOVERNMENT has not slipped up in banning the unions at GCHQ. It is the first move in a plan to ban the right to strike in major areas of the British economy. This became obvious last week as government thinking for another round of anti-trade union laws was unveiled.

A report by Tory industrial relations adviser Sir Leonard Neal made it clear that the next target for government action should be banning strikes in essential services.

Sir Leonard chairs the research group on trade unions at the Centre for Policy Studies — the Tory 'think tank' set up by Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher. This Institute has pre-outlined all previous stages of the anti-union laws. Neal was also chair of the Heath government's Commission on Industrial Relations.

According to extensive 'leaks' reported by the *Financial Times* on 20 February the Neal report names the essential services in which the strikes would be made illegal as electricity, gas, water supply, sewage and the health service.

Neal's report however is much more thorough going than previously leaked plans. It rules out any pretence of defending wages after the right to strike has been abolished saying: 'It ought not to be necessary to reward people for not taking immoral actions'.

relatively powerless to impede it — on the grounds that an upturn in employment will see a reassertion of some former union strength and attempts to claw back some lost control'.

The paper editorialises that, 'The time is ripe for continued legislative reform: the unions which remain officially wedded to the doctrine that the law has no place in industrial relations, are in no shape to stop it'.

The Neal report also contains a number of other proposals for clamping down on the unions — notably making illegal all strikes carried out which infringe procedure agreements.

By John Ross

Thatcher has promised a major new piece of anti-union legislation every two years. The Tebbit/King Bill on political funds and the closed shop will become law this summer. Banning the right to strike in gas, electricity, water, health and other services has now clearly been marked down for the fourth round of Thatcher's anti-union legislation. Cheltenham kicks off that process.

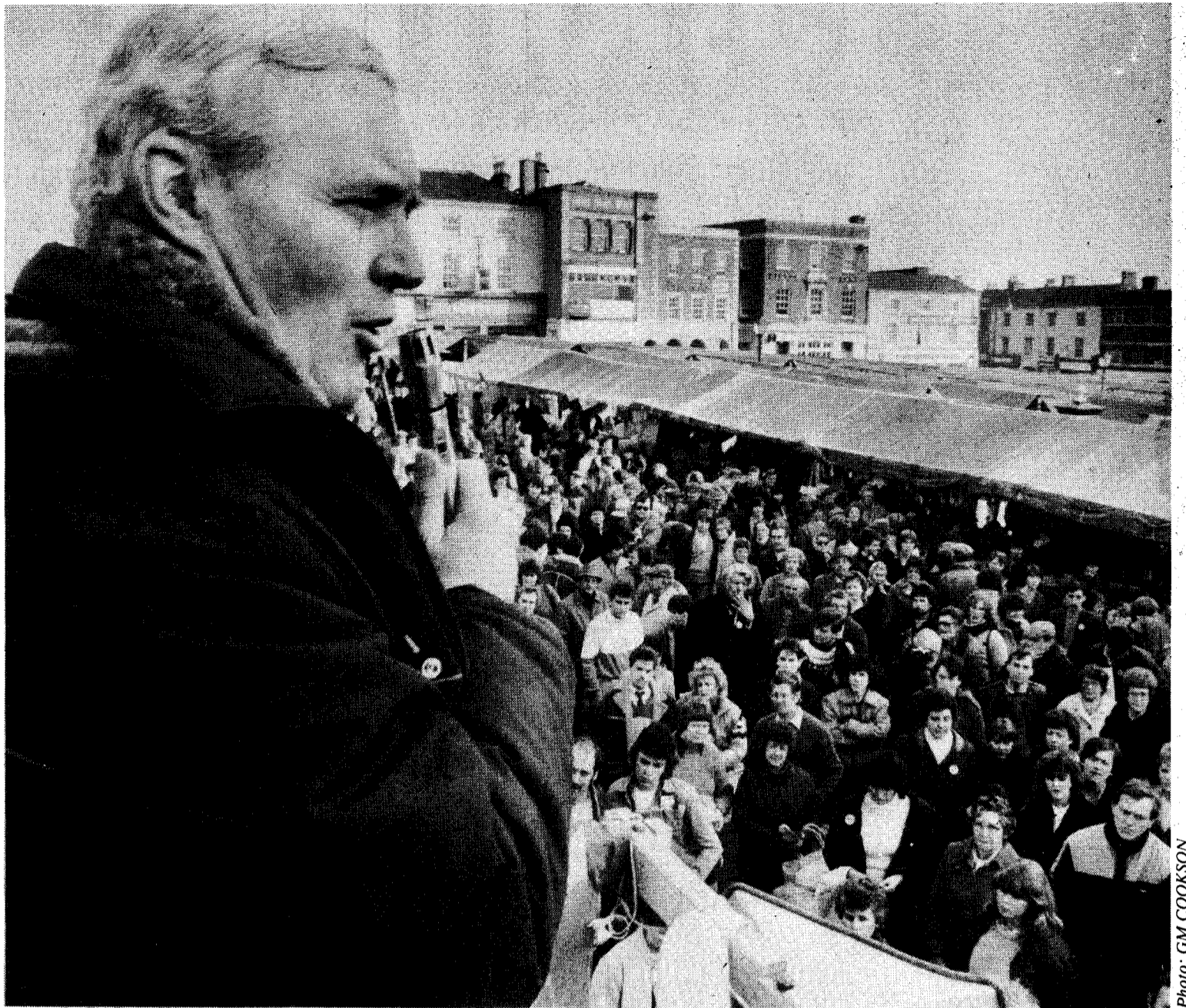
In addition to showing where the new round of anti-union laws are going to come the leaks of the Neal report show how suicidal is the course being pursued by the TUC around the GCHQ dispute and by its talks with the government on the Tebbit/King Bill.

Undoubtedly the government underestimated the opposition to its ban on the unions at Cheltenham. It was not prepared for the spontaneous civil service strikes that followed it nor by the public outcry against its decisions.

But by refusing to call industrial action against the Cheltenham ban, and instead proposing a no-strike agreement, the TUC is opening the door for the new round of Thatcher's attacks. By talking with King and Thatcher the General Council is giving credibility to the new plans to eliminate the right to strike which are coming.

The retreat at Cheltenham has to be ended and all proposals for 'no-strike' agreements withdrawn. The 28 February 'Day of Action' called by the civil service unions has to be turned into a day of industrial action. The TUC has to call off its talks with the government over the anti-union legislation.

Cheltenham has to stop being regarded as an isolated event and seen for what it is. A logical and coherent part of the government's plan to take away the right to strike from millions of trade unionists.



Benn conducting street meeting in Chesterfield

Photo: GM COOKSON

# On the campaign trail

**BETWEEN PACKED** public meetings, Chesterfield's candidate Tony Benn has visited old people's homes, factories and the local market place. On each occasion activity has come to a standstill while crowds gathered to hear their Labour candidate.

Three mini-buses a day have arrived from Sheffield filled with enthusiastic Labour supporters. Coaches have arrived from as far afield as Cornwall, 400 miles away, to support Benn's campaign.

It's not surprising then that local campaigners sniff victory in the air. But this is not reflected in the local press.

'Benn back-tracked' and 'Benn becomes parochial' are just a couple of examples of how the press is treating Labour's campaign. And another is that, following the Benn-Hattersley meeting — where 450 gathered in a local hall, while more than that number were turned away — the press led with an infamous: '60 attend Jenkins meeting'!

The Friday meeting with Dennis Skinner and Ray Buckton of ASLEF was a big success. Margaret Valans of the Chesterfield District Labour Party made it quite clear that only an uncompromising fight against the missiles could secure a future for young people, while Ray Buckton explained why the union ban at Cheltenham was an attack on democratic rights.

But Dennis Skinner stole the show in a speech that explained the days of

middle-of-the-road politics were over: 'This election is a fight between labour and capital,' he said, pointing out that the Tories thrive on the fear created by their policies — fear of unemployment, of poverty and illness, and the threat of world-wide conflict. 'People should be proud to vote for Tony Benn, he's sure to take on the Tories.'

By Paul Davidson

Benn understands that following the defeats of the health workers, the train drivers and the NGA, a Labour victory in this by-election would be the best way to rebuild the confidence of working people. And the audience left Friday's meeting, in no doubt that the fightback against the Tories had begun in earnest in Chesterfield.

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

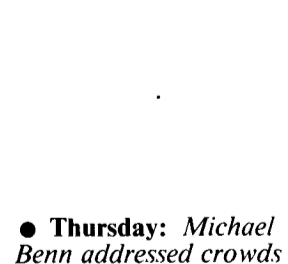


Photo: CHRIS DAVIES

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

● **Wednesday:** 300 people in a local school, still with many more outside, to hear David Blunkett and Tony Benn attack Tory plans for local government.

● **Monday:** 500 people left outside the meeting with Tony Benn and Roy Hattersley, after the hall was packed to capacity.

● **Thursday:** Michael Meacher and Tony Benn addressed crowds of health workers.

● **Friday:** 600 turn out to hear Tony Benn, Ray Buckton and Dennis Skinner on why they should boot the Thatcher government out.

Photo: LABOUR HERALD

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

OUR CIVIL RIGHTS ARE NOT FOR SALE

The report also takes a new step in two other directions. It argues the unions should be made legally responsible for strikes in essential services even if these are unofficial. This opens up the public sector unions to unlimited 'NGA style' fines even where they did not call any strike action.

Secondly not only strikes in essential services themselves will be illegal but also any strike in other industries which could 'damage' these services. Thus, for example, a miners strike which cut off coal to power stations could be declared illegal even although formally a miners strike would not itself be illegal.

Taking these measures together the power of effective trade unionism would be taken away from several million workers in major areas of the economy.

In a cynical front page report on Neal's proposals the *Financial Times*, always perfectly informed on these matters, notes that Thatcher, 'has been told that the present steady pace of industrial relations reform should continue while the unions are

# Chesterfield's political map

**CHESTERFIELD** is eminently winnable by Labour and by Tony Benn. But it would be wrong to see Chesterfield as a solid bastion of the working class. All is not well within the Chesterfield labour movement. But this has precious little to do with Tony Benn's candidacy.

Chesterfield has changed over the years. Outlying villages are now awash with Rovers and Volvos. Jodhpurs are more common than pit helmets. The entire East Midlands region showed a higher Tory swing than average in pit areas during the general election.

The biggest problem for Labour has been the role of its local councillors. Council leader Flanagan has run a right wing Labour Group with an iron rod — and a total lack of ideas beyond balancing the budget. Housing repairs and general services have deteriorated, and complaints multiplied.

This unpopularity has been reflected in two big swings against Labour in local by-elections, although the latest defeat had roots in a local incident outside the realm of council politics.

The local Labour Party has changed recently. The left has grown in a few wards. One of these has a membership roughly equal to the rest of the constituency. Those wards still firmly under right control have small memberships. (The ward the Liberals won recently had an active membership of six!)

Benn was chosen because of this left shift in both the wards and union delegations. Flanagan — the main standard bearer of the right — performed disastrously, dismayed even his closest supporters. The constituency annual meeting will formalise the defeat of the right.

There are a total of 17 candidates in the running. Only two others count. Bourne is a Thatcherite clone — a 33 year old solicitor from Nottinghamshire, who fought the last general election in Chesterfield, and wants a



safe seat somewhere else in the next.

