

# A SOCIALIST ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

**Inside: Ken Livingstone on British politics after the stockmarket crash**

# VOTE FOR SCARGILL



**IN JANUARY** the most important union election for many years will take place in Britain. It is an election being fought because, as Arthur Scargill has said, for the first time in history a law is being introduced specifically to remove one single trade union leader — himself.

The Tories have no interest whatever in trade union democracy. The centrepiece of their current round of anti-union legislation — the 'right' of union members to ignore a majority ballot and break a strike even when there is a clear majority in favour of it — is so anti-democratic that it has been condemned even by the CBI. The Tories insist on endless ballots in the unions while giving workers in a

company no right whatever to vote on any important matter which affects them.

The Tories are insisting on postal ballots in union elections, rather than workplace ballots which usually have a higher turn out, because they are not interested in the maximum number of people participating in union elections but solely in trying to secure the outcome the Tories want.

The reason why the Tories have introduced their current proposal that all non-voting members of union executives must be subject to reelection every five years was simply to force Arthur Scargill to offer himself up to the membership in the hope of defeating him. It had nothing to do with protecting the rights of NUM members — which are ruthlessly trampled underfoot by the government's programme of pit closures. It is

simply about securing an NUM leadership more compliant to the employers demands.

The election of the president of the National Union of Mineworkers is a vital one for miners. There is an escalating attack on them. It starts with six day working and its eventual aim is privatisation.

As David Hopper, of the Durham area, rightly said, if Arthur Scargill is defeated in the presidential election a giant step forward will have been taken towards the privatisation of the pits. An advance by the right wing inside the NUM will be seen by the government as a go-ahead to push on with its plans for privatisation. The introduction of six-day working would hit the conditions of miners, and cut jobs, throughout the industry.

This is why it is so disgraceful that

the 'soft left'-led areas inside the NUM — in reality the Communist Party and Kinnockite-led areas of South Wales and Scotland — are in practice lined up with the right wing. They are scurrying around trying to find a candidate to oppose Scargill. They are even prepared to support open right winger John Walsh from North Yorkshire.

Kinnock himself is openly calling for a candidate to replace Scargill. And he is thereby attacking the miners and helping the government with current and future attacks.

But the NUM election has a significance stretching far beyond the mineworkers union. Arthur Scargill is not just 'another' left wing trade union leader. The miners strike of 1984-85 was the longest mass strike in the history of any advanced capitalist country. And it was led by a leadership

that fought to win, using class struggle means to try and do so.

The NUM under Arthur Scargill's leadership has been the greatest champion of black people's and women's rights inside the labour movement. Arthur Scargill's defeat would be a setback for every working person in Britain.

The tactics of the election, of course, must be decided by those inside the NUM who support Arthur Scargill. But one thing is clear. Whatever any other member of the labour movement is asked to do to aid in Scargill's campaign, it is their top priority to do it. This is no routine election. It is a decisive issue in the labour movement. It will have an important impact on British politics.

All out for a Scargill victory!

# Socialist ACTION

## Why Britain must leave Ireland

THE bombing at Enniskillen has once more focussed politics clearly on Ireland and demands clear answers. Enniskillen is simply the most recent in the chain of tragedies in Ireland which have lasted not just since 1968 but for the 800 years of the British presence there.

The government has exploited the deaths at Enniskillen to prop up the Anglo-Irish agreement — which was looking decidedly shaky on its second anniversary with no progress for nationalists in the north. Following Enniskillen Dublin agreed to the British government's key demands - notably on extradition and cross-border security.

Ken Livingstone has been vilified by the media, fed by Neil Kinnock's office, because he had the courage to tell the truth - that the only way to secure peace in Ireland is by ending the British presence there.

There has been a struggle to end the British presence in Ireland since they arrived there. For the Irish people that presence has been an historical catastrophe. Over the centuries it has resulted in famine, endless wars and a colossal rate of emigration due to economic underdevelopment.

Each century the Irish have fought to end the British presence and create the basis for peace and prosperity in Ireland.

As Livingstone said in his speech on Tuesday: 'All those who have seriously studied the history of Ireland arrive at only one conclusion, that no purpose is served by the British presence there... The understanding of the necessity to withdraw from Ireland was clearly formed by British governments in the nineteenth century - and tragically blocked from being acted upon at that time those who remained tied to sectarian forces in the north of Ireland. Britain had the opportunity to withdraw from Ireland totally in 1920 - but in an act of dreadful folly decided to remain in six counties in the north.'

The partition of Ireland was imposed by Britain by military force. It overturned the result of the 1918 all-Ireland general election when 75 per cent of the Irish people voted for a united, independent Ireland.

The border was arranged to create the largest area with a safe inbuilt unionist majority. It did not include the whole of Ulster, for example, because there would not have been a secure unionist majority.

Britain created in the north of Ireland a statelet whose boundaries were chosen to create and maintain an artificial unionist majority. This was then carried through with sectarian discrimination against Catholics in every sphere of life in the six counties: politics, employment, education and the administration of justice. This was kept in place by a massive sectarian military machine and draconian restrictions on civil liberties.

The nationalist minority were, and are, defined as disloyal to the state because they share with the majority of Irish people the aspiration of a united independent Ireland.

It is because sectarianism is built into the foundation of this artificial state, indeed they are its sole reason for existence, that efforts to reform it have met such ferocious resistance from the unionists and come to nothing. Sectarianism can only be eliminated in the north of Ireland by eliminating its basis — which is a statelet based on a sectarian headcount.

The Labour Party's official policy cannot resolve the situation because it gives the artificially created unionist majority within the six counties a veto over Irish unity - which means that Irish unity will never come about.

The only way the logjam can be broken is by Britain adopting a policy of withdrawal from Ireland. That would remove the principal prop of loyalist intransigence — the British presence.

As Ken Livingstone said: 'We must draw the necessary conclusions from the history of the last century that Britain has no role to play in Ireland. We must conclude that in the interests of peace Britain must withdraw from Ireland.'

Until British labour, and the British people, finally draws this conclusion, and finally withdraws, there will be no peace in Ireland and the tremendous historical tragedy will continue.

We apologise for the exceptionally late appearance of this issue of Socialist Action. This was due to a burglary at our offices.

# LCC becomes Clause 4 front

THE ANNUAL general meeting of the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) on 14 February saw the essential transformation of that organisation into a front for the Clause 4 grouping. Clause 4 is an ex-student group, associated with figures such as Nigel Stanley, whose politics is summarised by their famous 'Operation Icepick' against *Militant* in the National Organisation of Labour Students. Clause 4 thought it a big joke to utilise an association with Stalin's assassin.

Clause 4 has the mentality of public schoolboys. The typical type of operation it considers 'clever' at present is planting stories in the *Guardian* ridiculing figures on the left and making grossly exaggerated claims for the influence of the LCC.

By James Brown

Clause 4 fears open political debate and operates by drawing up 'hit lists' of figures on the left to be removed from leading bodies of the Labour Party. While pretending to be on the left, Clause 4 in reality is in complete alliance with the right and operates as a sort of right wing entry grouping in the left.

### Impact

This Clause 4 policy had, however, suffered severe blows this year. First an LCC consultative conference had voted in favour of British withdrawal from Ireland in the lifetime of one parliament. Then, with greater public impact, four members of the LCC executive — George Galloway, Peter Hain, Ken Livingstone and Joan Ruddock — had signed a joint statement

with Vladimir Derer, Ann Pettifor, and Marc Wadsworth from Labour Left Liaison warning about right wing pressure for a coalition with the Liberals and calling for united action on the left.

As both the policy division on Ireland, and the position in favour of left unity, cut totally across Clause 4's right wing project it set about, in its usual way, organising to defeat these policies.

### Answer

Clause 4 therefore had three goals at this year's LCC AGM — to remove left wingers from the LCC executive, to prevent the LCC engaging in joint activity with other forces on the left, and to reverse the policy on Ireland.

Behind all these is a project, which Clause 4 operate in practice, but are not prepared to openly proclaim, of forming a bloc with the right against the left wing inside the party.

Such a Clause 4 operation was possible because, despite claims to the contrary, the number of active LCC members is in fact extremely small in number and they have little direct base inside the party. Thus



Ex-Tribune editor Nigel Williamson, now editor of Labour Party News, explicitly calls for realignment between the 'soft left' and right wing in the party.

although the LCC claims a membership of 1500, in fact only 247 people voted in the annual elections for this year's LCC executive — an indication of the real active membership. Analysis of voting for the NEC and resolutions to conference shows few CLPs supporting the LCC.

### Problem

The executive elections simply returned a Clause 4 slate. The main left winger in the LCC, Ken Livingstone, was knocked off the executive as was Mike Ward. Peter Hain fell from third to seventeenth in the poll out of 20

members. As Hain was for many years probably the best known figure in the LCC this shows how completely the LCC is now a Clause 4 front.

### Attitude

As was to be expected, given Clause 4's line, the LCC also passed a resolution rejecting working with others on the left — notably Labour Left Liaison.

On the policy front most significantly for its future direction the LCC AGM then went on to overturn, by 70 votes to 50, its consultative conference position for British withdrawal from Ireland

in the lifetime of one parliament. The AGM instead carried a Clause 4-Workers Party backed resolution accepting a unionist veto on British withdrawal.

### Facts

The outcome of the AGM was clear. The LCC has been transformed, for all practical purposes, into a front for the Clause 4 grouping which has a consistent project of a block with the right. The LCC has lost whatever character of a 'broad' grouping of the left it had.

The LCC, taken as a whole, is no longer in any real sense a part of the left.

## Briefing's turn on Livingstone

FOR EIGHTEEN months Labour *Briefing* has carried on a vitriolic campaign against Ken Livingstone. For example, in 1986 when Livingstone wanted to speak at a conference against expulsions in London, to oppose the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the party, *Briefing* organised to prevent him from being invited. During the period in which discussions for the left's NEC slate were taking place *Briefing* opposed Livingstone.

Anyone might therefore be surprised to turn to the latest, 10 November, issue of *Briefing* to read an adulatory two page interview with Ken Livingstone. Its headline 'Ken seizes the moment' and its introduction gives its general tone. This reads: 'After three years of relative isolation, Ken Livingstone has returned to form. Through his interventions at Labour Party conference and at the Chesterfield conference he has shown that he is firmly realigning himself with the left and establishing his credentials as our most articulate spokesperson. With capitalism worldwide plunging into crisis, he has chosen his moment well. *Briefing* is pleased to be able to publish the following interview with him.'

Given that Livingstone has decisively set the tone for the left on two key matters since the general election — the crash and, after *Briefing* came out,

Ireland — it is scarcely surprising that *Briefing* has to make such a turn. But unfortunately *Briefing* does not point out that if its course had been followed Livingstone would not have been on the NEC to have the impact he has made with his speeches since the election.

### Campaign

It would be good if from *Briefing* there was some apology for the vicious campaign they carried on against others on the left, notably in Labour Left Liaison, CLPD, WAC and the Black Section, who were fighting to get Livingstone on the NEC. Because, given the seriousness of the issues involved, *Briefing's* line would have imposed a serious defeat.

Even more serious is the fact that no conclusions are drawn by *Briefing*. A sustained and vicious campaign has been waged against Ann Pettifor of the Labour

Women's Action Committee — including trying to prevent her being nominated for election to the NEC after *Briefing* had itself accepted a joint slate. At the same meeting against the witch hunt which Livingstone was prevented from speaking to, *Briefing* opposed the establishment of the Campaign for the Reinstatement of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally defence campaign — probably the most effective defence campaign in the Labour Party for years and which secured the reinstatement of Khan and Scally against the direct opposition of Roy Hattersley. In short, what is involved is not individual mistakes but a whole pattern of errors which would have had quite disastrous consequences.

### Aims

Actually the reason for them is partly contained in the introduction to the *Briefing* interview when it says Livingstone is 'establishing his credentials as our most articulate spokesperson'. No he isn't — at least if by 'our' you mean a Marxist left which is what *Briefing* claims to represent. He didn't represent 'our' in the past, doesn't now and won't in the future. The absurd overestimation in the past,

and then the absurd sectarianism, and then absurd sycophancy is because no serious estimate is made of what Ken Livingstone is.

### Strengths

He is a (very) left social democrat who on one issue, Ireland, has shown a political courage of which any Marxist would feel proud. Livingstone is not a class struggle leader in the sense of Arthur Scargill or Dennis Skinner. He has always explained absolutely openly what he stands for. He stands for the unity of both the class struggle left and the 'soft' left against Thatcher and the right wing. That's what he stood for in the past and that's what he stands for today.

And your attitude to that depends on what you think the situation in Britain is. If we were near socialist revolution — anywhere near the false slogan of 'Labour take the power' which adorns the front cover of *Briefing* — then Ken Livingstone would be just about the most dangerous person in the country.

But if you take the real situation — that we are many years both chronologically and politically from socialism in Britain — then Ken Livingstone appears in a quite

different light. He is someone who wants to bring about genuine changes — reforms to give them their proper name. Livingstone would take Britain out of Ireland. He would grant the demands of women and black people in the Labour Party. He would pursue a completely different policy towards the ANC, Central America, and in Britain's relations with both the USA and the USSR. And if we are nowhere near socialism which we are not, then all these things are deeply progressive.

### Left

That is why the left can and should work with people like Ken Livingstone — or the Campaign Group or Ann Pettifor, or others. Not on the basis of tricks and manoeuvres, or absurd illusions and disillusion, but as a key part of laying the basis for a real fight for socialism in Britain. The sort of manic depression shown by *Briefing* in its attitude to Livingstone reveals only their own illusions about the situation.

To stop doing further damage hopefully *Briefing* will think over the lessons of this debacle both for their attitude to Livingstone and to other figures in the labour movement.

# Defeat Alton's Bill

## Labour women's conference supports FAB

THE NATIONAL conference of Labour women, meeting in Blackpool on the weekend of 14-15 November, firmly opposed David Alton's Bill to reduce the time limits on legal abortion.

Delegates committed the national organisation of Labour women to supporting the FAB campaign and ensuring the Bill's defeat. During the emergency debate on Sunday morning every one of the 14 speakers from the floor added their opposition to that of Jo Richardson MP from the platform. An emergency composite resolution and the statement reproduced below were agreed upon, which included calling on Labour MPs to respect party policy and vote against the Bill. An official collection for FAB was taken at the end of conference.

THE Labour Party has long been on record in support of the 1967 Abortion Act and successive annual conferences have passed resolutions in favour of the right of every woman to choose, and for proper provision of facilities under the NHS throughout the country. These commitments featured in our general election manifesto and were reaffirmed by an NEC statement to the 1987 annual conference.

We know that much has been achieved over the last 20 years since the 1967 Act: the tragedies and exploitation of backstreet abortions have become a thing of the past. Abortion is now a safe operation.

### Error

David Alton is a self-confessed anti-abortionist. The intention of his Bill to outlaw abortion after 18 weeks is to start destroying the 1967 Act.

Its practical effect will be a limit of 14 weeks for most doctors leaving a wide margin of error in case of prosecution. This will have a dramatic effect upon women's rights and on the physical and mental health of women who will be excluded.

The Bill will mean that women will have no choice

but to continue the pregnancy, if they learn from an amniocentesis test around 20 weeks, that they are carrying a foetus with Downs Syndrome or Spina Bifida.

### Majority

The biggest majority of women having abortions after 17 weeks are aged 19 or under. Many teenagers who hide their pregnancies through misplaced feelings of shame or guilt will be forced to give birth to the baby. Like the case cited in the Select Committee Report of the raped teenager, who hid her pregnancy resulting from that crime.

Similarly, older women will lose their choice, like the 45 year old grandmother, who mistook the signs of pregnancy for menopause and will now have to care for the child she did not want. According to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists one in five of the women having an abortion after the twentieth week had sought help before the twelfth week.

If David Alton and his supporters really wanted fewer late abortions they would be tackling the reasons why women face obstruction and unnecessary delays. They would press for safer,

more effective contraception, a better referral system, more research into early screening methods and equal access in all areas of NHS day-care abortion facilities.

### Restrictions

Arbitrary restrictions on the 1967 Act will never remove the need for abortion. Two thirds of the 29 abortions performed after 24 weeks in this country last year were on the grounds of severe foetal abnormality.

Alton will ensure that only women who can afford it will get what they want. The back streets, the tragedy of unwanted children and the hardship of caring for the severely handicapped in Thatcher's uncaring society awaits the rest.

The Labour women's organisations at all levels should be at the forefront of the campaign to defeat Alton's Bill. We call on women's officers and women's organisations to immediately mobilise members in opposition to Alton's Bill.

Use every opportunity to:

- lobby your MPs at their surgery, at the House of Commons, by letter or petition;
- contact sympathetic doctors and other health workers;
- write to your local press;
- organise phone calls and offer contributors for local radio;
- ensure that women's organisations support the Fight Alton Bill Campaign by sponsorship, affiliation and by organising regional demonstrations on Saturday, 16 January; and by mobilising support for the 21 January lobby, rally and torchlight procession at Central Hall, Westminster, London.



## Build the national action on 21 January

THE FIGHT Alton's Bill campaign is in the midst of preparing its first national action. On Thursday 21 January 1988, the day before Liberal MP David Alton's Private Members Bill receives its second reading in the House of Commons, FAB is organising a mass lobby of MPs and a rally in Central Hall, Westminster, in the afternoon. This will be followed by an all-women torchlight demonstration in central London.

The TUC women's committee and its social insurance committee both discussed the campaign against Alton last week and agreed to propose to the next meeting of the general council that the TUC sponsors, supports and promotes the activities against Alton, including the events planned for 21 January.

The Scottish TUC is already considering calling a demonstration against the Bill on 16 January. On the basis of a favourable decision at the TUC general council it will be possible to argue for similar action in other regions of the country. Mobilising the labour movement for the campaign is now the central task for all those concerned with fighting the Alton Bill between now and the second reading in January.

By Carol Turner

A sub-committee of the national campaign is already contacting a wide range of speakers, asking them to attend the rally. Jo Richardson, MP and women trade unionists, as well as other Labour MPs and pro-choice Liberal MPs will be invited to address the audience at Central Hall. Doctors, Christians, and all types of entertainers are also being invited to the afternoon event.

A wide selection of groups and campaigns will be offered a literature stall or display space in Central Hall. And, of course, local FAB groups as well as trade unions, Labour Parties and others should bring their banners for display.

The first set of stickers for the campaign has just been produced (details below). More leaflets and posters will soon be rolling off the printing presses — including publicity details of the 21 January action.

Meanwhile FAB is producing its second bulletin for local groups in response to the rapidly growing demand for information of all kinds. Each week, local groups are still blossoming.

### Petition

Those listed below are just a few of the many that have already taken to the streets across the country. The national FAB petition is now available and has already become a key method of raising discus-

sion of the issue.

Local groups are particularly urged to begin planning for the week of action that FAB has called to precede the second reading. Hopefully this will begin on Saturday 16 January with regional demonstrations and other public events across the country.

### Plans

Reports are now beginning to reach the national campaign that plans to build such action are already underway. For example, the Lambeth group is discussing calling a south London demonstration on that Saturday.

If no FAB group yet exists in your area and you would like to help set one up, the national campaign can supply information and publicity and provide speakers. Contact FAB today!

● Fight Alton's Bill campaign can be contacted at Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU (01-405 4801).

## Local round-up

THE last issue of Socialist Action carried reports from FAB groups springing up across the country. Now there are even more, some of which are reported below. If you want to advertise a group in your area, write to us c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

### South Wales

FAB groups have now been set up in several South Wales cities and towns.

The Cardiff group has been meeting since the end of October. It is supported by the labour movement, the women's movement

and students. The group has established regular petitioning in different parts of town on Saturdays.

Local FAB groups are also established in Newport and Swansea.

For more information about FAB in South Wales write to FAB, PO Box 428, Cardiff.

### Ealing

EALING FAB was set up on Tuesday 10 November at a meeting called by Ealing-Southall Labour Party Women's Section and NAC. Currently, it is meeting on Monday evenings in Ealing Civic Centre.

Ealing FAB plans street petitioning and leafletting on Ealing Broadway on Saturday mornings, and is organising a public meeting on Monday 14 December. This will take place at 7.30pm, Queen's Hall, Ealing Town Hall.

Contact the campaign c/o 52 Norwood Road, Southall, or phone Jan on 01-574 4016.

### Lambeth

LAMBETH against Alton meets every Tuesday evening a 7.30pm in Lambeth Town Hall. LAA is now also regularly petitioning and leafletting in Brixton Road, outside Burton's tailors, starting at 11am.

Meanwhile, Vauxhall Labour Party Women's Section is hosting a 'Fight Alton's Bill' meeting on Friday 27 November. The meeting is sponsored by Lambeth Against Alton, as well as the Lambeth Trades Council and Vauxhall and Norwood Labour Parties.

For more information about Lambeth Against Alton phone Joan on 582 2955 (ansaphone) or Carol on 254 0261 (daytime), or Juliette on 671 7285.

### Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM FAB is organising a public meeting on Friday 27 November to launch the local campaign. It begins at Carrs Lane Church

Centre (back of Marks and Spencer), and speakers include Clare Short, MP, NAC and NALGO Black Workers Group.

Birmingham FAB is also organising a picket of Tory MP Jill Knight. It will take place from 4.30 to 6.30pm, also on Friday 27 November, at Tory Party HQ, 16 Greenfield Crescent, Edgbaston Five Ways. Knight is a leading sponsor of David Alton's Bill.

For more information about Birmingham FAB, phone Bridget on 021-440 0173 (evenings), Jane on 021-449 5938 (evenings), or Bernie on 021-236 8323 (daytime); or write c/o Geraldine Egan, Birmingham Trades Council, 7 Frederick Street, Hockley, Birmingham B1 3HE.

OTHER FAB groups can be contacted as follows:

Greenwich: phone Rona on 01-856 0296 ext 261.

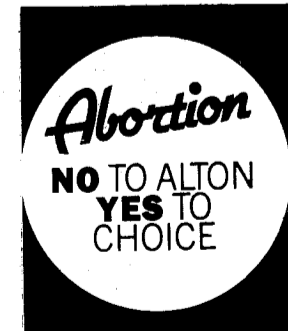
Islington: phone Liz on 01-263 9454.

Manchester: phone Cath on 061-223 4470 or write to Manchester FAB, c/o PO Box 16 (South PDO), Manchester M14 5DD.

Nottingham: phone Mary on 0602 623246.

Scotland: groups exist in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Ayr and Dundee; phone Scottish Abortion Campaign coordinator Liz Armstrong on 041-945 3943 (evenings), or write c/o SAC, PO Box 105, Glasgow G1.

Sheffield: contact Sheffield Council Women's Committee, c/o the town hall.



These and other stickers are now available from the Fight Alton's Bill campaign. Black and purple on white, they cost 20p for a sheet of 12 (including postage). Send your orders to FAB, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU.

## NUS conference discusses Palestine

AT LAST, after 11 years, the situation in the student movement where the struggle for freedom and national liberation of the Palestinian people has been completely ignored at a national level looks set to be turned around. With the creation of a new national student organisation formed to raise awareness and solidarity with the Palestinians, the atmosphere looks set to change. Students for Palestine has just completed a tour of 40 colleges and universities around the country giving platforms to two students from Bir Zeit University on the occupied West Bank.

By Polly Vittorini

At NUS conference in December Palestinian rights will be discussed for the first time in 11 years. The main motion for discussion tabled by the NUS executive aims to highlight the military harassment of the five Palestinian universities on the West Bank and Gaza strip by the Israeli authorities and the discrimination and lack of civil rights for Palestinians under Israeli military law. It calls for solidarity initiatives with Palestinians by students in this country.

### Campaign

But the motion is confounded by a clause which calls for the recognition of the right to exist of all nations in the area 'including Israel and Palestine' within internationally recognised and secure borders. The problem with this of course is the implication that there actually is a sovereign Palestinian state. Neither does the motion address squarely the racism of the Israeli state as exemplified by the Law of Return which allows any Jewish person to gain citizenship of Israel while denying it to Palestinians, even those born in the area.