By Andrew Kirk

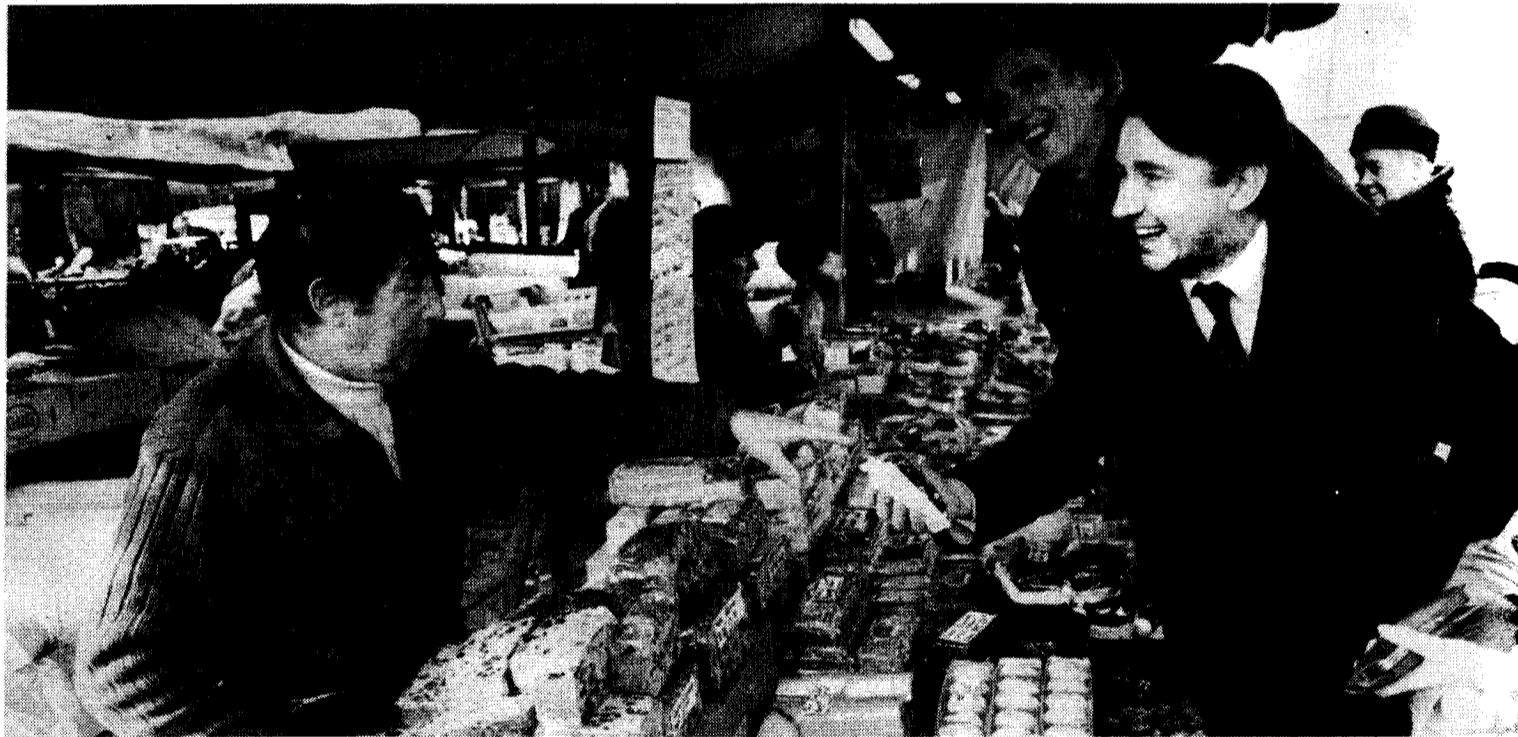
Liberal Max Payne makes a great play of being a local. He has fought the last two general elections in Chesterfield. He is not highly regarded by his party managers, who have tried to keep him out of any debate with the other candidates.

Both Tories and Liberals try to present Benn as the carpet-bagging outsider. Some of the Labour right even mumble about Benn 'being in it for himself'. A bit of this has rubbed off on the electorate. But the dominant mood of belligerent anti-Toryism can be won to support for socialist policies. If this is done, Benn can win, and easily.

The degeneration and regeneration of the Chesterfield Labour movement are both already clearly visible. A victory for Benn will also be a victory for the forces of progress and renewal.



On the stump again



David Steel campaigning with Liberal candidate Max ('Maximum') Payne

## View from



## Westminster

## Thatcher's Britain

By Bob Parry (MP for Liverpool Riverside)

**THE RE-ELECTION** of Thatcher's government has made George Orwell's 1984 much more likely. Already this year we've seen a real move to the right which, in my opinion, brings a British police state closer.

The massive level of unemployment has been used, especially in areas like Merseyside, to frighten workers in jobs into accepting low wage settlements. Obviously hundreds of people chasing only a few jobs has a demoralising effect.

My constituency is a typical dockland inner city area. It has the unenviable record of having the highest level of male unemployment in Britain, according to of-

ficial government statistics: around 37 per cent.

And in certain areas of the constituency, the real level of unemployment is anything between 55 and 60 per cent. That's horrendous by anybody's standards. It must be one of the highest levels in the western world.

We are about to lose 1100 more jobs due to the closure of British-American Tobacco. This factory is just around the corner from the Tate and Lyle site, where nearly 2000 jobs were lost only two years ago.

Toxteth is now in my constituency, where high unemployment and bad environmental conditions led to riots in 1981. Margaret Thatcher has taken no interest in trying to save jobs in

Merseyside, she's washed her hands of any responsibility for the area.

High unemployment has also been used to attack the unions — first the National Graphical Association, and now the Cheltenham GCHQ. The behaviour of Mrs Thatcher and Geoffrey Howe over the question of workers' legitimate right to belong to a trade union is disgraceful.

### State

These attacks go hand in hand with strengthening the state. First the government is intending to attack local democracy with the abolition of the GLC and metropolitan councils, and by introducing rate capping. But they are taking measures in addition to these.

They have strengthened the powers of the police with the recent Prevention of Terrorism Act. And now it stands for a full five

years, instead of having to be renewed annually as was previously the case.

Liverpool has probably seen more people arrested under this Act than most areas of the country. They are held without charges, fingerprinted and photographed, and when they're released — as the vast majority are, without being charged — those records are kept on file.

The new Police and Criminal Evidence Bill is another move towards putting more power in the hands of the police. We're seeing with this the return of the SUS laws we campaigned so hard to get rid of.

Police will have the right to stop and search people without any real justification — except harassment. And these powers will be used particularly against youth, and black youth at that.

If this bill becomes law, I can see more riots in Toxteth, in Manchester's Moss Side, in

Brixton, and other places. By introducing such laws, the right to peacefully protest — like the Greenham Common Women — is seriously thrown into question.

The present government is the most right wing one since the 30s. All people's civil rights are now under threat, as we move closer and closer to Orwell's police state in Britain.

### Urgent

To prevent this kind of society, we must work for the return of a Labour government, committed to socialist policies based on democracy, peace, jobs and freedom. This means a positive move towards an equitable distribution of wealth by an urgent commitment to public ownership and the rationalisation without compensation of any public sector industries privatised by this Tory government.

Photo: GIM COOKSON

Photo: GIM COOKSON

# More votes for the constituencies?



## Labour Party to organise in Six Counties

THE IDEA OF organising the British Labour Party in the occupied six counties of Northern Ireland is a strange notion — anyone with any sense knows that it doesn't stand a chance of getting off the ground.

Yet it allows everyone who supports reactionary loyalism to pass off their backward ideas as a variant of socialism. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Much of the credit for the promotion of Labour representation in the North must go to the British and Irish Communist Organisation — a group that split off from the Irish Communist Party because they thought Khrushchev's criticism of Stalinist repression was unfair. Of course, their barmy idea that the loyalists got a national identity at the same time as the Orange State does not carry much sway with the likes of Roy Mason. He just draws a balance sheet of his years of torture and intimidation in office and decides that if the Labour Party is not to fall into the hands of the 'troops out' brigade, the case of the Orange Order will have to be presented in a more circumspect manner.

Frank Allaun asks in *Tribune* with almost childlike naivety 'why not transform the vicious Orange versus Green battle into the non-violent Labour versus Tory struggle we know so well in the rest of Britain?' He says that if the British Labour Party were to open shop in the North ... 'everyone knows that our party is supported by Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Hindus, Moslems and atheists. There would be no suspicion of religious domination'.

So, led by Alex Kitson from the TGWU, off they all trooped to Belfast on a consultation exercise. Some, like Labour Party office boy Dick Barry had talked to loyalists before. His is said to have hidden behind a table in the departure lounge of Belfast airport to avoid being photographed with Ken Livingstone and councillors Kathy and Steve Dundred, who were over at the same time talking to a rather different set of people.

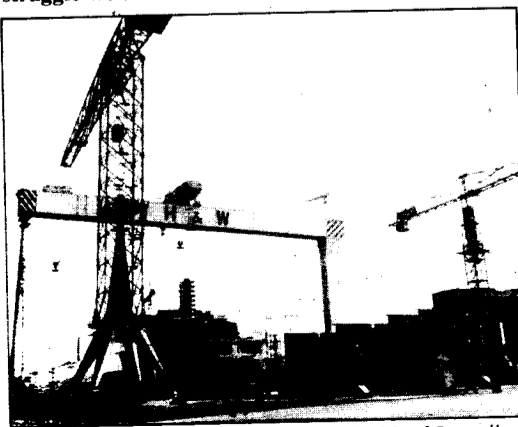
The seven person delegation met Northern Ireland representatives of several trade unions, the SDLP, the 'Sticky' Workers' Party, Paddy Devlin and the Northern Ireland Labour Party. The Northern Ireland Labour Party has been described as 'near-comatose'. This tragedy should not now be repeated as farce. Paddy Devlin — like his former pal Lord Fitt — is only interested in organising a party based on himself.

Both the Workers' Party and the SDLP would not welcome the 'competition' of a third party — there are not enough voters interested just in 'bread and butter' issues as it is. Most important are the trade unions who, naturally, would be expected to provide the funds for any new party.

Most would seem quite happy to allow a conference to take place in the summer on the subject of labour organisation, but their view seems to be that it would be better to 'have it all out in the open' and drop the idea completely.

The powerful Orange Lodges which double as meeting places for the loyalist dominated craft unions would be 'up in arms' if anything more serious was on the agenda. As it is, they are happy enough to leave the *Militant* and their supporters prattling away about how Sinn Fein are fascists and how the voters of the Short Strand should ignore the soldiers kicking in their front doors and start to protect the job prospects of their Protestant brothers threatened by the shipyard closures. Jobs which the Fair Employment Agency has reported are being barred to Catholics by the pro-loyalist unions.

Oh how comforting it would be to imagine all this were reducible to the very British anti-Tory struggle we all know so well.



Belfast shipyards: stronghold of Loyalism

A DISCUSSION has begun on whether the relative voting strengths of trade unions and constituencies at Labour Party annual conference should be changed. Trade unions have roughly 91 per cent of the votes, constituency parties roughly eight per cent. The questions was formally raised at the 1983 Labour Party conference in a composite resolution calling on the National Executive Committee '...to initiate a study aimed at restructuring Labour Party conference' so as 'to secure a more just division of conference votes'. This resolution was remitted to the NEC.

At both Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and Labour Coordinating Committee annual meetings since then resolutions have been passed in favour of increasing the voting strength of the constituencies.

There is, of course, no 'impartial' or 'just' standard by which the proportion of the vote should be measured. The decision on what these proportions are is a political one.

At present the votes of constituencies and trade unions are calculated on the assumed equivalence of a party member 'affiliated' through his or her trade union, and an individual member belonging to a constituency party.

Affiliate members pay 50 pence a year as part of their trade union membership dues into their union's political fund. Their union executive may then pass to the Labour Party a part of the money raised. The number of affiliate members is determined by the amount paid to the Labour Party.

### Levy

Most unions do not pass on the whole of the political levy. There is no rule or convention which obliges them to do so. How much is passed on, if any, is entirely at the discretion of the executive of each union. Thus there is no way of telling which of the union members are or are not affiliate members of the party.

If fact, most union members who pay political levy would not regard themselves as Labour Party members. In contrast, an individual member of the Labour Party fills in a membership form, is accepted by a constituency, and regards him or herself as indisputably a party

member.

Employed members pay a subscription 14 times higher than the amount which an affiliate member pays in political levy. Thus it can be seen that the equivalence of the two types of membership is no more or less arbitrary than any other kind of weighting.

### Concern

Those who drafted the 1918 party constitution realised there was no criterion for such weighting other than a political one. The decision that an affiliate member would count the same as an individual member for conference voting was taken in order to ensure the dominance of the conservative-minded trade union wing of the party, over the 'politically unreliable' constituency activists.