Students for Palestine is campaigning for all of these issues to be highlighted. Unlike previous years, when the practices of the Israeli state have not been discussed or only raised in the context of outrage at the banning of a student Jewish society for supporting Zionism, this year's debate is on favourable ground for the Palestinian cause. Much support has been generated during the course of Students for Palestine speaking tour. Since the last NUS discussion on Palestine massacres have occurred at Sabra and Shatila in the Lebanon and refugee camps at Bourj al Barajmeh and Beirut have been placed under size.

### Solidarity

This NUS silence is incredible, particularly when compared to the student union's position of support for British withdrawal from Ireland, for the overthrow of apartheid in South Africa, and for the defence of the revolution in Nicaragua against United States aggression. With the formation of Students for Palestine, a network of Palestine solidarity groups has been brought together with student organisations to raise the issue and build concrete solidarity with the Palestinians.

## WINNING THE MAJORITY

Labour's policies for women

A conference organised by the Labour Women's Action Committee

**Saturday 21 November**

Speakers include:

Diane Abbott MP,  
Diana Jeuda NEC/USDAW,  
Rose Lambie TUC/COHSE,  
Ann Pettifor, Jo Richardson MP,  
Audrey Wise MP

Lambeth Town Hall  
Beaconsfield Hill  
London SW4

10.30am-5.30pm  
Registration: £3 and £1.50

The Labour Women's Action Committee conference this Saturday includes sessions on the Alton Bill, on changing party policies, on union organisation, and on local government. Conference will commence with a plenary discussion on 'Winning the Majority'. Registration facilities at the door. More information from Anne on 01-241 5626.

# Camden's racist housing policy must be reversed

THE LABOUR-CONTROLLED London borough of Camden has found a way to reduce the number of homeless families on the authority's books that would gladden the heart of a National Front member. Since the beginning of October Camden has been offering a free travel warrant to Ireland to any Irish family which is homeless within its boundaries. And the council is reported to be considering offering the same 'facility' to Bangladeshi families.

According to *Guardian* reports of Friday 13 and Saturday 14 November: 'At least nine families have already been treated in this way'. These articles point out that Camden officers advised councillors as early as last April that such a policy would be 'racially discriminatory'. The *Guardian* quotes council officers as describing the policy as a 'back-door form of immigration control'.

By Carol Turner

Like many other inner-London boroughs, Camden faces severe problems as a result of the Tory government's concerted attack on local authorities and their finances for the past eight years.

### Crisis

It has the second-highest number of homeless but a relatively small stock of housing from which to accommodate them. The blame for the housing crisis Camden and other boroughs face should be placed squarely where it belongs: on the shoulders of Margaret Thatcher's government.

However, *nothing* — including this government's vicious policies — can justify a housing 'solution' that amounts to repatria-

tion. The 'soft left' Labour leadership of Camden council deserves every single bit of the odium that the *Guardian* publicity has attracted. This policy is a disgrace to the entire labour movement.

According to Camden's policy.

### Chaos

In a letter to the *Guardian* of Saturday 14 November he wrote: 'Camden will use the precedent set by *R v Bristol ex parte Browne* to refer priority need homeless people who come to Camden from outside England, Scotland and Wales (and who have no local connection with this borough) back to the local authority from whence they come if, and only if, that local authority is prepared to offer them suitable' (author original emphasis)

Some Labour councillors are now correctly demanding Smyth's resignation as housing chair. The Camden Labour group met on Monday 16 November. It was asked to consider an emergency resolution to this effect, which demanded the policy was reversed.

The group however voted 29 to 11 to continue repatriation, on the basis outlined by Gareth Smyth.



The so-called soft left and right wing joined forces to vote the continuation of this policy through.

Camden's Labour group's repatriation policy, particularly its recent decision to reaffirm that policy is a disgrace to the party

locally and nationally. It must be reversed forthwith and housing chair Gareth Smyth sacked at once.

The national Labour Party leadership must immediately repudiate Camden's policy which will

be used as a precedent by every racist Tory, and Labour authority in Britain. Fascists will doubtless glory in it — perhaps providing a little 'encouragement' to Irish and Bangladeshi families to leave.

## Labour women in conference

THE RECALLED and reorganised Labour women's conference originally scheduled for last May finally took place last weekend, 14-15 November, in Blackpool. Despite the decision of the party hierarchy that the agenda should not consist of the usual resolutions and reports, and instead be composed of 'workshops' on worthy topics decided in Walworth Road, the first act of conference was to overturn the imposed agenda and to limit workshops to the first morning.

However the limited number of resolutions that conference was allowed to discuss meant debate was dramatically curtailed compared to previous years.

By Jude Woodward

One discussion that was fully taken was that on the campaign against David Alton's anti-abortion Bill. A full hour of debate revealed unanimity in the hall in opposing all attempts to limit legal abortion, and supporting the activities of the FAB campaign.

The Labour Women's Action Committee fringe meeting on Saturday evening was packed to the rafters by 200 women. The discussion at the meeting again centred on the campaign against Alton, with Jo Richardson explaining the stakes for women in the fight against it.

Many women expressed interest in joining

LWAC, and will be attending the Winning the Majority conference this coming weekend.

However, despite the good atmosphere at this fringe meeting, and in the debate on Alton, overall the conference indicated real problems confronting the Labour women's organisation.

### Platform

In the elections to the conference arrangements committee (CAC) the right managed to regain control, mainly due to confusion on the part of many delegates as a LWAC slate was not circulated. LWAC members had understood that there would not be a contest for the CAC places as some women had decided not to stand due to the reorganisation of conference. In fact all nominations were treated as valid and while the right wing and Militant knew who they were voting for,

most ordinary delegates did not.

Alongside this the review of the Labour women's organisation was not discussed. Nor were there any emergency resolutions presented on the issue of women on parliamentary candidate shortlists.

Again a campaign of misinformation is being conducted. Women were encouraged to believe that the review could be discussed at the next regular conference in May 1988, while more recent statements from Walworth Road have implied that the extra time for the review will only extend until January 1988.

Finally rumours suggest that there may be an attempt to alter the agenda of the next regular conference again to have a workshop format — a blatant attempt to prevent women at the conference from expressing points of view widely divergent from those of the party leadership.

However in the immediate weeks to follow, the most important battle for Labour women will take place at the NEC, when it decides whether Jo Richardson or Ann Davies will be chair of the NEC women's committee.

## Black Section youth support Trevor Monerville

FOLLOWING a successful appeal against remand without bail, Trevor Monerville has now been released from police custody. But the campaign goes on.

On Saturday 7 November a successful picket was held outside Hackney Police Station, supported amongst others by the Labour Party Black Section. We reproduce below their youth committee's statement.

THE Labour Party Black Section is appalled at the 'incident' on Sunday 1 November, involving three black youths and Hackney Police, in which Trevor Monerville and his brother Peter Thomas received injuries to the head and body.

In January of this year Trevor Monerville needed emergency treatment following his arrest by police from Stoke Newington.

The Labour Party Black Section is outraged at the latest in a long line of maimings, vicious assaults

and murders by the state's bully boys.

We are calling for those concerned to be swiftly brought to justice and severely punished and also that the police forces should be placed under the democratic control of elected local bodies and the Police Complaints Authority be replaced by an independent organisation. The police have declared war on black people. The black community must mobilise and resist!

The Labour Party Black Section therefore stands four-square behind the Family and Friends of Trevor Monerville Campaign Committee and we support their demands for the dropping of all charges against Trevor Monerville, Peter Thomas and Paul Rolle.

We are also calling for black and white politicians including those in parliament to raise this important issue at the highest level.

For further information contact: Steve Jomoa, Youth Organiser, 46 Summerhouse Avenue, Heston, Middlesex, TW5 9DA (01-577 5057).



# British politics and the crash

**THE FIGURE** on the Labour left who has so far best understood the significance of the stock market crash is **KEN LIVINGSTONE**. His speech at the Socialist Conference in Chesterfield was the highlight of that gathering. He has produced a major article in the *Guardian*, clearly based on the Chesterfield speech, outlining the political consequences of the crash for Europe.

Livingstone spoke on the stock market crash and its political consequences, with Diane Abbott, at the Socialist Action 'Building an Alliance for Socialism' weekend on 8 November. We reprint here Livingstone's speech together with a response by **REDMOND O'NEILL**.

WE HAVE to look at what has changed in the space of the last few weeks, which will have a dramatic impact on the struggle for socialism throughout the rest of our lives: that clearly is the impact of the crash of the stock market. It did strike me as quite interesting that many people on the left have been predicting the demise of capitalism, and the great crash that was coming, decade after decade. Yet an awful lot of people seem to have taken a long time to wake up to the fact that we are now living through one of these dramatic economic changes that will recast the nature of national and international politics.

It wasn't just some elements on the left. Right across the whole of politics in Britain people have been very slow to take on board the scale of what has happened and what has changed.

I saw it most dramatically, as I'm sure Diane Abbot did, with the Tory MPs clustering around the ticker-tape machine in the House of Commons saying 'I don't understand what's going on. Why couldn't she have seen all this a year ago? Why weren't we warned this was going to happen?' And right through these last three weeks there's



been Lawson — a great, complacent, immovable object sitting on the front bench — saying it's just a temporary correction, don't panic, and that it was all Reagan's fault.

One has to say there hasn't been an adequate response from our front bench either. Having spent a large part of the last four years, saying to Thatcher 'why can't you have a huge deficit in your budget like President Reagan's' — and just spend it on nice things like hospitals instead of nasty things like Star Wars — some of the ground has been cut away that could have been used to launch a real attack.

## Trigger

There is no doubt that the actual trigger for this crisis is the budgetary policies of the United States of America. But, it's not the real cause. The underlying causes are endemic to the way capitalism operates. But the trigger was the consequences of this enormous deficit that has been built up because Reagan wanted to have an armaments programme on a bigger scale

even than the military programme that was necessary to fight the Vietnam war.

Reagan wanted to avoid putting the cost of that programme onto American families. The only way you can actually hold back the development of a real party of labour in the United States is by creating the illusion among workers that they don't need a party of labour to defend them. Had Reagan tried to fund the cost of that armaments programme out of taxation, and by avoiding the US balance of payments deficit, it would have cut the living standard of average US households by \$2500. Reagan wouldn't have survived that and the American political system as a whole would have faced a deep crisis.

## Armaments

Instead, the mechanism of using interest rates and exchange rates on the money market to suck the money in from the rest of the world spread the burden of that armaments programme across the rest of the world. This was the trigger, although not the underlying

cause, of the crash. But we should now look at events as they have emerged since the crash.

Faced either with a massive cut in public spending and massive tax increases or a devaluation of the dollar, the Republicans have decided on devaluation as the major way of solving this crisis. This means they are going to try to let the strain of the crisis be taken by the United States' rivals through competitive dollar devaluation rather than going for any serious adjustments to the US budget.

## Election

Facing an election in a year, determined to maintain US military spending, and determined to hold onto the White House, that clearly is the only real strategy they can go for. Massive tax increases and cuts in public spending would most probably make any US party unelectable. As the adjustment in the international value of the dollar may take the best part of a year to work through into the US economy in terms of inflation, it means the

Republicans may just about hang onto the White House. But it's an extremely risky strategy and managing of this recession might be so incompetently done that it does precipitate a recession on a much greater scale than we are already inevitably locked into.

Those people who are saying that the stock market crash was just a fluctuation on the money markets, that it won't effect the real economy, are talking absolute drivel. Given what has already occurred, we are already locked into a recession that will rank with the worst we've seen since World War II. And if it's mismanaged, as there's every possibility of it being mismanaged, it could then be much more dramatic than anything we've known since World War II. And it will be still more important in the shift it brings about between the United States and Europe.