The same biased thinking lay behind that part of the Labour Party constitution which provided for NEC constituency representatives to be nominated by constituencies but elected by the whole of conference — that is, by the block vote of trade union delegations. The constituencies managed to get this procedure changed in 1937, but the same ruling is used today in relation to the five women on the NEC.

It is not surprising, therefore, that those most adamant about the existing proportionality are amongst the most reactionary of the trade union leaders.

What is of concern is that some comrades on the left regard a prospective increase in constituency voting strength as an attack on the unions. Understandably, they are concerned that trade unions are at present

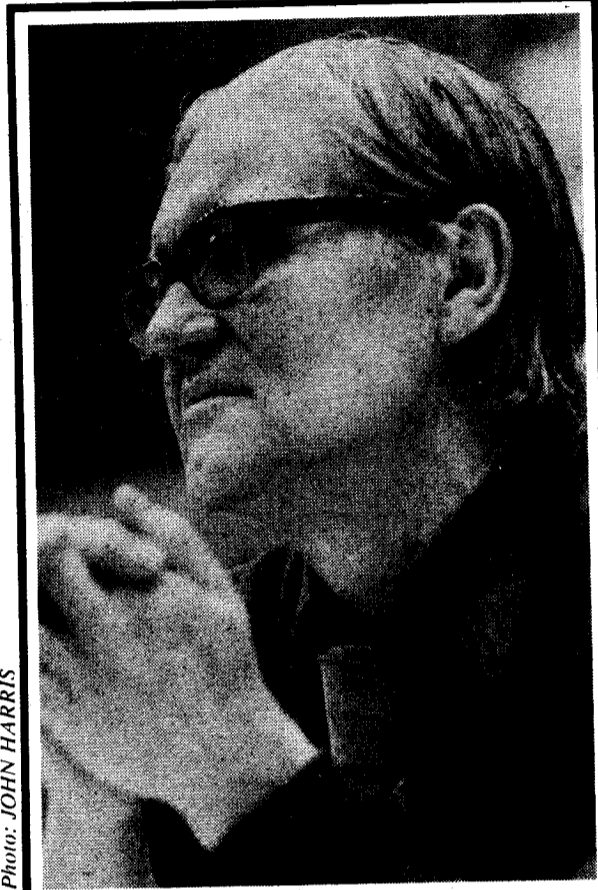


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Last year's Labour Party annual conference saw a move to change the relative voting strength of constituencies and trade unions. This has opened up a debate of major significance. VLADIMIR DEZER, secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, argues the case in favour of increasing constituency votes.

under fire, and fear that questioning their role at conference may be used by Labour's enemies.

Yet the critics of the trade unions may find it hard to use the unions' willingness to relinquish some of their power as an argument against them. In fact relations between the trade unions and constituencies are likely to improve if the constituencies are given a bigger say.

Trade union involvement at the constituency level is minimal except in rock-solid Labour seats which the unions control. Trade unionists probably see no need to attend constituency meetings when they know that whatever is proposed, the trade union

voting power at conference overwhelmingly dominates the decision.

At present constituency and political trade union activists only see each other at party conference and there is little opportunity for them to come together. If constituencies were to have more votes at conference, trade unionists might see attending general committee meetings and influencing constituency decisions as important.

Their contribution might make constituencies more 'conservative' but — on the positive side — it would lead to a two-way traffic of ideas and greater understanding of the two points of view.

A more spurious argument against changing the present proportions — that it would be an act of hostility against the unions — appears to be based on the assumption that trade union dominance of the Labour Party is a necessary condition for the party becoming socialist. We are told that Labour can be won to socialist policies only by winning the argument for socialism in the unions.

The underlying and unstated assumption of this argument is that the unions could be transformed into, or act as, a political party. In fact, the unions by their very nature cannot take the place of a socialist party.

The basis of union recruitment is the improvement of pay and conditions of a particular section of the working class within a capitalist society. A union's particular ideology — that is, one which derives from the special needs and claims of its members — prevents it from going outside the capitalist framework.

### Impact

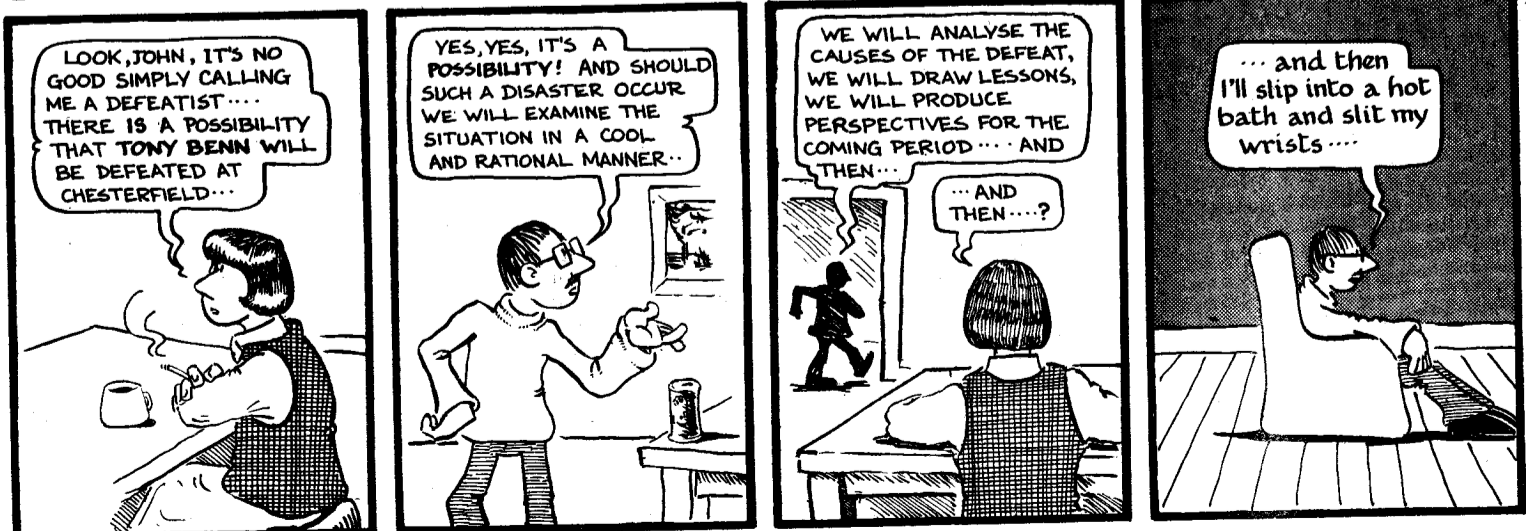
In practice, in matters of national politics, unions rely on the lead given to them by the political wing of the labour movement: the Labour Party. The question then is not whether the unions can become socialist, but whether the Labour Party's political wing has the potential of becoming so.

The Marxist left refuses to accept that the Labour Party can bring about socialist changes. However, their numerous attempts to set themselves up as a political force outside the Labour Party have been abortive. Unfortunately, the result has not only been their own political isolation, but — more importantly — their non-participation within the party has made it possible for Labour's right wing to remain dominant.

In the last analysis, we are faced with the refusal by the Marxists to acknowledge the reality of the political conditions under which they must operate if they wish to have a political impact.

## A PIECE OF THE ACTION

By CORMAC



# Grenada — What's happening?

**THE INVASION** of Grenada on 25 October 1983 was the first US military intervention in the English-speaking Caribbean. Fifteen thousand military personnel attacked a population of only 108,000 people.

In December a labour movement delegation went to discover the full extent of the impact of the invasion. A variety of trade unions and Labour Parties were represented on the eight person delegation.

**TREVOR SHELDON** asks **RUPERT DOWNING**, chairperson of the Britain Grenada Friendship Society, and a delegation member, about their findings.

**What were the immediate effects of the US invasion of Grenada?**

It resulted in a heavy death toll of Grenadians, definitely more than the 30 the Americans admit to. It will be difficult to assess exactly, since we heard reports about mass graves for Grenadians killed during the fighting.

We saw large scale destruction of agricultural land, roads and public utilities due to the combat. Also the invading forces have been consolidating their position. This has meant a massive purge of anyone suspected of being at all progressive.

Two thousand Grenadians have been detained at Point Salines. They have been held under appalling conditions and interrogated. Many people have been under surveillance and harassment in an effort to suppress any opposition to the continuing occupation of the country.

**You say they are occupying the country?**

The US claim to have withdrawn their combat troops from Grenada. Well this is just not true. At least 450 from the 82nd airborne division (Rapid Deployment Force) remain. These are supported by nearly 600 heavily armed Caribbean forces (mainly Jamaican and Barbadian), and supported by four coast guard units and 15-16 helicopter gunships.

In addition there are 250 CIA and military intelligence officers who have taken over a ministry building in St Georges.

**Is there any evidence of torture?**

We interviewed people who had been detained for short periods of time and who showed us scars of the torture which had been used. One trade unionist showed us the scars from having been strangled twice almost to death, with rope and then submerged in water almost until drowning, during interrogation. Others had received similar treatment.

Of those detained at Richmond Hill at least two suffered electric shock treatment, another lost his right hand as a result of the torture used by the Americans. At least 37 remain in detention without charge and all delegations have been refused access to these detainees.

**So who controls Grenada?**

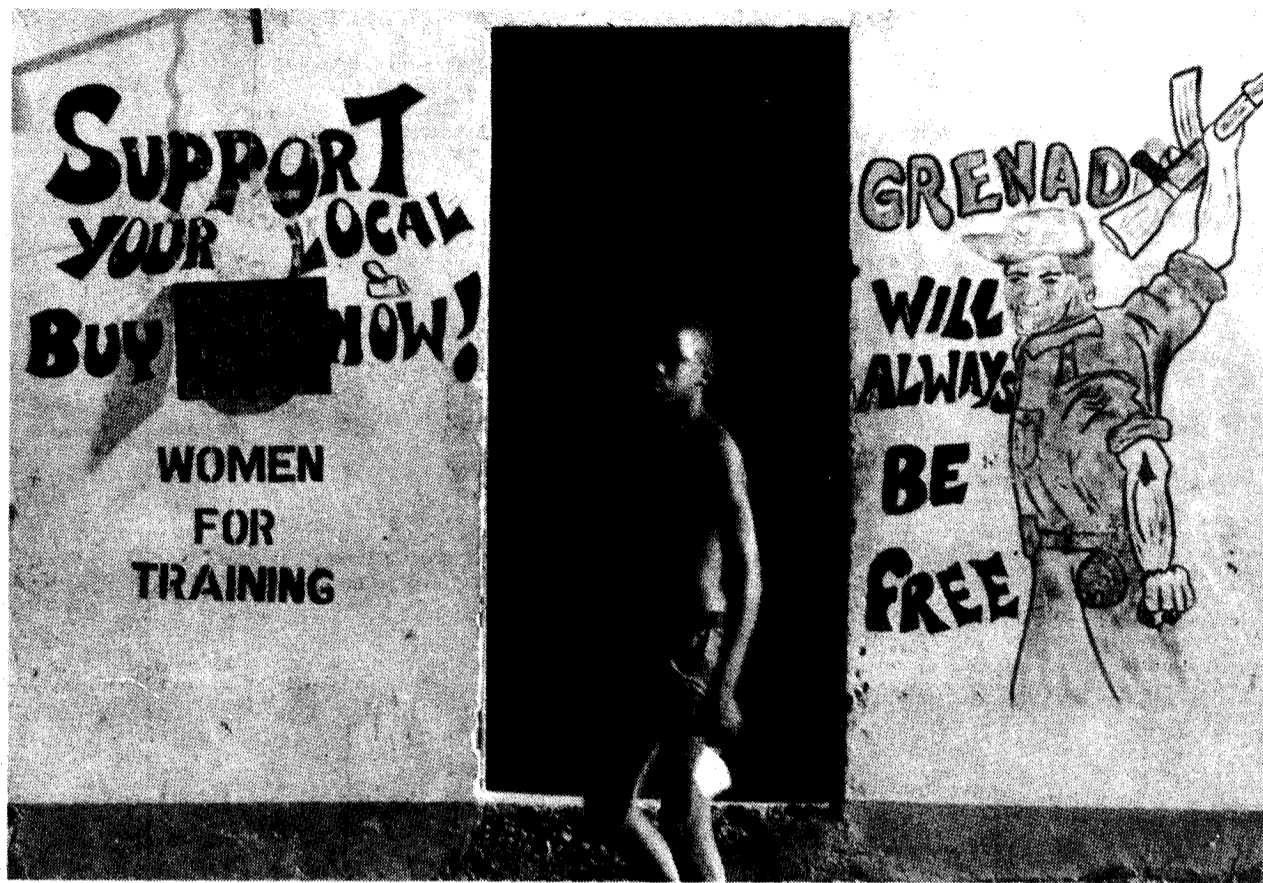
Very clearly the Americans. The governor general is at all times surrounded by American aides, and has assumed near dictatorial powers. The Interim Council that was set up, supposedly as a neutral, caretaker body, is acting as a stooge for US interests.