All this will change politics in its turn. We've just gone through a long period — it's not recent, it's not something that happened in the general election — of leading figures in the labour movement saying we have to adjust to a new reality. First, in the aftermath of 1983, it was trade union leaders saying we have to adjust to the fact that we face another term of Thatcher. They said trade unions must start working with Thatcher. They went through a great debate to junk TUC policy, which was not to cooperate with Thatcher. They turned the whole of the trade union movement through 180 degrees — and then were told that she didn't want to deal with them anyhow, they could just sod off.

## Leadership

Since the 1987 election defeat the attitude has been much more dramatic and more noticeable in terms of the Labour Party leadership.

The view is being put forward that after three election defeats the world has changed in some permanent and fixed way that we have to relate to. It is going to change the way politics operates the rest of our lives.

I think that many leaders of the right in the Labour Party saw the 1981 to 1987 period as equivalent to the politics of the shift that took place in the five or six years after World War II. They saw what they thought was an historical parallel, a mirror image of the 1945 Labour government which so captured the intellectual ground of British politics that all the other parties, the whole of the establishment, had to accept the changes that the Labour government had brought about. The other parties had to accept full employment and the welfare state if they were to have any chance of taking power.

And for a generation after 1945 that was true. That was what actually happened. Whatever the weaknesses, whatever criticisms we would have about the 1945 government, it did mark a major step forward in reformism — and a transformation of society which lasted for a generation and brought very real material benefits to workers. The whole of British politics, the whole of the British state, had to adjust to demands that had built up between the two world wars and we were locked into a new system of politics for a generation by that government.

I think many people on the right thought the last two terms of Thatcher had done the same thing in Britain. That the Thatcher experiment had transformed people's perceptions of the world and given them new sets of goals, and new sets of individualist identities to replace the collective approach of much of working class

Continued on page 6



# We are at a point in time when the world system begins to change

culture. They believed that the whole of our politics had to be geared to that.

This was never true. Even in the depression that I'm sure we all went through after 11 June it was never a realistic assessment. Because there was an overwhelming public commitment to the changes made in 1945. There has never been that for the changes that Thatcher, and those around her, have pushed through in British politics over the last eight years.

There has consistently been majorities in every opinion poll for full employment, for better public spending. She got the lowest votes of any Tory government, not the real mass votes that the post-war Labour governments got. Although Thatcher's government has presided over many advances for capital, and many defeats for Labour, there was never a sea change brought about in public perceptions.

So the world has changed. And it's going to take a lot of people a lot of time to wake up to it. But it does mean that the key issues of socialism that have been there throughout the last 100 years are put back into the centre of political debate. There is no way that we can lift ourselves out of the recession that we're going to go into — starting from a real position of four million unemployed — without tackling the question of the control of capital.

It is of course fortuitous that we're going to have a major review of Labour Party policy at the same time as the consequences of the Wall Street crash begin to work themselves through.

Undoubtedly many of the right see this review as a chance to water down unilateralism — or to try and find another way of fudging whatever economic policies they'll come up with to lose the next election. But it also gives us the chance to push forward,

reemphasise and reevaluate, and try to make relevant to today's conditions, all the fundamental underlying principles of socialism based on analysis of class.

The crash will also put right in the centre of political debate the issue of our relationship to Europe. Because there's no doubt whatsoever that the right in Europe — and this will certainly be the case in every European country — will see the way out of this recession as building very rapidly the final stages of the Common Market, in particular achieving by 1992 the common internal market. This will be accompanied by moves towards European military integration and strengthening European militarism — the Euro-bomb concept of Owen.



**There is no way we can lift ourselves out of the recession without tackling the control of capital**

This is inevitable because one of the things that will be accelerated by this recession is the move of American interests away from Europe and towards the Pacific basin. There will be major pressures on European nations to in-

crease their defence spending, and the right will be arguing that they want a Europe that's literally armed to the teeth in order to fight the dreadful Russian menace. Therefore, as well as the debate about rebuilding our economy and our welfare state, and how to pay for it, we'll also face the central issue of where Britain should be in relation to the forces throughout the world. What should be our attitude to Nicaragua and South Africa? Should we see the Soviet Union as an enemy or take a more progressive and open minded view about the nature of relationships that should develop between ourselves, the Soviet Union, and the process of internal liberalisation that it faces. All that must be dealt with in the review.

As the right are pushing for extra arms spending we will be in a position to show that this is now actually a more realistic time than ever before to actually go for a policy of unilateralism — and to go not just for getting rid of nuclear weapons but for getting rid of the nonsense we got saddled with at the election that the money saved on the bomb should be used to buy more tanks. We also want to say this is the chance, now, to negotiate a massive reduction in conventional arms between the nations of Western Europe and the Soviet Union. There is no way these debates will be avoided.

These views culminated in the final nonsense of Gould saying that we must now all have to accept the share-owning democracy and this is the way forward. I must say Brian Gould is actually a very nice person. He was one of the few MPs that was actually prepared to talk to me after the election. I have nothing against him personally but it is bad to urge everyone to get in on the share market three weeks before the end of a 12 year bull market coming to its end! But Bryan Gould simply believed that politics had changed in a way which would be a completely new world and you had to adjust to it.

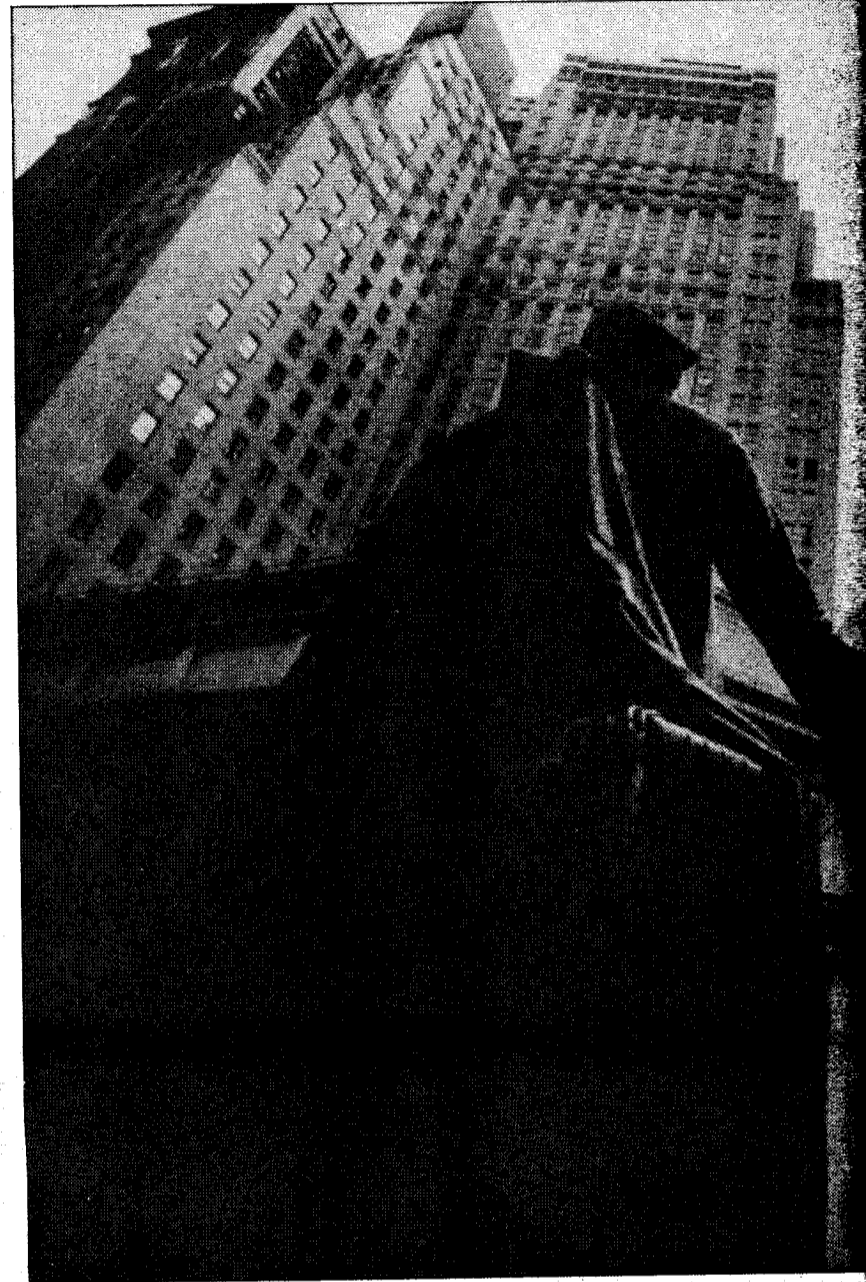
All that's going to be knocked away. Because although people haven't yet taken on board the scale of what's happening in terms of the political divisions in society — and as yet ordinary members of the community, trade unionists and so on, haven't taken in the scale of what is happening — as it starts to bite it is going to completely undercut the intellectual credibility and authority of the politics the new right have pursued both here and in America, and the reflection it has had in the labour movement. A new shuffling of the political cards will take place. What will its shape be?



**There will be major pressures on European nations to increase their defence spending**

There will be people deserting, people who've gone along with Reagan and Kohl and Thatcher, now desperately looking for some alternative, and there will be a major struggle between the new centre party and the left. And unfortunately for the left large numbers of people will actually be reflecting much of the thinking of the new centre party rather than socialism.

What we will see being put forward as the alternative to Thatcherism now will be a version of warmed-up Keynesianism. People like Steel and Owen, and unfortunately some of our own



leadership, will say that what we need is a nice big public works programme to turn it all round — completely overlooking the fact that it wasn't Keynesianism that turned round the great depression of the 1930s. The public works programmes of Roosevelt in America had a major impact in individual areas but they didn't cure the general problem of unemployment and underinvestment, and they didn't get the US out of recession. It took World War II to do that — and I don't think even the new realists will be advocating a third world war as a way of getting us all back to work!

Finally, while the debate will be there, there is the question of how we actually move it forward. There's no question in my mind that the struggle for the policy direction of the Labour Party will be given a major ratchet upwards by this crisis. People who thought we could drift along with a bit more rhetoric, or adapt to Thatcherism, will get a shock. But this also demands a sense of seriousness and responsibility from the left. The idea that we carry on our own internal sectarian disputes on the left, and worry about which left wing grouping is a little bit holier than the other one, or who can poach a few members from here or there, or which small grouplet can fuse with another small grouplet or pressure group, is completely inadequate, and wholly irrelevant to the process of change that is going to be sweeping not just through Britain but the rest of the world.

We are at a fundamental point in time when the entire world system begins to change. It can change progressively if we seize the initiative, or it can go the other way to one of several reactionary alternatives. If we fail it might very well be parties of the far right that seize the initiative, win working class support that Labour should

have, and open the way to some form of modern authoritarian solution. The question, therefore, is what do we do about it?

I make no apology whatsoever for saying that the question of unity on the left — not a bureaucratic structure, not ignoring differences, but strands of opinion on the left working together for common goals — is absolutely fundamental. If we remain divided, if one group on the left sees its main enemy as another group on the left rather than defeating Thatcher and the right in the Labour Party, then they are actually betraying the working class and the working class internationally. Therefore, I think that it couldn't have come at a better time that there is the beginning of some sense of responsibility and some beginning of understanding about the need to put together broad consensus for unity and about what type of agenda that unity should be based on.



**... a sense of seriousness and responsibility from the left**

We have seen that understanding the Labour Party most effectively in terms of the work done around Labour Left Liaison — with the international campaigns in it, and its defence

# THE CRASH OF 87

1900 ... yesterday: down 22.6%

1700 ... 89

entire

# Strategy in Europe after the crash

**SINCE THE stock market crash of 19 October Ken Livingstone has been putting forward a consistent line which can easily be summarised. On Livingstone's analysis the stockmarket crash has opened up not simply a recession but a shift in the relations between the United States and Western Europe. As he put it in his *Guardian* article of 6 November: 'What took place on 19 October was not simply about share prices. Nor does it involve only an international recession — although that will certainly ensue. Much more fundamental shifts are involved ...**

'The foundation of the crash is the attempt by the United States to maintain an international supremacy for which it no longer has the economic base. The economic and political consequences of this for Britain will be particularly direct — relations with the United States have dominated Western Europe and Britain since 1914.'

## Redmond O'Neill replies to Ken Livingstone

According to Livingstone: 'There are only two possible developments in Europe. The first, already being promoted by some West European governments, is to meet the possibility of increased tensions with the United States, and increased pressure to US disengagement from Europe, by economic austerity and arming to the teeth.'

'This reality lies behind current proposals for a right wing solution in Europe (the "Eurobomb" so beloved of Dr Owen), increased conventional armaments, increasing West European military integration, policies of austerity aimed at sustaining rearmament and potential trade wars.

## Recession

'Increased spending on "European" armaments at a time of economic recession would increase demands for deeper cuts in the welfare state and further reductions of trade union power and civil liberties ...

'The second possibility is a Western Europe based on detente, drastic reduction in armaments production, progressive domestic policies, and with the labour movement placed in a commanding position in society.

'Reduction of armaments expenditure and economic cooperation would release economic resources for development. Reduction of unemployment, and national debt, would improve the framework of life throughout Europe. Such a direction in European policy could only be led by a socialist political force.'

## Correct

Large parts of this analysis are entirely correct. But we would make some comments and add some points to it.

First the economic implications of the crash will be even sharper and more rapid in the 'third world' than in Europe — although Livingstone is right that there will be major consequences in Western Europe.

The initial effect is going to be a resurgence of the debt crisis. If there is a recession in the United States, or if it cuts back its imports through dollar devaluation, then there is no way the semi-colonial countries would be able to generate the export surpluses to repay their international debts even if it were right to demand that they did so — which it isn't.

It shouldn't be forgotten that the drastic reflation of the US economy started by Reagan in 1981 was necessary

by the threat of Mexico defaulting on its debt. A new international recession will deepen the international debt crisis again. Brazil already called a halt to all interest payments earlier this year and there is a deep political crisis in Peru centred on the debt.

But beyond the debt crisis are still more serious consequences — both positive and negative. There is no doubt that the economic consequences of the crash will have catastrophic consequences in some parts of the third world. Famine is already rampant in large parts of Africa. A country such as Uganda is on the verge of disintegration. Sri Lanka is wracked by communal programs launched by the Sinhalese majority. Right wing separatist movements have been strengthened in the Punjab in India. There are going to be horrific and right wing developments as entire countries and societies disintegrate under the impact of economic consequences that will follow the crash and the consequences of the crash.

## Correct

But there are also going to be, over the next 10-15 years, socialist revolutions in the third world — in addition to that which is already proceeding in Nicaragua and its accompanying struggles in Central America. The first and clearest prospect for this is in the Philippines. Already there the government of Cory Aquino faces an armed resistance of 10-15,000 fighters of the New People's Army which controls 10-20 per cent of the country. The Philippines ruling class is one of the most corrupt in the world. The entire Phillipines economy has been reoriented to exports over the last 20 years — which means it is going to be particularly hard hit by a recession of a dollar devaluation. A huge political struggle is going to unfold in the Philippines — with the possibility of direct US action as in the Gulf.

## Explosion

Another country in which there is already a huge social and political explosion is South Africa. Here there is not only the most archaic, reactionary and despicable regime in the world but also one with a relatively strong ruling class and with a mass white reactionary base. This combination means that there is going to be a prolonged struggle in South Africa — one with a major impact on

world politics.

In short the developments that are going to take place in Western Europe must be put in the context of real socialist revolutions, and struggles for freedom, that will take place in semi-colonial countries, which demand our solidarity, which are decisive in themselves, and which will push forward the relation of forces in the imperialist countries themselves.

We doubt that this is a difference with Ken Livingstone, whose record on Ireland, for example, is the most creditable of any major figure in the labour movement. But it means the points he makes on Europe must be put in a wider context.

## Europe

The second point concerns Europe itself. In his *Guardian* article Ken Livingstone puts forward a whole series of demands in Europe which are correct. He calls for detente with the Soviet Union, opposition to European austerity programmes, and opposition to European militarism. The demands which flow out of this we completely agree with.

But this raises the issue of *what type* of Europe is going to emerge from this? Ken Livingstone rightly notes in his *Guardian* article that Western Europe has had no real economic stability outside its real relations with the United States since World War I. Therefore what would be the social and political dynamic unleashed by the practical steps he proposes?

## Austerity

We think it is obvious. Any attempt to oppose European militarism, break the link with the United States, or oppose European austerity programmes would mean ferocious resistance from the West European bourgeoisies — let alone the United States. Economic and political sabotage, cutting off of trade, economic destabilisation, and every other mechanism of sabotage would be attempted. We do not believe that it would be possible to stabilise a neutral capitalist Europe. Embarking on the course Livingstone outlines would inevitably end either in a collapse or in a socialist Europe.

These are some of the key strategic issues which need to be discussed out in the next period.



Labour Party democracy organized by CLPD, and the Women's Action Committee, and the Black Section, and the support all these groups gave to the miners strike, it prefigures the type of Labour Party that is needed.

And it also had successes at what was a very difficult Labour Party conference. I know that I have to thank people in the LLL for the work that was done in the NEC election. But I think it was very important for the left that we saw Bryan Gould getting 40,000 less votes than myself after the whole of the press and the whole of the right had been building up a campaign against 'Livingstone'. It was a blow to the psychology and credibility of the right that this campaign fell flat on its face — as was the support received by Diane Abbott.

But most important is the impact at the rank and file level. What is important about the particular coalition of forces that has come together is that it prefigures the Labour Party as it will be in the years to come. It represents an internationalisation of our movement and a widening of our class, race, and sexual base within British politics. It starts to put the issues and aspirations of women workers and black workers centrally on Labour's agenda and not peripheral to it. I think the Labour Left Liaison and the coalition of forces it represents, and the links it has with the Campaign Group and in the NUM, prefigures what the left will be in the Labour Party — and eventually what the Labour Party and trade union movement will represent.

A similar process is also being reflected in changes in the trade unions. Arthur Scargill played a decisive role in the way the NUM supported women and the black community. But the same process will affect other unions. The NUM, NUPE, and the CGU are all moving in the same direction.

recruit part-timers, to recruit women, to recruit more black people, is going to change those trade unions fundamentally. In the TGWU and in NUPE, although the left have suffered reverses, it still remains sufficiently strong that it's possible to win important policies in these unions in the period ahead. Equally it is important to see what is emerging in terms of the link up between TASS and ASTMS. I was at a TASS school at Torquay yesterday, and the debate was extremely illuminating. Because at exactly the same time the electricians and the engineers are rabbiting on new realism and no-strike deals, and seeing their membership decline year by year, we are seeing the creation of a powerful union in the growing sectors of the British economy which is aligned with the left in the party — and that is going to be of profound significance in the struggles between left and right in the labour movement over the coming years. Developments which start in the international economy will work through and reinforce all these trends in British politics.

So I have no doubt whatsoever that whilst a lot of people are still suffering from the depression of 11 June, and aren't taking on board what has happened in terms of the shift in the international economy. I've no doubt whatsoever that suddenly things have changed dramatically. The consequences will take some time to work through, but what happened on 19 October (the day of the Wall Street crash) shifted world politics.

If we've got the ability to lift our eyes from the sectarian squabbles that assail so much of the left, and take the measure of what has occurred, we can plan for and achieve major victories for radical socialist politics within the next decade both internationally and in Britain.



# Terrible price of British rule in Ireland

**THE BOMBING** at Enniskillen has been exploited by the government and media to legitimise a new wave of repression in Ireland. It has also been exploited to try to silence those who argue that only a British withdrawal can secure peace in Ireland. We reproduce here the editorial from *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, the newspaper which supports Sinn Fein in Ireland, on the events at Enniskillen. The views of *Socialist Action* are stated in our editorial.

THE republican movement, its members and supporters everywhere have been shocked and shaken by what happened in Enniskillen last Sunday. We do not try to excuse or defend the action which caused the deaths and injuries inflicted by the IRA bomb.

The most telling criticism of this disastrous IRA action has come from republicans themselves.

To the families and friends of the dead, and to the injured, the sympathy of republicans goes out. It will be no consolation to them and will be scorned or ignored by those who do not wish to understand the suffering of all our people.

But bereavement and injury are things republicans deeply understand because they have experienced them at firsthand so many times.

After the dead, the injured and their relatives, it is republicans who have most directly to lose from

this action. Its consequences will be with us for a long time to come because of our sorrow and because our enemies — the enemies of our people — are so strong and have been so strengthened by it.

Those enemies who have inflicted so much suffering on our people for centuries — and in particular in the last 20 years — have been quick to use the grief of the victims and the reaction of people generally to further their political ends. The British government has secretly revelled in the opportunity this has given them to justify their occupation of our country.

When the emotions of this week have eased, the vast majority of the Irish people will recognise the talk of peace from Margaret Thatcher and Tom King for the hypocrisy that it is.

The current phase of the war in the six counties, which enters its twentieth year in 1988, has wrecked

many lives. Our people, nationalist or unionist, are not to blame for that war, no more than they are responsible ultimately for the death and suffering which foreign interference has brought to our land over hundreds of years. Generations of Irish people have tried to end injustice and bring about change by peaceful means and have been met with British violence.

Twenty years ago, the present phase of nationalist resistance to British-sponsored injustice began with the campaign for civil rights. It did not begin with the IRA going out to shoot RUC men or British soldiers but with ordinary Catholics demanding simple reforms within the Northern state — votes and houses and jobs.

## Injustice

The guns and batons which were used against them by the forces of the state are now part of history. Many people have died since but the most basic injustice which existed then — the denial of civil and national rights — are still maintained and defended with British guns.

If that was not the case there would be no IRA. There would be no support

for the IRA or any reason for the IRA to exist. But the support and the reason are facts and will remain so as long as Britain continues to deny our people the right to national self-determination.

Where there is oppression there will always be resistance; where there is armed oppression there will always be armed resistance.

## Peace

Those who this week have hypocritically hidden behind the bereaved and blamed the IRA for the entire war are not interested in peace. They have thrown in their lot with the British government which holds the key to peace but which, by enforcing its unjust rule here, withholds it.

There can be no peace without justice. If the IRA laid down its arms tomorrow it would not bring peace.

Next Sunday the Catholic pulpits of Ireland will thunder with denunciations of the republican movement and the bishops will brand as sinful anyone who supports the republican cause. It has happened many times before and has changed nothing, least of all the injustice which is the root cause of violence.

The statement which

will be read out is one of the most dishonest that has ever emanated from the Catholic hierarchy. It refers to the 'present campaigns of republican violence' and implicitly lays the blame for all the violence and deaths in the six counties on republicans.

It links the republican movement with the renegade criminal elements responsible for the kidnapping and maiming of John O'Grady. This is a lie and the Catholic hierarchy knows it as well as everybody else.

In attempting to morally blackmail people the hierarchy is showing its double standards about peace. It says that it 'sym-

pathises' with the 'police force' in the six counties but that it is 'sinful to join organisations committed to violence or to remain in them'. They are clearly saying that British violence is not sinful.

We strongly contest that view. The bishops have not tried to end the war but have taken sides in it — the side of the powerful, the establishment.

The position of republicans has not changed. But not because we want this war.

Our people have suffered bereavement, physical and mental injury and long years of imprisonment. We go on because the state of the country demands it and because we know that peace with

justice cannot come short of a free Ireland.

Armed resistance to British rule will bring that freedom because it is ultimately the most necessary political weapon against an armed aggressor and the only one the aggressor will heed. The experience of oppressed peoples all over the world and, most of all, in our own history, proves that.

That is the tragic context in which the Enniskillen bombing took place. Republicans will never forget it and in the ongoing struggle to end injustice and bring about a free, peaceful Ireland will carry it in their hearts and minds forever.



## Enniskillen: IRA Statement

**ON MONDAY 9 November, the day after the bomb explosion at Enniskillen, the IRA issued a statement which we reproduce below together with *Republican News*' comments.**

'THE Irish Republican Army admits responsibility for planting the bomb in Enniskillen yesterday which exploded with such catastrophic consequences. We deeply regret what occurred.