Rather than acting purely administratively they are transforming the country politically and economically, turning it into a dependency of the US.

Economic development projects, part of Grenada's attempt to become economically more self-sufficient have been closed, which, combined with the purges of the civil and education services has led to around 3,500 workers being sacked since the invasion. In other words, unemployment which the revolution brought down from around 50 per cent under Gairy, to 12 per cent in 1983, has now returned to the levels of the Gairy dictatorship.

The US are clearly disrupting the economy, making it dependent on multinational investment and US aid, thus transforming Grenada into an economic colony of the United States.

**One of the achievements of the revolution was the development of free trade unions and popular mass**



Growing Grenadian resistance still confronts US repression



**organisations — what has happened to these since the invasion?**

Now the trade unions have been subjected to searches, requisitioning of their transport and resources and individual executive members have been arrested, detained, interrogated and in some cases tortured. The invaders have used right wing unions (e.g. the seamen and waterfront workers union) and the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) to attack other unions, run smear campaigns and try to take over the progressive unions. However, they are resisting. Recently, occupying forces were brought in to put down an agricultural workers strike, but the workers held out and got a negotiated settlement.

**The revolution represented a major gain for women in Grenada. How**

**have women in particular been affected?**

Women have been worst hit because under the revolution progress for women and their involvement in the process, especially in employment, had really moved forward. A lot of the sacked civil servants and teachers were women. Also the National Women's Organisation has been disbanded and its staff sacked as have the staff of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Assistance to single parents and all other social welfare programmes have been stopped and this has hit the large number of women in Grenada who are single parents.

**So how have the Grenadan people responded to the invasion? Did you see any evidence of resistance?**

It's true that initially the position of most people was relief at the removal of the Military Council which overthrew Bishop. They didn't really care who did it. Now the mood is changing very rapidly. It was clear that the majority of Grenadians were very frustrated and angry with the continued occupation of their country. The majority of working Grenadians we spoke to were very hostile. They say that 'now they have got rid of the Military Council they want their country back and revolution back.' They do not want their programmes closed down or the people harassed by the military which they never invited in the first place.

This increasing resistance was clear. We saw American troops being stoned by young people in the countryside. American propaganda

posters torn down angrily by Grenadians and people quite openly wearing Maurice Bishop badges recently produced and revolutionary headscarves.

**What role has the British government played in the invasion and subsequent events?**

It is important to understand that the US invasion was planned a long time ago and they have had dress rehearsals like the 1981 Amber and the Ambergines exercises.

It is clear from the Reagan-Thatcher alliance on foreign policy that the Thatcher government was consulted at all times and was fully involved. Indeed we now have information that one hundred paratroopers from Plymouth were flown to the region five days before the invasion and were in Barbados along with the US forces prepared to go in.

The Tory government has also been involved in the occupation. British police 'advisors' have been sent and most of the £3/4 million British aid is going towards setting up a 550-man paramilitary defence force which will take over the running of the country.

**What are the international implications of the invasion?**

The defeat of the revolution has been a major blow to progressive struggles throughout the Caribbean and is a clear indication of the aggressive character and development of US imperialism in the region.

For example, Jamaican officers told us that when they left Jamaica, they were told that they were going to Barbados to defend it against invasion. However, when they got there and were told they were going now to invade Grenada, a large number of the men refused to obey and were sent back to Jamaica.

This shows a level of anti-imperialist understanding that will continue to develop and sharpen in the Caribbean despite the apparent strength of the United States.

**What do Grenadians see as our role here in solidarity?**

They were quite clear on that. The progressive trade unions are desperate for our support. They cannot continue to operate unless they have international assistance to reduce the level of repression. They said that 'it's really important that you organise to get the troops out, to get the pressure off us and to get those CIA bastards out. We want you to act very quickly and urgently to help us return Grenada to some form of democratic self-determination'.

One thing that began while we were there and has now been formally launched was the *Maurice Bishop Memorial Foundation*. This will be used to channel assistance to the victims of the massacre of 19 October and the invasion.

**What should organisations and labour movement bodies do now?**

Firstly we need to get the facts known and the delegation welcomes invitations for speakers from organisations anywhere ... to inform groups about events and discuss the situation. Secondly, there are copies of the delegation's comprehensive report available and we welcome orders. It is important to get it out to as many labour movement bodies as possible.

It is important for organisations to raise the human rights violations, the harassment, the searches, detentions, torture and situations where rights of employment are removed arbitrarily because of political beliefs. Trade unions in particular must organise around this.

We also urge organisations and individuals to affiliate to the Britain Grenada Friendship Society which, since its establishment in 1980, has played an important role in building support for the Grenadan revolution. We think that the Caribbean is an important part of the world and that it is a priority to continue our internationalist work. So we urge all bodies and individuals to get involved in this work.

● Copies of the delegation's report are available at £1. For further information, speakers and so on contact: Labour Movement Delegation to Grenada, 4 Gray's Inn Buildings, Roseberry Avenue, London, EC1P 01-806 9112.

# U.S. Freeze movement

**SUPPORT FOR a nuclear freeze has spread very widely in the United States. Should American socialists give their endorsement to the freeze movement or should they insist that the anti-nuclear movement be explicitly unilateralist?**

In the following article which is an edited version of one that appeared in the American newspaper *Socialist Action* the author **MARK HARRIS** argues that the freeze movement should be supported. He points out that its dynamic will lead it into conflict with the American ruling class and take it along the path against the military goals of US imperialism.

The stakes in the struggle against nuclear war are immense. There are some 50,000 nuclear weapons ready for use in the world today with the capacity to destroy all human life some 22 times over.

As Albert Einstein said, 'I don't know what weapons are going to be used in the next war. But I know very well the ones that will be used in the war after that: "the bow and arrow."'

With this sober realisation in mind, nearly three million people took to the streets of Europe's major cities last October in opposition to Ronald Reagan's plan for deploying 572 Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe. In West Germany alone, where 108 Pershing II missiles will be based, more than a million people demonstrated on 23 October.

A million people gathered in New York City on 12 June 1982, in the largest demonstration in American history, to protest the spiraling nuclear arms buildup. Contrary to Reagan's glib assertion in 1981 that a limited nuclear exchange is possible in Europe, millions of people instinctively grasp the reality that a nuclear war is not 'winnable'.

In the United States the latest resurgence of the anti-nuclear weapons movement took its initial form in the campaign for a bilateral freeze of the arms race by the United States and the Soviet Union. Ballot propositions in eight of nine states and hundreds of cities have expressed widespread support for the bilateral freeze proposal.

While the proposal appeared at first glance to be equally directed at the United States and the Soviet Union, the great majority of the activists in the movement, as well as the millions who joined the periodic anti-nuclear actions



Freeze movement demonstration: should be supported in the United States

across the country, saw the freeze as primarily directed against the policies of the US government.

This flowed from the simple fact that it is only the United States that threatens to deploy new and qualitatively superior weapons. Every demonstration for a nuclear freeze has also shown by its banners, slogans and speakers, a natural tendency to oppose US intervention in Central America, and to counterpose to the billions spent on arms to the lack of funds for jobs and social services.



The Soviet Union has declared its support for a nuclear freeze. The inescapable logic of the freeze demand then is for the United States, not the Soviet Union, to agree. And it is precisely the US refusal to back off on its plan to deploy the new and more deadly missiles in Europe that

guarantees the focus against US policy will deepen.

It is true that the leaders of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign risk derailing the movement through their policy of reliance on the Democratic Party. At their annual conference last December, they announced a major campaign to support 'pro-freeze' candidates in local, state, and national elections in 1984. At the heart of their strategy will be a campaign to replace Ronald Reagan with the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party. But it is missing the point about the nuclear freeze movement to simply reduce it to a manoeuvre of the Democrat Party aimed to take the heat off Washington's 'real war' in Central America and done to hold the USSR solely responsible for the nuclear threat.

The ability of the anti-nuclear movement to organise as an independent, non exclusive campaign turned towards involving the largest number of people through mass action and mobilising around the anti-capitalist demand of: 'No nuclear weapons' directed at the US rulers will be the

ultimate measure of its success.

The ultimate capacity of the movement to find an organisational expression in the US labour movement will also prove to be an indication of its future growth and power.



Democratic Party politicians who claim support for the nuclear freeze understand the extent of popular support for an end to the arms race, but they fear the thrust of an independent mass movement against Washington's war drive.

This was also the case during the movement against the Vietnam War. When the first demonstration against the war was held in April 1965 in Washington, DC, the 20,000 demonstrators faced considerable hostility from a large sector of the American population. But the campaign of mass action, demonstrations,

teach-ins and student strikes never let up, and the antiwar movement eventually won the hearts and minds of a majority of the American people. The antiwar movement was not only an instrumental factor in forcing the United States out of Vietnam. It so profoundly altered the political climate in the country that the American ruling class still strains against the albatross of the Vietnam syndrome.

The movement against the war in Vietnam showed the power of masses of people — mobilised in the streets and in broad, democratic decision-making conferences — to win the withdrawal of US troops, and to overcome the manoeuvres of forces oriented towards the Democratic Party.

Today with the cutbacks in social services, massive unemployment, attacks on minority and women's rights, and attacks against the unions, the potential power of the antiwar, anti-nuclear weapons movement is even greater than during the 1960s. While less than 14 per cent of the public supported 'immediate withdrawal' from Vietnam in 1965, today a large majority not only oppose new US weapons in Europe but are against US intervention in Central America.

Despite the formal wording of the resolution for a bilateral freeze, there is an inherent dynamic to this campaign that focuses on the US role in the arms race. It is the United States that is unilaterally raising the stakes of the arms race by its relentless military buildup.

When a million people demonstrate in America against nuclear weapons, isn't the thrust of this action aimed directly at Washington? When citizens in Utah and Montana demand that no MX missiles be placed in their state, isn't this a unilateral demand on the US government? When demonstrators call for 'Jobs, not Bombs,' or 'No Neutron Bombs,' isn't this aimed unilaterally at Washington?

As Washington continues to escalate the arms race, the demand for



**I WAS DOING** a speaking tour in Michigan which included visits to an action at Williams International Corporation at Walled Lake just north of Detroit. They have a contract to make a F107 turbo jet engine for cruise. Each engine costs \$300,000. It was then I got arrested for conspiracy.

During the last blockade on Friday 2 December some supporters heard my name coming over the police walkie-talkie with instructions to arrest me. We then went through a fumbling charade of trying to hide me in the crowd and change my clothes! It was no good. A young Quaker tried to help me by taking me to his car, but I was grabbed from behind and told I was under arrest for trespass.

It seems that the Sheriff's department had infiltrated the training sessions. Fifty one people were charged with conspiracy and trespass. I am the only person who is charged *only* with conspiracy. I did not take part in the

blockade. My release was secured by raising two \$1,000 personal loans pending two trials on three counts of conspiracy. Two of the charges carry one year maximum sentences and the other 6 months maximum. If they were to run concurrently my maximum time in jail will be 10 months.



**My crimes involve:**

- \* Showing a film of Greenham about blockading, taking over the sentry box and celebrating. I joked about the film being dangerous material.

- \* Waving a piece of Greenham Common fence around and describing the 29 October action planned by Women Against Cruise.

- \* Generally offering encouragement and applause for what they were doing at Greenham.

- \* There was a fourth way in which I offered encouragement. I used the words of Thomas Merton and Thoreau.