'GHQ has now established that one of our units placed a remote-controlled bomb in St Michael's aimed at catching crown forces personnel on patrol in connection with the Remembrance Day service but not during it. The bomb blew up without being triggered by our radio signal.

'There has been an ongoing battle for supremacy between the IRA and British army electronic engineers over the use of remote-control bombs. In the past, some of our landmines have been triggered by the British army scanning high frequencies and other devices have been jammed and neutralised. On each occasion we overcame the problem and recently believed that we were in advance of British counter-measures.

'In the present climate nothing we can say in explanation can be given the attention which the truth deserves, nor will it compensate the feelings of the injured or bereaved. (Signed: P O'Neill, Irish Republican Publicity Bureau, Dublin).'

Republicans do not attempt to justify or explain away what happened in Enniskillen last Sunday. There is no way that what the IRA has called the 'catastrophic consequences' can be reversed or minimised. It was an appalling tragedy that should never have happened.

But what is clear is that the IRA had no intention of injuring civilians, and did not themselves detonate the remote-control bomb. They did not anticipate the tragic results of the premature detonation of the bomb.

That was a monumental error for which republicans have paid, and will continue to pay dearly.

In the aftermath of Enniskillen, everything that republicans have said has been distorted where it has not been censored. This is to be expected but what cannot be denied is that the IRA has been consistent in claiming responsibility for an action so damaging to the republican movement and so useful to the enemy.

Nor can it be denied that the war in the six counties which has claimed so many lives is not now and never has been the fault of the Irish people — nationalist, loyalist or republican — but that ultimately Britain is to blame.



# How Reagan was forced to sign the INF treaty

UNITED STATES and Soviet negotiators are presently in Geneva putting the 'finishing touches' to the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. This treaty comes after two years of determined pressure for such a deal from the USSR. CAROL TURNER looks back on the steps which have led to the treaty.

15 JANUARY, 1986. In his statement of that date, on behalf of the Soviet government, Mikhail Gorbachev outlined a proposal to completely rid the planet of nuclear weapons. In propaganda terms, it was a surprise for warmongers like Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Francois Mitterand and Helmut Kohl — one they decidedly did not welcome.

The Soviet Union offered a three-stage programme for a total and world-wide elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. Stage one: the USSR and USA would reduce by half the nuclear arms that could reach each other's territories. Stage two: other nuclear powers would begin to engage in nuclear disarmament. Stage three: all remaining nuclear weapons would be eliminated by the end of 1999.

## Reason

The Soviet Union's statement, however, stressed that such reductions would only be possible 'if the USSR and the USA mutually renounce the development, testing and deployment of space strike weapons'. Star Wars was to be used by Reagan as the main reason for refusing any deal for the next 12 months.

As a result of the USSR offer, and others made by Gorbachev, the United States was put on the defensive in the propaganda war.

In the autumn of 1986 Reagan and Gorbachev met face-to-face in Iceland.

The US president was universally perceived to be responsible for the failure of the nuclear arms talks in Iceland. Even that pillar of the United States establishment, *Time* magazine, was forced to admit it.

## Reykjavik

The 27 October 1986 issue explained that even as the US delegation flew home from Reykjavik: 'headlines were already spreading the impression that Reagan had thrown away the promise of a nuclear-free world by clinging to his vision of a space-based defence — even if there might be no missiles to defend against.'

The article went on to describe: 'the next steps in what flowered into a publicity blitz unprecedented in their administration. Its purpose: to persuade the US and the world to emulate the optimistic child in one of Reagan's favourite jokes who finds a pile of manure in his room on Christmas morning and begins

shovelling away, convinced that "there must be a pony here somewhere." who had assiduously avoided the press during his first 10 months in office. Assured that it was unavoidable, he conducted an 80-minute airborne briefing.

'While it was in progress, Regan and eight aides were sketching the next steps in what flowered into a publicity blitz unprecedented in their administration. Its purpose: to persuade the US and the world to emulate the optimistic child in one of Reagan's favourite jokes who finds a pile of manure in his room on Christmas morning and begins shovelling away, convinced that "there must be a pony here somewhere."

'After his Monday televised report to the nation, the Great Communicator took his case on the campaign trail. But his aides handled most of the spin control, trooping before every microphone, TV camera, journalistic conclave or group of citizens they could find or summon to uncover a pony of hope under what at first looked like the manure of Reykjavik.'

## Offer

*Time* magazine explained how 'the spin-doctors hammered at three main points': Gorbachev not Reagan blocked a drastic reduction in nuclear weapons by demanding all work on the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) be confined to laboratory research for 10 years; Reagan had no choice but to reject this demand, which would have killed SDI; the summit was not a failure but a success because it brought the world to the brink of a deal that had seemed unimaginable.

A few weeks after the Iceland summit, at a Vienna meeting between US and USSR foreign ministers, Eduard Shevardnadze indicated that the Soviet Union was 'ready to negotiate on the individual agreements'. Talks would not be made conditional on the Star Wars issues.

By the end of February this year, the Soviet Union had made the offer on which December's treaty will be based. In a statement issued by TASS news agency on Saturday 28 February 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev said: 'The Soviet Union suggests that the problem of medium-range missiles in Europe be singled out from the package of issues, and that a separate agreement on it be concluded, and without delay.'

The White House had no option but to respond positively. 'We hope to make progress,' said a spokesperson for the administration.

This was the offer which drove a wedge between the USA and West Europe. In the week that followed the British media began its campaign against the deal. It was a campaign echoed in France, Germany and elsewhere. 'Gorbachev offer divides Europe's nuclear powers' reported the *Financial Times* of Tuesday 3 March.

With one eye on the then forthcoming general election Margaret Thatcher pretended a tepid welcome. But the French administration experienced no such constraint. A French foreign ministry statement baldly spelled out that: 'the objective must be to avoid a denuclearisation of Europe.'

## Europe

As the weeks wore on and the deal was still on the table, the headline writers became more explicit. 'Do we really want Europe to be nuclear-free?' asked *The Daily Express* on Thursday 4 April, when discussions were taking place about limiting short-range missiles as well. *The Daily Mail* warned of the 'folly and fallacy of a nuclear-free Britain', while the *Sunday Telegraph* asked 'And if the Red Army rolls West?'

West European politicians and their media increasingly focussed on the 'dangers' of a nuclear-free Europe. They raised every conceivable (and bogus) objection they could think of. The INF treaty was seen as a possible thin end of the wedge to a nuclear free Europe — and also as 'decoupling' Western Europe and the United States.

At each stage of the nuclear disarmament talks over the past two years, it has been the US and West European governments that have raised objections to denuclearisation. This period has clearly highlighted the real position of the self-declared multilateral nuclear disarmers like Reagan and Thatcher: they are determined to keep their nuclear armories. That is why after first offering the 'double zero' option the INF treaty was actually opposed when Gorbachev accepted it.

The 40 year old debate between unilateralists and so-called multilateralists has been exposed more than at any other time for the fake and the fraud that it is. The argument is not about which method will lead to nuclear disarmament but about whether or not to disarm.

The INF treaty is the first step to what must be the central slogan of the next period — the elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide.



## Angola blow to apartheid-backed UNITA

IT IS now becoming clear that the rebel UNITA forces of Joseph Savimbi and their South African sponsors have suffered major setbacks at the hands of the Angolan army, FAPLA. JON SILBERMAN reports.

THE Angolan news agency, ANGOP, announced 11 November that, in addition to heavy UNITA casualties, 230 South African troops had lost their lives in fighting over the last two months. Armed forces leader Antonio dos Santos Franca said that 11 AML-90 armoured

cars, 24 other military vehicles and a number of light weapons, cannons and jeeps of the apartheid forces had been destroyed.

The South Africans themselves now openly admit to having been involved in the fighting with ground troops, contradic-

ting earlier Savimbi denials. According to Angolan president, Jose Eduardo dos Santos, over 3000 South African troops have been involved in the invasion. But flagging apartheid troop morale has prompted visits to military units involved in Angola by president Botha, foreign minister Pik Botha, finance minister Barend du Plessis, and education minister FW de Klerk.

On Friday, 13 November Pretoria revised earlier casualty figures, now claiming that 23 soldiers had been killed. But in typical apartheid fashion, only the deaths of white soldiers were admitted whereas many black soldiers had been involved in what was the fiercest military confrontation in the 12 years of war since Angola won independence from Portugal in 1975.

## Soldiers

Since that time, Pretoria and Washington have put their all into trying to overturn the MPLA regime which, in addition to driving out the Portuguese colonialists and improving the conditions of the Angolan people, has provided strong backing to the anti-apartheid struggle and to the fight for independence of Namibia, and which has proved a powerful obstacle to South Africa's imperialist designs throughout the region. Their war of aggression has caused \$12 billion damage, caused 60,000 deaths, and displaced some 600,000 people.

An invasion force in 1975 was repulsed by a combined force of

Angolan troops and Cuban internationalist fighters who volunteered in their tens of thousands to defend Angola against apartheid aggression. Today some 37,000 Cuban volunteers are estimated to be in the country at the invitation of the Angolan government and its people. Soviet military advisers are also there.

## Statement

Apartheid army chief, general Jannie Geldenhuys, confirmed the desperate situation of the South African and UNITA forces in a statement of 11 November. 'Russian and Cuban-backed Angolan forces are desperately trying to capture the Cuando-Cubango province in southern Angola and therefore they pose a very real threat to UNITA's position in the territory' he said.

In another statement the South African Defence Force claimed to have inflicted heavy defeats on camps in Angola of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). Pretoria claimed that 150 SWAPO guerrillas were killed in a 'pre-emptive strike'.

All Pretoria's statements are designed to deflect from the reality of the defeat suffered by UNITA at the hands of FAPLA. Their refusal to give casualty figures for black soldiers, their targeting of Cuban and Soviet personnel and the invention of the raid on Namibian liberation forces — which SWAPO denies to have happened — are aimed to deflect attention from the real problems they have encountered.





Danish workers strike for a 35-hour week.

## Why Labour should oppose the EEC

ONE OF the most important issues that will be posed again by the stock market crash is the attitude of socialists to the plans of various West European bourgeoisies — and to the EEC. With concern among West European governments over the way the United States concluded the IMF treaty with the USSR, and an understanding that the stockmarket crash means increased trade tensions with the US, there is an increasing trend to 'European' militarism and 'European' austerity programmes. 'Left wing' positions on Europe failing to oppose the EEC have also been advanced by John Palmer and others. LES HUCKFIELD MEP looks at what should be Labour's attitude to the EEC.

At a banquet to celebrate British entry to the Common Market on 2 January 1973, Sicco Mansholt, Dutch EEC Commissioner said: 'For the great mass population there has been no broad improvement in conditions generally ... dissatisfaction is indeed widespread ... progress of integration has led to major social stress ... disparities in standards of living between different areas of the Community have become more marked rather than less.'

No wonder that in the general election of June 1983, Labour's manifesto said: 'We are also committed to bring about withdrawal in an amicable and orderly way so that we do not prejudice employment or the prospect of increased political and economic cooperation with the whole of Europe.'

Since then, nothing has changed — though John Palmer and the Socialist Society, and Frances Morrell and the so-called soft left would have us believe so. Labour Party policy must still be one of withdrawal from the Common Market framework. But just as important is Labour's policy after withdrawal.

### Demise

In his cogently-argued book *Europe without America*, Palmer, the *Guardian's* correspondent in Brussels, gives an excellent summary of the gradual demise of respect for America and her influence. On one hand, capital in

Europe has lost trust in American defence and foreign policy initiatives, while on the other, it is afraid the USA will retreat into its political and defence laager, putting trust in strategic defences, especially Star Wars.

Between 1981 and 1985 there was a 51 per cent increase in American defence expenditure. America currently spends 6.4 per cent of its gross national product on defence, compared with the EEC's 3.8 per cent and Britain's 5.5 per cent. Thirty per cent of US military expenditure is spent on stationing forces in Europe. So there is a fear that America will retreat into 'beggar-my-neighbour' policies, and economic nationalism. The most dangerous Common Market reaction to all this consists of a variety of 'Euro-bomb' scenarios, advocated across the political spectrum from David Owen to the European right — against which the Labour Party must champion detente and a nuclear-free Europe.