It seems they were trying to confiscate the Greenham film. There are many unanswered questions. Did the fact that I am a plaintiff in the Greenham women versus Reagan in the New York Federal Court have anything to do with all this? Or is it simply that Greenham women are dangerous creatures and the US military must be protected?

The cases of all of us are to be held in two different courts, in Walled Lake and in Pontiac, but all are subject to appeal. In Walled Lake the prosecutor has gone over the top and has asked the whole bench of three judges to disqualify themselves, because of bias in our favour. They have refused and the

Prosecutor is appealing to the Supreme Court of the state.

The arguments on my behalf will centre on the First Amendment rights to free speech and advocacy and opinion is that they ought to succeed, but nothing is certain. One of the lawyers Bill Goodman described my arrest as an attempt to teach the peace movement not to make international links. Let's show them that what the *New York Guardian* calls one of the sharpest cases of police repression and police spying in the US in more than a decade will simply sharpen our commitment to peace making. Wittier souls than myself would probably manage to quote things about exiles in a strange land at this point but I can only think of one suitable word. **HELP.** Love and Peace, Jean Hutchinson. If you want to help Jean write to: *Greenham Woman Against Cruise*, 5 Leonard St, London E2.

### News on International Women's Day

Women at CND plan to protest outside a top level arms conference in London and Paris. If you want to join in ring CND on 01-263 0977.

## Greenham Women Against Cruise

On 29 February Greenham Women Against Cruise are proposing that cruise missiles are dismantled and returned to the USA. We hope you will join us in imaginative actions organised locally.

Get your information from regional contacts

South West 06267 79232  
Brighton 0273 556 744  
Southampton 0703 554434  
London 01-639 8561  
Wales 0222 45381/566548  
Scotland 041 423 1485  
Birmingham 021 449 8703  
Sheffield 0742 589375  
Nottingham 0602 47315  
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Lancaster 0524 751361  
Newcastle 0632 653224  
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Oxford 0865 722883  
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East Anglia 0603 667823  
Donations to GWAC, 5 Leonard St, London EC2



Reagan and Thatcher: united behind nuclear escalation

a nuclear freeze will increasingly tend to give way to concrete unilateral demands, such as no new missiles in Europe. Are the supporters of a nuclear freeze ready to 'freeze' the now existing Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe. Obviously not.

We know that there can be no lasting disarmament, no lasting security from the threat of nuclear destruction until the capitalist system, which has spawned the horrible possibility of nuclear war, is eliminated. But saying this does not make irrelevant the deployment of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe.

The peace movement certainly earned a victory in 1963 when a ban on atmospheric nuclear tests was ratified. Any and every step toward the disarmament of capitalism is in the interests of the working class. The best way to counter liberal Democrats' intentions to turn the freeze campaign into a petty diplomatic affair in the hip pocket of the Democratic Party is to steer the anti-nuclear weapons movement toward a clear mass-action perspective challenging every front of Reagan's military buildup from nuclear weapons to intervention in Central America.

Speaking to the real concerns of millions of ordinary Americans, the anti-war and anti-nuclear weapons movement can mobilise a broad mass struggle that will not only throw a wrench into the military objectives of the government but, also, deepen the political awareness, experience, and capacity for organization of the majority of working people.

**Socialist Action can be obtained from Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army Street, No. 308, 94110 San Francisco, California, USA. The subscription price for 12 issues is 20 dollars (£15 sterling).**

## Greetings from a class war veteran

I HAVE read all the issues of Socialist Action and overall I find them pleasing to my eyes. I still do not quite understand your political standpoint. I do not know where you came from and where you are going, except in the broad sense that like myself you have a socialist objective. But so have many others.

I have not read much of the SWP literature these days but I get the *Militant* now and then. It isn't a patch on Socialist Action — more like a news sheet with an article added.

I was a Communist. I think the CP is dying, but I do not want to get in on the act of kicking it to death. It is being strangled by its own contradictions and needs no help to do this from me or the editor of Socialist Action.

All the Communists I know are fine comrades, Stalinists included. You want a job done and they'll do it — and we all know that action speaks louder than words.



Soviet troops in Hungary 1956

History had passed the CPGB by and it doesn't know it. Communist Russia hangs around its neck like a python. Their objections to Stalinism come too late for redemption and have only split the Party asunder. Its latest cry of a 'broad democratic alliance' is an impossible dream.

Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Gulag mentality of the

USSR have sunk deeply into the minds of the western working class and makes explanation of socialism difficult — but explain we must.

I see that Socialist Action supports Broad Left initiatives and I congratulate you on that. I am an old class war horse but I could be of some help.

J MATHIESON, Glenroches, Scotland.

## Monty Python Conference

I COULD not resist writing to you after reading the article headlined 'Left Gains at LPYS Conference' (SA43). You see I recently attended the Wales Regional YS conference in Cardiff as a delegate from Newport West and along with the comrades from Newport East we were the only two branches to offer alternative views to that of the *Militant*.

*Militant* had tight control in Cardiff as they did in Brighton and this was shown wherever we opposed a resolution.

Newport West's resolution was to call for the destruction of the Police Bill and we also urged conference to campaign at local levels against the Bill. It was passed but with an amendment, which we opposed, calling for the Police to have trade union rights as they were workers disguised as police!

Newport East had a similar problem, for like Oxford East they called for women's rights within the LP and trade unions, and for the YS to

organise weekend schools on women's rights. It was passed but amended. Instead of weekend schools the amendment called for discussion on women and the fight for socialism — and we all know what kind of socialism *Militant* have in mind.

Newport West sponsored a Labour Briefing fringe meeting which besides being swamped, en masse, by *Militant* supporters was a success.

We felt as David Sheppard does, that we have to concentrate on organising the YS minorities in different regions. Comrades of Newport West and East would like to thank supporters of *Revolution* for their support which was much needed.

Finally I have to say if we had not laughed we would have cried. The regional conference somehow reminded me of an educational weekend for Monty Python enthusiasts — I wonder why?

DAI BERRY, Newport West LPYS

**KLMNOPQRSTU  
IJKLETTERSTU  
IJKLMNOPQRST**

## CLPD members, the facts

SINCE COMRADE Jude Woodward has only been involved with CLPD for a short time she is hardly in a position to make comments such as 'the smaller size of this year's conference reflects the first decline in membership' (SA44).

For your information, in 1980 CLPD had a total of 1207 registered supporters and organisations and under 200 attended the AGM. In 1981 we had 1445 registered and only some 100 came to the AGM.

In 1982-3, the year of the takeover bid, we had 1646 registered and over 500 at the AGM. In 1984 we had 1436 registered and some 250 at the successful three-venue AGM.

It is clear therefore that the smaller AGM in



1984 compared to 1982-3 had everything to do with the takeover bid and nothing to do with the small fall in registered supporters.

And for the record, our treasurer, Victor Schonfield did not 'attack WAC'. Rather he spelt out the facts in relation to the financial support CLPD gave to WAC over the past year. PETE WILLISMAN, Assistant Secretary CLPD.

## 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.

### Labour Movement

● CLP National conference County Hall, London SE1. Credentials £3 and £2 for second delegate (must be a woman), c/o Islington South CLP 295 Upper St, London N1.

● Broad Left Organising Conference Octagon Centre, Western Bank, Sheffield, Sat 24 March 11-5.30. Credentials from George Williamson, 11 Sutton Place London E9 6EH.

● Womens Action Committee half day conference, Sat 25 Feb., 2-6pm, Sidney Building, All Saints, Oxford Rd, Manchester. 'Labour Women — Action in Manchester', speakers Jo Richardson MP, Ann Pettifor. Workshops, creche. Write to WAC, 86 Watts St Manchester 19.

● Briefing Women discuss preparation of 'Labour Women and Feminism' forum. A Womens Place, Hungerford House, Embankment, London. Sun 26 Feb, 2pm.

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### Disarmament

● Trade Union CND AGM, Sat 25 Feb. Details from TUCND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.

● Labour and NATO Labour Briefing discussion conference. Sat 24 March, 10.30-5pm County Hall, London.

● Greenham Common cabaret and benefit. Chats Palace, Brooksby Walk, London E9. Fri 2 March. With The Exocettes, Sensible Footwear, The Wild Girls. £2.50/£1.50 unwaged.

### Anti-cuts campaigns

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

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### Ireland

● Labour and Ireland day school for budding writers, workshops with trained journalists. London, Feb or March, £1. Write to Labour and Ireland, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

● International Womens Day delegation to Belfast. March 9-12, women only delegation and mixed picket of Armagh Jail. Information from London Armagh Group, 374 Gray's Inn Rd WC1.

### International

● Sri Lankan Research & Information Group will provide speakers on the current situation there for meetings. Write to 9 Grays Inn Buildings, London EC1.

● 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.

● Sponsored day for El Salvador 24 March. Day of national activities on anniversary of Archbishop Romero's assassination. Details from ELSSOC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

● Victor Jara festival Royal Festival Hall, Fri 2 March, 7.30, featuring Inti Illimiani, Isabel Parra, Angel Parra, Santiago Del Nuevo Extremo from Chile. Tickets from Chile Solidarity, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7, tel. 272 4298.

● Film premiere *Return to Haifa*, based on novel by Ghassan Kanafani. Wed 29 Feb, University of London Union, Malet St, London, 7pm.

● Concert for El Salvador with Orchestra Jazira. Fri 24 Feb, 8pm, LSE Houghton St, (Haldane Rooms), London. Tickets £3.50/£2.50 unwaged.

● Grenada, the Caribbean and Black People's rights in Britain labour movement meeting. Thur 1 March, 7.30pm, Highfields Workshop Centre, Leicester. Speakers include Cecil Gutsmore, Peter Soulsby (leader of City council) Surinder Sharma, and from the New Jewel Movement Support Group.

### 25 Years of the Cuban Revolution

● Britain-Cuba Resource Centre Information about activities, subs to Granma weekly review and newsletters from 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

● Womens study tour of Cuba 4-20 April, information from BCRC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

● Cuban workers trade union commemoration. Organised by UCATT building workers. 19 April, County Hall, London, 7pm. Tickets £1 from Britain Cuba Resource Centre, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

### Civil Rights

● Action Group on Immigration and Nationality Conference on the case for reform of the law, Sat 24 March, 10-4.30, AUEW House, 43 The Crescent, Salford.

● Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom conference on a new labour movement daily paper. Sun 26 Feb, County Hall, London SE1, 10am. Details from CPBF, 9 Poland St, London W1.

● Hackney Campaign against the Police Bill day event at Chats Palace, Brooksby Walk, London E9. Sat 25 Feb, 2-11pm. Films, exhibitions, theatre, Benjamin Zephaniah, live music.

● Immigration Widows Kit information and advice on information against the immigration attacks on women. From Women Immigration and Nationality Group, c/o 44 Theobalds Rd, London WC1. 85p (inc p&p).

### Lesbian & Gay Liberation

● London Labour Campaign for Gay Rights new office at 39 Chippenham Rd, W9 2AH 01-286 9692, open Tues-Thur 11am-7pm. (Westbourne Grove tube. Bad access, help available).

● Labour Movement Lesbians is a new organisation of lesbians in the labour movement to support each other and organise initiatives on issues that affect lesbians. Further information from Sarah c/o Feminist Library, Hungerford House, Victoria Embk, London WC2.

### Miscellaneous

● GLC workshops Employment and training for the future. 23 Feb Cooperatives. Black Women's Centre Brixton, 41A Stockwell Green, London, SW9, 7-9.30 pm. 8 March practical workshops for women on computer use. Room 97 County Hall. 22 March Migrants in the NHS, County Hall. 5 April Migrants, black women and trade unions, County Hall.

Abortion Rights and Facilities Conference University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1 25 February 1984. 10-5 Registration from NAC, 47 Waldrum Park Rd, London SE, 23.

### New pamphlet: Politics in the 1980's — The British Crisis.

Articles reprinted from Socialist Action and *International* — John Ross, British politics in the 1980's; Alan Freeman, How Labour Can Win; Steve Marks, the 1983 Election; John Ross, Facing 1984; Alan Freeman, Rebuilding the Labour Party.