### Pressure

The other major pressure for a 'Fortress Europe' policy is, of course, Wall Street's Black Monday, and the consequences of the world-wide stock exchange crash. At last, America's financial hegemony is clearly coming to an end. Current Common Market countries' pressure to correct the American trade deficit, while refusing to reflate their own economies, is the latest in a series of events

where, across the political spectrum, there is a 'swing back to Europe'. Above all, Labour must campaign against a Euro-nuclear defence policy.

Given current party policy, no wonder John Palmer writes: 'Ironically, the British Labour Party is in danger of moving from a narrow-minded opposition to all things European to a superficial infatuation with the institutions of the EEC.'

### Naive

Frances Morrell's and Terry Ward's recent paper to the 'Alternative to Trade Wars' conference was a frighteningly naive example of such infatuation. This is their main theme: 'The intellectual basis for nation-state socialism, which Labour has supported since 1918 has disappeared. Labour's future is European.'

This completely ignores the kind of Europe which is being created. I will not dwell on the lunacy of the Common Agricultural Policy, for which there is no political majority or will for major change, for more worrying is what is emerging as the Common Market industrial policy.

### Agency

The multinationals have the Brussels Commission as their servicing agency. Under the Commission's various programmes for the new techniques, Euro-funding is not only destined to strengthen multinationals in Europe, but under these programmes is channelled to their Common Market offshoots. Council of ministers, commission and parliament reports galore are hell-bent on the slavish imitation and reproduction of the conditions favouring American and Japanese capitalism throughout the EEC.

Palmer and Morrell try to chart alternative ways out of this. Both are totally inadequate.

Palmer writes that a 'new, radical socialism is now taking shape, drawing

inspiration from sources as diverse as the ecological and green movements, from feminism and community activism' and 'a new breed of progressive regional and local authorities has even struck up an alliance of convenience with the European Community'.

He seems to believe his collection of ideas from GLEB, Lucas workers, Kodak stewards, Phillips workers, Ford and General Motors stewards, feminism, ecologists, and the peace movement can make the breakthrough. But he cannot surely believe that because the West German Greens increased their share of the vote to 9 per cent in January, and Danish Left People's Socialist Party recently increased theirs to 16 per cent, the system can be overturned?

### Thrust

In contrast, Frances Morrell plainly doesn't understand the combined thrust of the Single European Act, which establishes majority voting on a wider range of issues in the council of ministers, and proposals for the completion of the EEC internal market by 1992. With Terry Ward she writes: 'While it is true that European institutions tend at present to promote policies based in free market principles and financial orthodoxy, this largely reflects the present ascendancy of right-wing ideas within Europe — an ascendancy which derives in no small measure from the failure of the left to put forward a common and coherent set of alternative principles.'

So for her, all the left has to do is: 'to reaffirm the collective responsibility of European governments to manage market forces so that they operate to the benefit society a whole.'

This in itself is a fundamental delusion about how the Common Market works. For the 'political agenda of Europe' is rigidly predetermined by the Treaty of Rome itself, and reinforced by the EEC Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

No wonder that, after the referenda in Denmark and Ireland on the Single European Act and completion of the internal market, the siren songs of the Palmer-Morrell axis prevented what should have been a major British left debate.

### Policy

Meanwhile, a mild Euro-welfare reformism is now the standard policy of most parties in the Confederation of European Socialist Parties. Many British Labour MEPs are already locked into its agenda. The 'Work programme of Socialist Group' is less specific and radical than the SDP Euro-manifesto in June 1984. In arguing for a 'social Europe' to complement the internal market, they are accepting its inevitability. But while the Single European Act will surely drive the internal market to its completion, who will pay for doubling the size of the social and regional funds to provide for social compensation?

They are already treading the road along which most Euro Socialist parties have ceased to be 'sectional' and turned to 'catch-all' politics. Their only way forward to survival is being in government, if necessary with other parties near the centre of the political spectrum, each equally desperate to participate in government. They function as state-funded brokerage machines, their clientalist politics mainly responsive to the balance of group pressures.

Instead of working through the Confederation of European Socialist Parties towards a common Euro-manifesto for 1989, Labour should summon a congress of those on the left of such parties who seek, first, to end the present EEC framework and instead build a new nuclear-free Europe, based on working people's interests, and against the multinationals. It's not too late — and the Labour Party should still take the lead.

## Car workers strikes

FORD, Vauxhall and BL which account for the overwhelming majority of UK car production have each been hit by strike action in the last week. Further action is planned.

Ford's plants at Dagenham, Halewood, Southampton, Dunton, Daventry and Croydon have all be the scene of industrial action as both manual workers and staff have demonstrated their opposition to management pay offer.

The next meeting of the national negotiating body, the FNJNC, is on Monday 23 November. At the previous meeting on 11 November, unions representing the 32,500 manual workers at the 21 Ford plants, rejected company proposals for plant level bargaining over radical changes in work practices in return for a four-and-a-quarter per cent rise.

The company's proposed deal would last for three years and would include total job flexibility

Some 14,000 workers took strike action to coincide with the talks in what was the latest in a series of stoppages since the end of October. According to the company 2700 units have so far been lost as a result of the action.

The unions are demanding a 10 per cent rise on basic rates, a special line-workers allowance, the doubling of productivity bonuses, a 37-hour week and improvements in holiday entitlements.

The last major victory scored over the company by the unions followed the successful strike in 1978. Since then, however, there has been a nearly 40 per cent reduction in the workforce, and UK workers have suffered relative to improvements won in other countries. In West Germany, for

instance, manual workers work 10 days a year less than in Britain.

Similar action has been taken at Vauxhall. Its Luton plant was the scene of a nine-day strike over productivity bonuses during which time the company unilaterally suspended national pay talks.

When talks covering the 7500 manual workers were resumed on 5 November, the company offered a two year deal. Like at Ford, Vauxhall made a four per cent, productivity-strings attached, offer. Their proposed changes in working practices involve revising the shift system to allow continuous production, and altering the method of assessing staffing levels and job descriptions.

The draconian proposals come against a background in which company chair, John Bagshaw has predicted a 'solid' operating profit this year; last year the company recorded a net loss of £61.7 million. It has been the workforce that has footed the bill. Productivity rises and speed-up have joined a cut in the workforce by 1200. The company is aiming at a 25 per cent reduction in 'costs' over three years.

Manual workers at Vauxhall's plants in Ellesmere Port, Luton and Dunstable staged a 24-hour stoppage on 11 November to protest the company offer.

The action at BL's Cowley plant on 16 November was in response to a company proposal to spend half of a pension fund surplus this year and the diversion of pension fund monies for a further two years into production development! The last stoppage at Cowley was in 1984.

## Postal workers strike vote

BY more than 73,000 votes to 58,000 postal workers throughout the country have declared their preparedness to take strike action for a three hour reduction in the working week.

Union of Communications Workers (UCW) leader, Alan Tuffin spoke immediately of '73,000 very angry workers' as he resumed talks with the Post Office. Management have offered a one-hour reduction in the working week with strings attached in reply to the union's demand for a 40 hour week.

According to the law, the UCW would be required to take action by 10 December. Tuffin said that within seven to 10 days, it would become clear if the union would need to take action. He called on the Post Office to improve its offer to make industrial action unnecessary.

Post Office vice-chair, Kenneth Young, claimed that the vote was not a strong

mandate for action but only a 'narrow majority'. But then he would. The reality is quite different.

There have been dozens of local disputes within the industry in which the young workforce has shown its determination to fight management attacks. The latest was earlier this month in Liverpool in which 1000 postal workers staged a 24-hour strike.

Moreover 56 per cent to 44 is by no means 'narrow'.

The Post Office don't believe their own rhetoric. They have 'contingency plans' in the event of industrial action and the Tory government has already announced its intention of suspending the Post Office's monopoly in the event of a strike — to allow private contractors to attempt to organise scabbing. Some have predicted unofficial action as a result of the ballot vote.

The last national postal workers strike was in 1971.

In the Unions

# Scargill stands for reelection



'IS ANYBODY going to stand against Arthur? Is there anybody brave enough?' asked Dennis Skinner at a 15 November Barnsley meeting organised to fight the closure of Redbrook and Woolley pits. None of the NUM president's critics has rushed to throw their hat into the ring. South Wales secretary, George Rees, who at a previous executive meeting had called for Scargill's resignation, could only bring himself to move that the executive refuse to accept the NUM president's decision to stand down and seek re-election!

NUM general secretary, Peter Heathfield, also spoke at the Barnsley meeting. He explained the background to Arthur Scargill's decision to resign and seek reelection in a pithead ballot on 22 January.

By Clive Turnbull

The 'new realists' on the NUM executive, he said, were calling for compromise and conciliation in the face of the coal board's attacks. But every time the NUM conceded a compromise, management moved the goal posts, Heathfield stated.

Scargill's decision to stand for reelection was announced at a meeting of the NUM executive on 12 November. The executive agenda had been dominated by the eight-week long overtime ban against British Coal's newly-imposed code of conduct.

Government ministers and British Coal management are now openly stating that the code is designed to victimise NUM branch officials and militants. But despite the massive 77 per cent ballot vote in favour of action against the code, the overtime ban decided by a majority of the NUM executive only limited production of coal in overtime, not maintenance or development work.

Attempts by the Yorkshire and Durham NUM areas to force the executive to make the overtime ban effective have

been rejected by a combination of the right wing and the area leaders from South Wales and Scotland.

British Coal management has taken this to be a sign of weakness, an occasion for pressing forward their attacks:

- Payment of this year's wage increase, due this month, has been withheld from NUM members until the overtime ban is lifted.

- Pit closures and jobs losses have dramatically increased in the last months.

- British Coal's so-called Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) has launched a management-sponsored recruitment drive.

- New investment is being used to try to blackmail miners into giving up the five-day week for six-day working and longer shifts.

Privatisation plans for electricity and coal envisage a mining industry in the 1990s with just 70,000 miners and 70 pits. This would mean complete closure of the Durham, North Derbyshire and Kent coalfields, under 2000 miners in Scotland, and the concentration of 'streamlined', 'high production' mining in Yorkshire, Notts and the Midlands, in a small number of 'super-pits'.

At the executive meeting on 12 November, the Durham area — with Scargill's support — proposed that a special delegate conference be convened to discuss fur-

ther action against the code. This was rejected.

Arthur Scargill summarised the choice facing miners at the SO Davies Memorial lecture in S Wales on 30 October, as being between 'new realism', what he described as the 'politics of fear' — and 'class struggle'.

The 'new realists' are based on 'defeatism' in Scargill's view, calling 'for an end to confrontation and class struggle — seeking a strategy of coalition, collaboration and compromise.' Instead of militant action, Scargill explained, the new realists argue for 'lobbies of parliament, marches, demonstrations, meetings and broad alliances involving all sections including the churches.

'They see this programme of action as a substitute for, and not complimentary to, industrial action.'

A meeting of the Yorkshire area council on Monday 16 November voted by 51 votes to two to recommend the area's 53 branches to back Scargill's reelection. Branch nominations will now be made and the area council meeting on 7 December will officially declare the Yorkshire nomination.

There was no support at the council meeting for a move by the area's full time agent, John Walsh, for the area to seek legal advice on Scargill's decision to seek reelection.

Walsh has been canvassed as a possible right-wing candidate for president by the media. Until now, Walsh has said that his preparedness to stand depends on his support in the union's areas, despite strong pressure, including from within the right wing within the labour movement more generally, for him to stand. Another potential candidate touted by the media, S Wales area president, Des Dutfield, has definitively ruled himself out.

## Engineers flexibility deal rejected

BY 17 votes to 13, the executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) have rejected employers federation proposals for radical changes in working practices.