Available from PO Box 50 London N1, price 35p, (plus 16p, p/p).

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The Soviet Politbureau. Bottom row (left to right): Ustinov, Gromyko, Chernenko. Behind Chernenko, Romanov and (far right) Gorbachev.

# Discordant voices face Chernenko

ONE OF THE curious features of European politics at the present time is that Washington is imposing far greater monolithism on the West European states than is being done in Eastern Europe by Moscow.

It is just not on for a NATO regime to oppose cruise and Pershing or even to ask for the dual-key. The most that was allowed was for Greece to ask for a six months postponement of deployment. Washington has also tried to impose monolithism in economic relations with the East, with Reagan's drive for economic warfare against Moscow, and although West European resistance on this issue has been more successful, Washington continues to keep arm-twisting.

In contrast, East European governments have taken a sharply divergent stand on nuclear missiles and on economic relations with the West. Husak in Prague is the Thatcher of the Warsaw Pact, 'calling for' missiles to be deployed in Czechoslovakia. And Honecker's acceptance of Soviet missiles was accompanied by a great public voicing of disquiet.

Meanwhile Hungary reputedly managed to resist Soviet pressure for missiles deployment. Zhivkov in Bulgaria said that his country would never accept nuclear weapons on its territory — no doubt an easy issue since Moscow did not intend deployment there, but nevertheless a gratuitously categorical statement.

There has been similar dissonance over foreign economic policy. Hungary has joined the IMF and is now breaking further from the ranks by trying to negotiate a special trade deal with the Common Market, while the Czechoslovaks trumpet the need for closer integration of Eastern Europe into Com-econ.

More generally, it is evident that in place of a

general Eastern bloc line, local and regional features are being increasingly emphasised in the foreign policies of the Comecon countries. At one end, Bulgaria is pre-occupied with Balkan issues, lining up with Greece for a nuclear-free zone and groping for a link-up with Albania.

By Oliver MacDonald

At the other end, the GDR is increasingly pre-occupied with maintaining good economic relations with Bonn. Czechoslovakia is trying to upstage its neighbours by establishing a Thatcher-style 'special relationship' with its bloc leadership (Moscow).

The source of these centrifugal trends can only partly be explained by Soviet flexibility. The much more likely reason is the protracted crisis in the Kremlin. During the sluggish years of Brezhnev's dotage, Moscow was overwhelmingly pre-occupied with one issue in Eastern Europe — the Polish revolution.

## Struggle

No sooner was the Jaruzelski counter-revolution set in motion, than the Kremlin was plunged into the succession crisis. Andropov's illness prevented the emergence of a new Soviet line for pulling the East European states together. And Chernenko's takeover is not going to resolve the leadership crisis. On the contrary it may deepen it by setting off a struggle within the Kremlin.

In many ways, the governments of Eastern



Jaruzelski: would welcome more freedom from Moscow

Europe welcome the extra margin of manoeuvre that the Soviet leadership crisis allows them. At the same time they are nervous because of the uncertainties over Moscow's future course and are feverishly lobbying for answers that favour their own particular interests to come out from the tussles within the Kremlin.

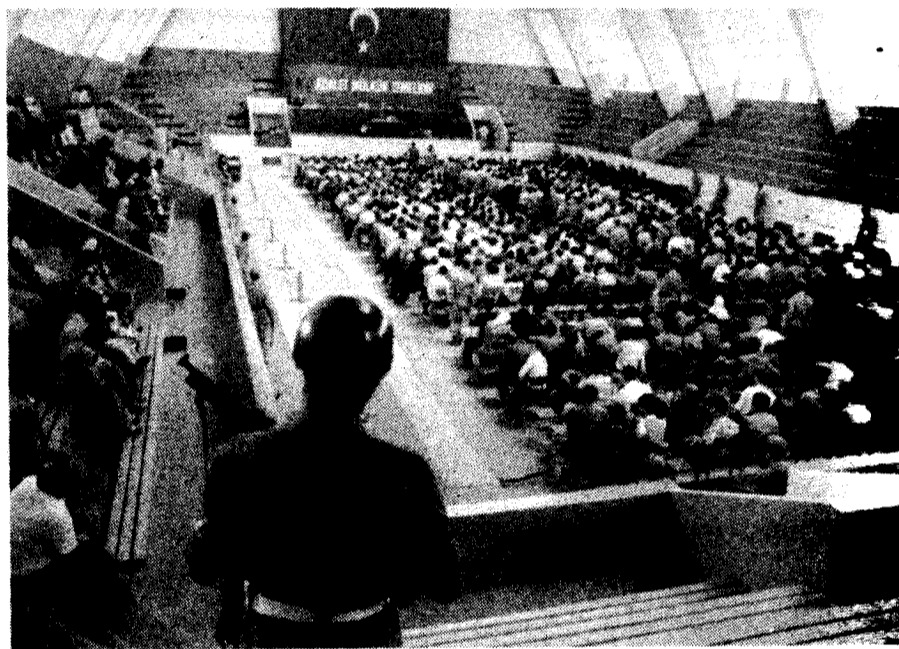
Two of these issues dwarf all others as far as the East European governments are concerned. Firstly what sort of economic reform, if any, will emerge within the USSR? Secondly, will the USSR decide to break the economic links between Eastern Europe and the West and turn Comecon sharply towards autarchy in response to the Cold War?

A radical decentralisation of economic management in the USSR would be welcomed by the Hungarians, by the Jaruzelski group within the Polish regime, and

probably by the Bulgarians. The dominant group within the Czechoslovak regime would be hostile to such a reform.

But it is the issue of economic relations with the West that is probably the most sensitive issue for the other Comecon governments. A sharp turn towards autarky would be welcomed by the Husak regime and by a powerful group in Poland. It would cause a major crisis in both Hungary and the GDR.

Chernenko's victory has been welcomed most by those who oppose economic reforms, but insofar as he follows Brezhnev's line of seeking deals with the West as the top priority of Soviet policy abroad, this will be welcomed by the East European regimes most dependent on East-West trade. But the longer that the drift continues in Moscow, the more difficult it will be for Moscow to lay down the line in Eastern Europe.



Mass trials like this have convicted tens of thousands of socialists and workers in Turkey

# New atrocity in Diyarbakir

OVER 2000 political prisoners in Diyarbakir prison, Turkey, went on hunger strike on 3 January 1984 in protest against the retraction of the limited rights gained after their September 1983 hunger strike.

Diyarbakir, a town of 400,000 inhabitants, is the capital of the Kurdish nation whose larger part is within the borders of the Turkish state. There are eight million Kurds in Turkey, about one-fifth of the total population.

Immediately trials involving the prisoners were suspended and family visits stopped so that no-one could find out exactly what was happening within the prison walls. On 6 January a fire was started in the wing of the prison where most of the leaders of the Kurdish national liberation movement are held.

Some 5,000 people are reported by Kurdish sources to have gathered outside the prison in a militant protest against the authorities. Apparently twenty prisoners were badly burned and wounded in

this fire and transferred to military hospital.

By Nigel Johnson

On 24 January, relatives of four prisoners were told to come and collect the bodies of their relatives from the military hospital, allegedly victims of the fire. While all news of the incident is banned from the press and radio, the information has filtered out from the relatives of Diyarbakir prisoners that among the dead are Najmeddin Byukkaya, a leader of the Association for Freedom for Kurdistan; Yilmaz Derim, a leader of the Socialist Party of Turkey-Kurdistan; Khalil Char-pakh, a leader of the Kurdish Workers Party.

Reports that Mehdi Zana, Mayor of Diyarbakir, serving a twenty-five year sentence, was among the victims appear to be unfounded.

This is surely one of the most vile atrocities yet committed by the Turkish junta — now wearing its civilian clothes—since the

sham elections four months ago! It is an urgent priority that the 'civilian' government of Turgut Ozal be forced to accept a fact-finding mission to the prison from the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International.

Meanwhile we should note that alone among European councillors, it was the British Tories who engineered the readmittance of Turkey to the Council of Europe by a filibustering manoeuvre, which, despite a walk out by other councillors, has ensured by a constitutional nicety that Turkey's bloody dictatorship will once again be seated at the council.

An opportunity to unify and develop the solidarity work on Turkey and Turkey-Kurdistan will come with the Labour Movement Conference on Turkey called by a number of Labour MPs for 12 May. Make sure your organisation sends delegates.

For more information contact the Turkey Solidarity Campaign, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

# Nuclear profits make murder worthwhile



**ONE EVENING** in 1974 Karen Silkwood was driving to meet a reporter from the *New York Times* and a representative from her trade union.

In her car was detailed evidence which indicted her company Kerr-McGree with negligence and falsification about safety regulations at its plutonium plant in Cimarron Oklahoma. Then her car crashed and she died. The state patrol police dismissed her death as 'accidental'. The FBI insisted there was no evidence she had been murdered.

apartment they found cheese and bologna contaminated with plutonium and all the apartment's contents had to be destroyed.

## Cynics

The cynics at Kerr-McGree claimed she had deliberately contaminated herself with carcinogenic substances just to embarrass the company! The murder of Karen Silkwood became a *cause celebre* in the United States. Her union fought against the phoney findings of the state police and the FBI. They were joined by her parents, anti-nuclear protesters and feminists — more than 100 women arrested at the Pine Gap Peace Protest gave the name 'Karen Silkwood' to the cops.

**By Bob Pennington**

A car-crash expert hired by her union — the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union — said her car had been rammed from behind by another vehicle and driven off the road. The manila folder with all the damaging material against Kerr-McGree — conveniently for the company — had disappeared. The evidence she had been compiling over four years about Kerr-McGree's disregard for health and safety which had put employees at death risk from cancer was gone. Kerr-McGree could breathe a sigh of relief. Ms Silkwood's death for them was most convenient. Her detailed indictment of the company had been backed up by Doctor Karl Morgan, professor of nuclear engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Meryl Streep is now playing Karen in a recently released film about her life and arranged death. On 12 January a US court ruled after the company admitted conspiring with the police to steal the manila folder from her car that her parents were entitled to damages. A staggering \$10.3 million was awarded to her mother and father.

He reported that 'plutonium pellets were scattered about desks and hallways' adding 'with regard to long term cancer risks, there seemed to be little concern'. Karen's own monitor revealed she had been exposed to the deadly plutonium. When investigators checked her

For Kerr-McGree that sum is peanuts. There are untold billions to be made out of government contracts for nuclear projects. What's the life of some of its workforce or even the murder of one of them matter when the returns are so great?

After all if you are manufacturing products that will wipe out entire continents, why get squeamish about your own workers?

# Youth CND against Reagan

Last weekend's Youth CND conference agreed to call for a mass demonstration in London when Reagan comes this June. The emergency resolution, proposed by the Leeds YCND, called on CND to mobilise the whole movement and committed the National Committee to organising a march of youth and students.

The demonstration could coincide with European-wide actions in the period before the EEC elections.

It would, hopefully, reach the vast numbers that turned out in protest when Reagan last came to Europe. The conference, which was hailed as the most representative ever with 90 groups and 30 individuals registered, was endorsed by the CND executive over the weekend.

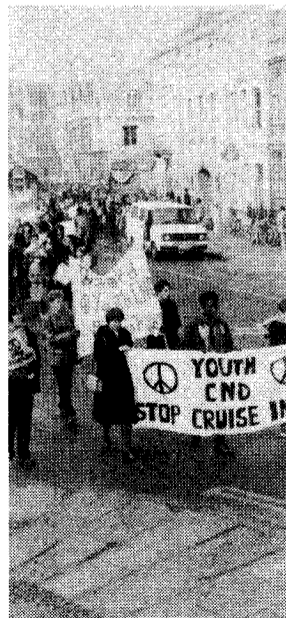
The last conference in London had been declared invalid by the executive who claimed that it was 'unrepresentative' and 'made decisions 'outside CND policy'. However, the 270 delegates passed resolutions and elected a National Committee on similar political lines to the last conference.

It was agreed to mobilise YCND against

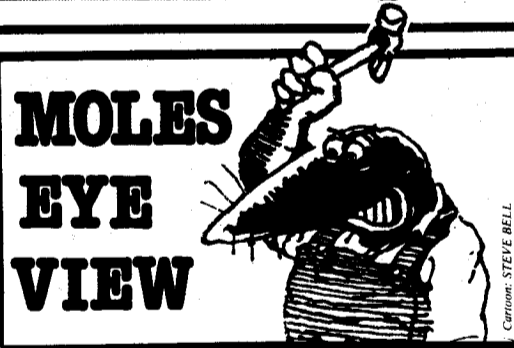
the military interventions of the western powers in places like Central America and the Middle East. It was decided to hold a long march around nuclear bases culminating in a *Jobs not Bombs* carnival in London. Resolutions were also passed supporting the Greenham women, opposing witch hunts in the peace movement and calling for greater autonomy for Youth CND.

## Side

YCND reaffirmed its existing commitment to working with the labour movement and youth on training schemes and called for trade union action against the missiles. But an amendment proposing joint work with the Labour Party Young Socialists was rejected.



Ken Cameron of the FBU summed up the mood of most of the delegates in his closing speech: 'It's through the youth of this country that we're going to win our aim of unilateral disarmament, and not through the Len Murrays or the Terry Duffys'.



## Cementations 'pork pies'

A LOT of spiteful people have been accusing the Thatcher family of nepotism. Mark denies this saying he never eats that brand of lasagne.

What's worse they keep insinuating he only lands jobs like the Cementation one because of his mam as he is not overburdened with much between his earholes. One former business associate even said 'he (Mark) was not very bright ... But his name did carry a lot of weight'.

Stoutly defending himself Mark claimed he had 'a reasonable athletics career and played cricket at school.' So even if he has difficulties with his tables and those words with

more than two syllables are a bit tough he can run a bit.

They used to say that 'The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton' so maybe the Oman contract was won on Harrow's running track. Despite all this Mark keeps going. What the public think is no concern of his. As he says he is only responsible to 'three people on this plant. One of them is my mother, the second is the Almighty and the third is me'.

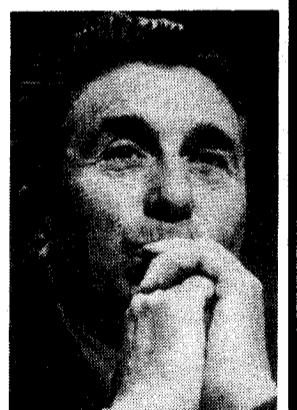
So if his mam didn't help to get the contract maybe he and the Almighty did it together.

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

His mam, who some suspect thinks she is the Almighty, kept quiet about that because as Mark says he and her 'have an agreement ... not to talk about it.' Well with all those 'pork pies' flying about between Mark and Cementation you can hardly blame her keeping her mouth shut.

Michael Slater Cementation's project director and a company spokesperson both denied he worked or got paid by Cementation. Then Mark blurted out that he had worked for them and did get paid.

No wonder his mam is seriously thinking about buying him a new car and entering him in a 12-month rally in the Gobi desert.



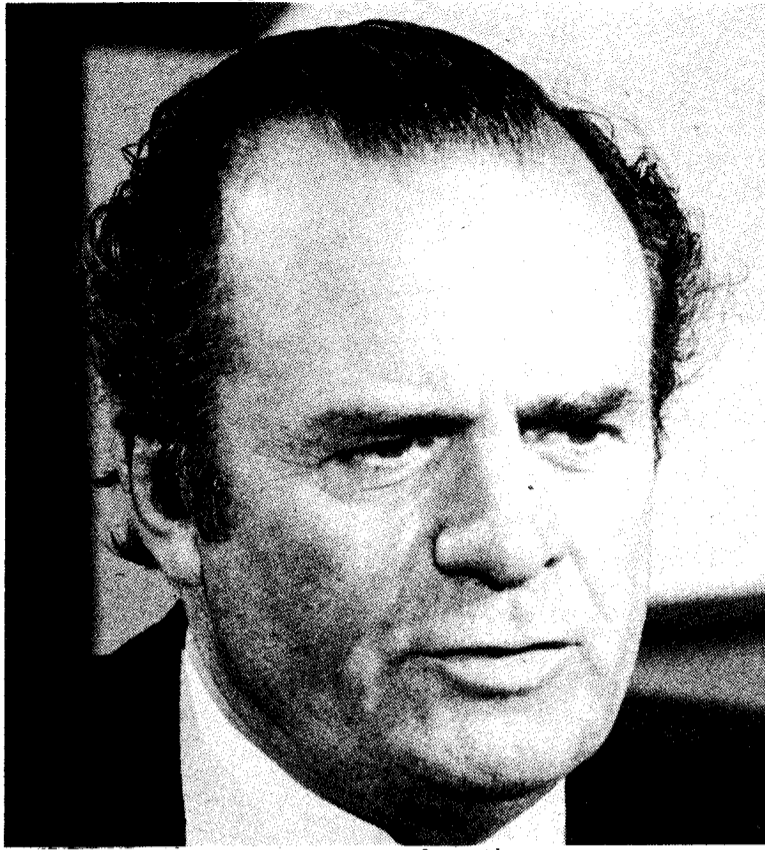
## Social mix

YOU have got to give it to Frank Chapple. You don't catch him doing daft sectarian things like running around Chesterfield getting votes — for Tony Benn.

He mixes in much wider social circles. Last week he went to Chesham for lunch with Maggie and Dennis, Vice President Bush of the USA, Lord and Lady Carrington, Field Marshal and Lady Bramall, Tarzan Heseltine himself and Geoff — friend of the trade unions — Howe.

Frank was pleased to see that not only were no Bennites present, there weren't even any Kin-nockites!

# Labour Party and the Unions Charter



Ron Todd and Peter Hain supporters of appeal

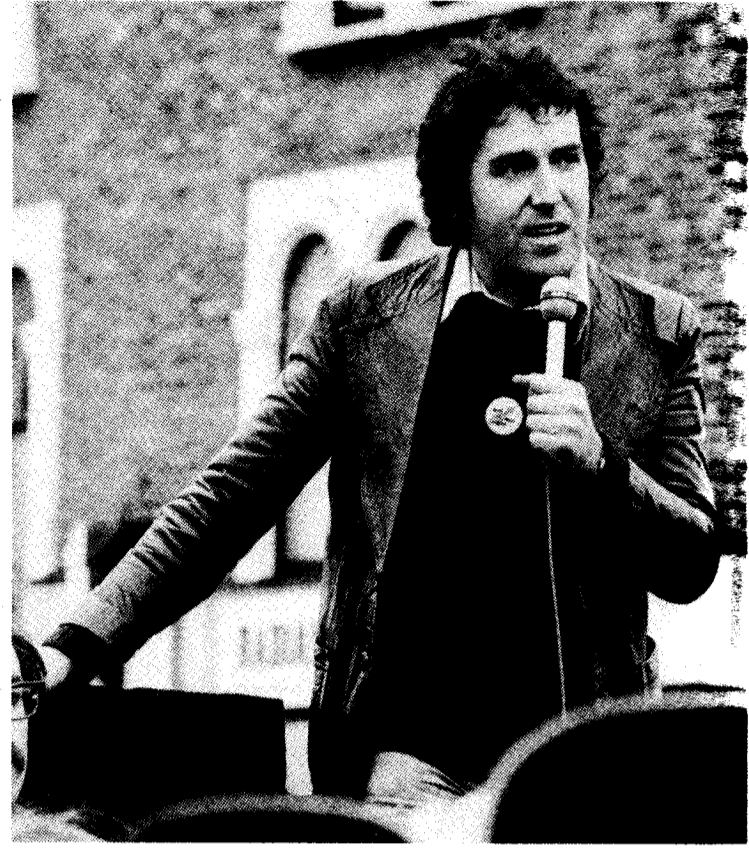


Photo: G.M. COCKSON

**THE LABOUR** Coordinating Committee has launched a campaign to win victory in the coming ballots on trade union affiliation to the Labour Party. With an impressive list of sponsors — including Ron Todd, Arthur Scargill, David Blunkett, Ken Livingstone and Michael Meacher — the LCC is basing its campaign on a four point 'Labour and the Unions Charter'.

Alongside the charter the LCC plans to hold a conference in July to plan a campaign to win union ballots on Labour Party affiliation. Peter Hain, the Vice-Chair of the LCC, explained that it was not intended to be just a conference with speakers but with workshops on different aspects of the campaign.

While the LCC would be hosting the conference it would be organising it closely with other groups.

By John Ross

In the press release announcing the charter the LCC explains, 'Although the Tories' latest anti-union Bill has still not passed through Parliament, barring an earthquake, it will become law later this year. We therefore believe it is vital to prepare the ground now to win the ballots for continued trade union affiliation to the party.'

'The fact is that Labour has been losing the battle of ideas amongst

workers. Only 39 per cent of trade unionists voted Labour in the last election. Links between trade union branches and local parties have disappeared or ossified. With few exceptions real socialist politics has evaporated from the organisational channels which do remain.'

'A well prepared campaign could be a golden opportunity to inject socialist ideas and Labour policies into workplaces again. We could actually turn the Tory threat to our advantage by mounting a campaign at rank and file level, using the political fund ballots as a vehicle for arguing Labour's case with individual trade unionists.'

'The Tories' calculated attempt to force the

unions away from Labour will not be defeated by national circulars and publicity, but by determined work by local Labour Party members and union activists.

'We are calling for broad-based support for the Charter as a first step. We shall be circulating it to other union leaders and MPs asking them to become sponsors.'

This LCC campaign is a most welcome initiative if it is really intended to run it in a non-sectarian way, and aimed at the Party and trade union rank and file. Winning the ballot on trade union affiliation, together with defending the cities, is the single most important challenge facing the Labour Party in the next year. The sponsors for the LCC charter have enough weight to mobilise a really massive campaign if they link themselves to the grass roots of the party.

Socialist Action is endorsing the LCC drafted charter. It appeals to all those who support its policies in the trade unions and Labour Party to do the same.

• Details of the campaign from Labour Coordinating Committee, 9 Poland Street, London W.1. (439 3749).

## Labour Party and the Unions Charter

It is vital that we defend the partnership between Labour and the unions and indeed strengthen it at every level. To this end we call for:

1. Active opposition to the Tory assaults on trade union rights
2. A campaign of activity and education to win the argument for trade union affiliation to the Labour Party
3. The promotion of socialist policies and support for Labour at workplace level
4. The strengthening of local union/constituency Labour Party links and the formation where appropriate of Labour Party workplace branches.

### Launching sponsors:

Tony Banks MP  
Tony Benn  
David Blunkett  
Ken Coates  
Vladimir Derer  
Jack Dromey (TGWU)  
Peter Hain  
Harriet Harman MP  
Eric Heffer MP  
Ken Livingstone  
Mick Martin (TGWU)  
Michael Meacher MP  
Bill Morris (TGWU)  
Alan Sapper (ACTT)  
Arthur Scargill (NUM)  
Ron Todd (TGWU)  
Tribune Group of MPs

## Towards a Labour daily?

**EVERYONE** in the labour movement knows of the anti-Labour bias of the media. We can all recall stories of press atrocities against progressive campaigns like CND, or against trade unionists taking action.

By Davy Jones,  
Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom

That's why the call has gone up for a Labour daily to counter the imbalance of the Tory press. Many leading trade union figures like Moss Evans have supported the idea. The TUC even went so far as to commission a study chaired by Lord McCarthy on the feasibility of a Labour daily.

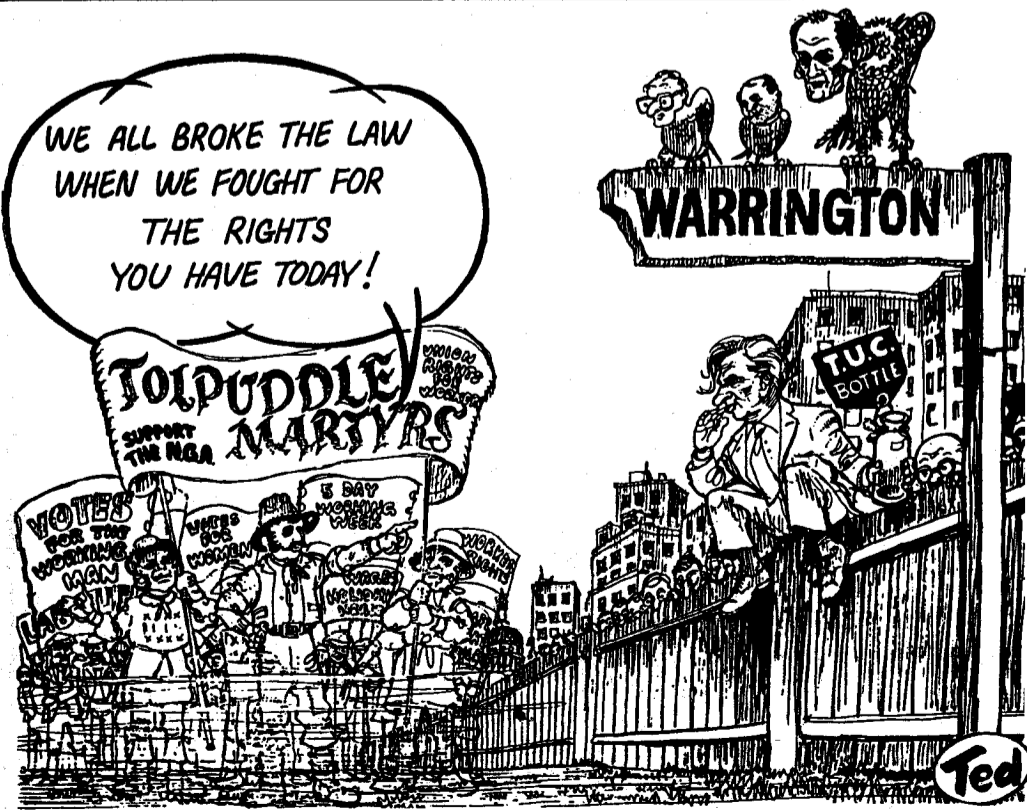
McCarthy argued that at a cost of £6.7m the unions could launch a daily with a circulation of 300,000 with an editorial policy broadly sympathetic to the labour

movement, yet not reading like some turgid union journal.

But the unions have not been able to raise the money, and some have backed out of the idea altogether. So if a Labour daily seems remote, what alternative are there? How about a labour movement Sunday paper, or a cable TV channel, given that the majority of people get their news from TV nowadays?

These and other themes will be explored at a one day conference organised by the Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom this Sunday 26 February at London's County Hall, from 10-5pm. Speakers include Alex Kitson, Jill Tweedie, Jake Ecclestone and Brian Sedgemore MP. There will also be a workshop on broadcasting where Edmund Dell will debate Ken Loach over TV censorship.

Details of the conference and the campaign from CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1 3DG, tel 01-437 2795.



'We meant nothing more, sir, than uniting to keep up the price of labour and to support each other in times of need'.

These words were spoken by George Loveless one of the six Tolpuddle Martyrs during the trial that resulted in their deportation to Australia 150 years ago.

Things have changed little since then and successive Tory governments have sought ways of destroying our unity and our organisation.

The sequestration of NGA funds and the baton charges on the pickets at Warrington were a direct attack on all trades unions and all trades unionists and our response must be the same as it has always been ... UNITY AND MASS STRUGGLE.

We have not forgotten the pledges made at the TUC Wembley Conference. The Merseyside Trade Union and Labour Campaign Committee which was formed after that conference to coordinate the fight against the Tebbit legislation will continue to give unconditional support to the NGA and any other union in conflict with the anti-union laws.

This committee will not desert those comrades arrested on the picket line at Warrington.

Following the police charges on what until then had been a peaceful mass picket, over 140 individual trades unionists face fines of up to £500 and we estimate the fines of all those arrested will total in excess of £15,000.

The Merseyside Trade Union and Labour Movement Campaign Committee has already spent over £2,000 in support of the NGA.

We are now launching a National Appeal for funds to assist those arrested on the picket line and

to support all trades unions actively engaged in confronting the Tory legislation.

The trades union movement's last line of defence was never Len Murray or the TUC — the last line of defence has always been the solidarity of the members at rank and file level.

### Sponsors include:

Moss Evans, T&GWU  
Alan Sapper, ACTT  
Ray Buckton, ASLEF  
Arthur Scargill, NUM  
Rod Bickerstaffe, NUPE  
Bill Keys, SOGAT

### and Merseyside Labour MPs

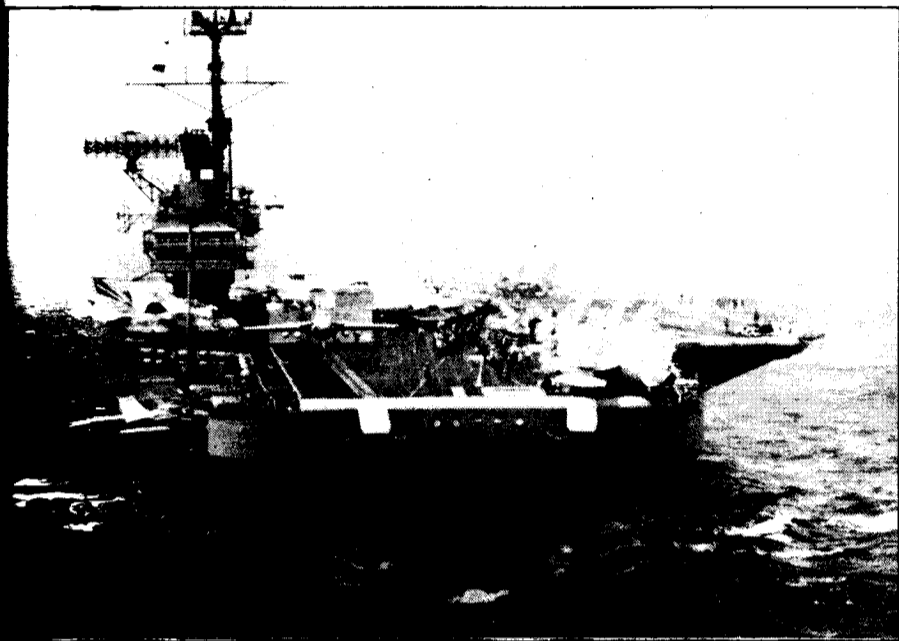
Eric Heffer  
Terry Fields  
Bob Wareing  
Bob Parry  
Alan Roberts  
Eddie Loyden

Demonstrate your support by donating generously to the Merseyside Trade Union and Labour Campaign Committee and the NGA c/o Paul Davies, T&GWU, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool 3.

The funds will be used directly to aid our 140 comrades who have been victims of the courts in Warrington.

# A Socialist ACTION

## US fleet heads for Gulf



IRAN'S long-expected offensive against Iraq has now begun. The Iranian regime has established an army of half a million soldiers, with the objective of driving towards Iraq's capital city, Baghdad, and cutting it off from the second largest city, Basra.

The war has lasted for nearly three and a half years, and has resulted in over two hundred thousand deaths. Because of the Iranian 'human wave' attacks a large number of the dead have been Iranians, but Iraq too with its much smaller population has sustained massive casualties. Nearly every Iraqi family has had someone die in the war.

Because of its greater size and human resources, Iran is getting the upper hand in the war. While the Iraqi economy has suffered devastating blows, and is now just kept afloat by oil money from the Gulf states Iran's economy is undergoing something of a resurgence.

Whether Iran's offensive will be powerful enough to bring down the Saddam Hussein government has yet to be seen. But there are good reasons to think that the West will do everything possible to

prevent it.

An Iranian victory would spread the influence of Shi'ite fundamentalism westwards, and threaten the pro-Western oil states in the Gulf. It would represent a major strategic turn around in the area.

Of all the western powers, France has been the most active in supporting Iraq, because of French commercial and financial interests in that country. While the United States is not on particularly good terms with Iraq, it too would be loathe to see the Iranian regime spreading its influence. Moreover the reactionary Sunni Muslim clan which dominates Saudi Arabia can be guaranteed to pour in money to prevent any victory for its Shi'ite rivals.

The United States has now despatched its powerful battle fleet in the Arabian Sea towards the Gulf.

Its objective is to keep open the strategic Straits of Hormuz, through which large amounts of Japanese and European oil — produced by US oil companies — are transported.

The danger of the closure of the Straits stems from Iraq's threat to utilise its Super Etendard planes and Exocet missiles to attack shipping in the Gulf, and to destroy the Iranian oil terminal at Karg Island. In retaliation the Iranians say they will close the Straits, which the Americans have vowed to keep open.

Neither the Iranian or Iraqi workers have anything to gain from this senseless war. Hundreds of thousands have died for nothing. But socialists should completely oppose any attempt by the United States, or other imperialist powers to intervene against Iran. Khomeini and the reactionary social order he represents have to be dealt with by the Iranian workers. Imperialist intervention will only set back that process.



Israeli armoured column moves north in Lebanon

## Israel prepares as Gemayel totters

**LEBANESE President Amin Gemayel cannot now hold out for long. Over the past two weeks his army, and the militias of the Christian Phalange Party, have suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the Druze 'Progressive Socialist Party' and the Muslim Shi'ite movement Amal. After the army's offensive around the southern suburbs of Beirut had been thrown back, the Muslim forces liberated West Beirut, while the Druze launched an offensive opening up a corridor between the Chouf mountains and Beirut — thus cutting the country in two.**

In subsequent offensives south of Beirut a huge tract of territory has been liberated from the army and the Phalange. In the areas liberated from the reactionary forces, gory evidence of Phalange massacres has come to light.

By Paul Lawson

With the army in a state of near-collapse, the Druze and Shi'ite militias are now poised for a final assault on Souk al-Garb, the final outpost of the Phalangist forces in the Chouf mountains.

The anti-Phalangist victories mark a decisive turnround in the political situation in Lebanon, forcing the reactionary Christian forces onto the defensive. The United States' policy in Lebanon — that of trying to create a strong Phalangist government — is now in complete disarray. But this by no means signifies that imperialism has given up in the region.

In the first place the United States' powerful task force remains in place off the Lebanese coast despite its troop withdrawal. But the main danger of a pro-imperialist attack in Lebanon is now the possibility of a substantial Israeli intervention into the con-

flict.

Despite the fact that Israeli relations with Amin Gemayel have been strained in recent months, the Israelis understand that there is a major danger facing them if a Muslim-dominated state is created in Lebanon — namely that units of the PLO will once again utilise Lebanon to attack Israel's northern border.

Already the Israelis have launched air strikes against Druze forces and alleged Palestinian positions. While the Druze PSP have denied that the positions attacked were in fact held by Palestinians, it is known that small detachments from the pro-Syrian PLO 'dissidents' have taken part in the fighting against the Phalangists and army.

During the past week the United States and Saudi Arabia have been putting together diplomatic schemes to try to salvage something for Gemayel and the Phalange from the wreckage of the battlefield. But they have come up against the basic reality of the new relationship of forces in Lebanon — nothing will now work without the agreement of the Syrians, who maintain a 30,000 strong army in the country, and their Druze and Shi'ite allies.

Now that Amin Gemayel has been forced to abandon his 'troops withdrawal' peace treaty with Israel, the Israeli government has decided to maintain its occupation of southern Lebanon indefinitely. Several hundred thousand Shi'ite Muslims in that area are now under the iron heel of the Israeli occupation force, which is the target

of daily attacks. Israel will doubtless use its south Lebanon enclave as a base to attack anti-Phalangist forces.

The crucial question now facing Lebanon is whether the United States and Israel are prepared to live with the defeat which they have suffered. If not, then the only result will be new and bloody fighting.

### The World Economic Crisis

Saturday/Sunday March 3/4 1984  
10am till 5pm

The Conference takes place at Caxton House, 129 St Johns Way, London N19, which is a couple of minutes walk from Archway Tube (Northern Line).  
Snack lunches will be available on both days, and there will also be a bar open at lunchtime. A creche will be provided but it must be booked by Monday, February 27.  
There is good access and facilities for the disabled.

I wish to book ..... places for the weekend conference on the World Economic Crisis.

I enclose £ ..... to cover:

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