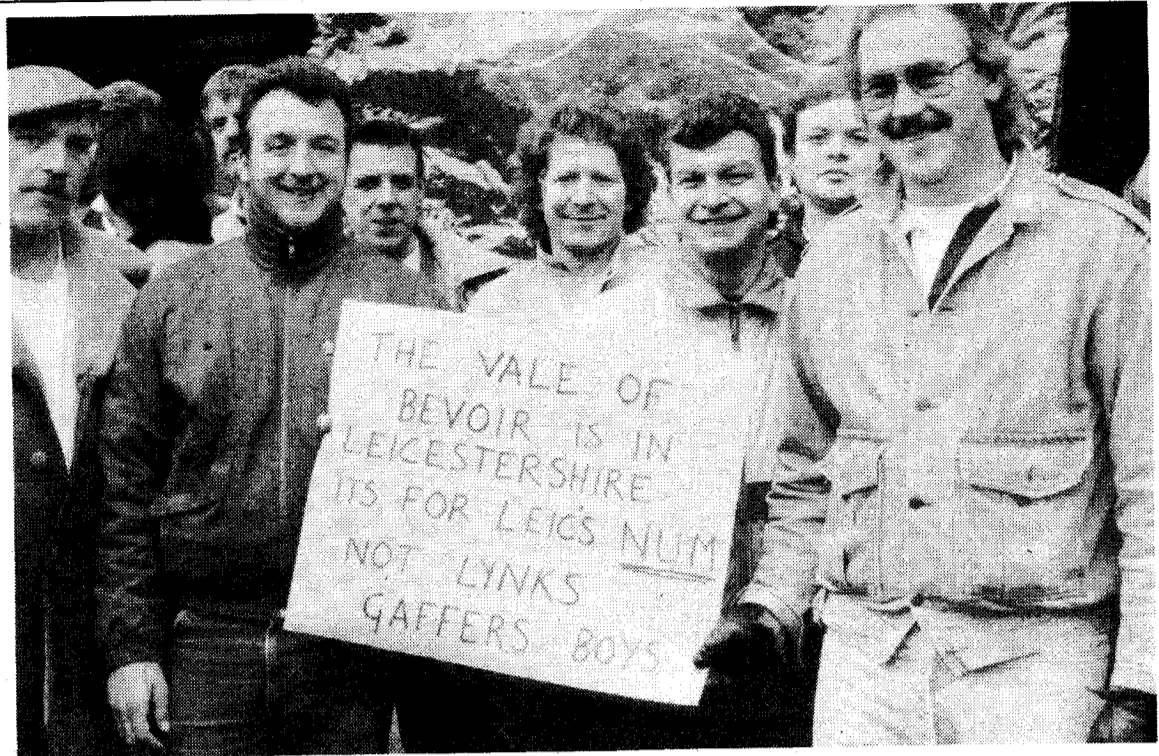
The employers were offering a reduction in the working week of one-and-a-half hours over three years for non-shift engineering workers in return for job flexibility,

management-determined shift patterns to allow 'maximum plant utilisation' and other measures which together constituted the elimination of rights established over decades of struggle. Shift workers, who already work a 37.5 hour week, would have received no reduction.

AEU president, Bill Jordan, had strongly campaigned in favour of

the proposals which were the culmination of four years of talks. The CSEU executive decision is a major blow to his leadership and reflected growing opposition of engineering workers throughout the industry to the deal.

The issue of the shorter working week now becomes part of the annual pay claim to which the engineering employers are due to reply on 23 November.



## Six-day working — key presidential issue

RIGHT at the start of the miners strike in 1984, every single Fleet Street newspaper printed a photograph as part of their campaign against the strike. It showed coal boss Ian Macgregor and general secretary of the Leicestershire NUM, Jack Jones, hammering a peg into the ground at the Vale of Belvoir, the site of major new investment leading to the opening of so-called 'super pits'.

By Jon Silberman

The ceremony signified that Vale of Belvoir jobs would be guaranteed as open to Leicestershire miners and that accordingly they had nothing to fear from pit closures — their job security was assured. The Vale of Belvoir promise was key in winning the bulk of Leicestershire miners to refusing to join the strike.

Like every other similar 'promise' made by the Board, it has turned out to be a complete con. The first Vale of Belvoir pit, where development work is now underway, is at Asfordby in Leicestershire. Asfordby is scheduled to come on stream in 1991-2.

But despite its geographical location, despite the Macgregor promise, British Coal has moved the pit management out of the Central area (which includes Leicestershire) into Notts. They have held out the carrot of a single 'union' deal to the scab UDM organisation which is recognised by British Coal in the Notts area.

They have signalled that all development work at Asfordby will be performed by contractors, thereby putting doubt over the possibility of Leicestershire miners, threatened by redundancy as work at their pits is run down, moving across to Asfordby.

The reason? British Coal is after an agreement for six-day flexible working at the new pit.

The NUM is opposed to six-day working. The national executive has ruled that this is a national issue and that areas may not negotiate away the guaranteed five-day week that was won 40 years ago. But the bosses' UDM organisation is prepared to do what British Coal want.

The board's proposal caused uproar at a meeting of Leicestershire NUM members. They

decided to lobby talks between Jack Jones and local Labour MP, Greville Jenner and coal boss Sir Robert Haslam on Monday 9 November. Altogether 70 NUM members — out of whom just three had been strikers in 1984-5 — turned out at British Coal's London headquarters.

Leicestershire NUM president, Terry Tracey, said that they had come 'down here to secure Asfordby for Leicestershire miners. We are worried that they are moving it to Notts to give it to the UDM. They want six-day coaling and they know that unlike the NUM, the UDM is open to this.'

Power group members were also on the lobby. Their official said that British Coal 'can see that the UDM is flagging'.

Jack Jones said that the board's move was 'typical' of the mistrust that was running through the mining industry 'following the board's tactics of supporting the UDM. We want a written assurance that all our people will get transferred to Asfordby.'

Following the talks, however, Jones reported that Haslam had stated that the NUM could

receive recognition at Asfordby and that Leicestershire miners could be transferred to the new pit, providing the union agrees to six-day coaling. He announced immediately prior to the executive meeting his intention of proposing that the union dramatically change its stance on the issue.

One of the decisions of the executive meeting did indeed move in this direction. It was agreed that each area leadership investigate with its opposite number in British Coal how pits could be made 'economic'.

In announcing his decision to stand for reelection at the same meeting, Arthur Scargill said that opposition to six-day working was a key issue for the union's entire future.

Six-day working would not create jobs. It would, in addition to eroding hard-won conditions, lead to massive job loss as 'flexible' pits boosted productivity and undercut other pits which would be declared uneconomic.

We should be fighting for a reduction in the working week, Scargill said.



## Sacked miners Christmas appeal 1987

The 326 sacked and victimised miners and their families are facing their fourth Christmas without a wage

Our photo shows Christmas during the miners strike of 1984/85

The families and the community banded together then to make sure the meagre resources went a long way.

But this Christmas will be different for those miners who are still locked out as a result of the strike

They will be feeling isolated - cut off from the rest of the community who will be enjoying the Christmas spirit.

That is why the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign has launched its Christmas Appeal.

The NJMC aims to raise enough money to give each sacked miner a decent Christmas.

We do not feel that the children of victimised men should have to be told they cannot have the present they wanted because their father stood by trade union principles and fought for his job.

● Please donate to the Justice Appeal Fund

Make cheques payable to NJMC and send them to 26 The Avenue, Durham City. Tel: (091) 386 1375



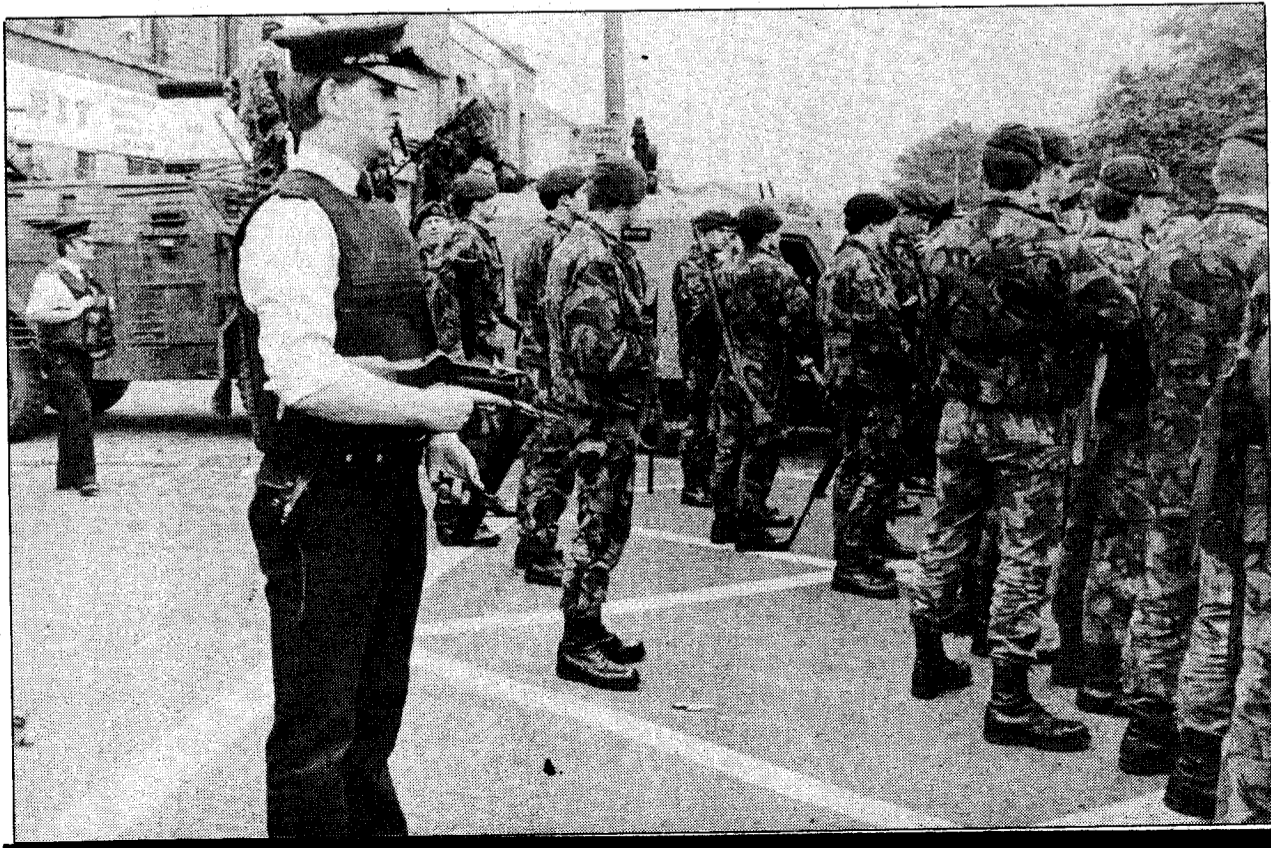
# A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

Inside: Ken Livingstone on British politics after the stockmarket crash

After Enniskillen

# BRITAIN MUST WITHDRAW FROM IRELAND



NO WORDS can describe the hypocrisy of the British government over Enniskillen. When, on Bloody Sunday 1972, 13 Catholics were gunned down by British paratroops this was described as a mistake — although it was like a textbook exercise from one of the British army's 'low intensity operations'. The entire apparatus of the British state was wheeled out to whitewash this massacre. Scarcely any publicity is given to sustained campaigns of sectarian murder by unionist thugs. Yet when at Enniskillen there was a terrible tragedy from which Republicans clearly had nothing to gain, the entire British publicity machine, starting with the Royal family, is turned loose. It is a perfection of technique which the British army and ruling class have used in innumerable colonial massacres from Amritsar onwards.

Indeed what could be more sickening than the British role in Ireland. In the Irish famine of 1846-47, a direct result of British rule, a million died from starvation and another million were forced to emigrate. Ireland is the only state in Western Europe in which the population today is lower than it was in the nineteenth century.

The partition of Ireland in 1922 was a piece of anti-democratic manipulation staggering even by British standards. The original nine counties of Ulster would have produced a majority for independence from Britain. So three counties were simply amputated to produce a 'democratic' majority for partition.

The sectarian state that was produced held its Nationalist minority down by terror and discrimination. Even today unemployment among Catholics is three times as high as among Protestants.

The problem in the North of

Ireland is not one between 'communities'. It is one where a section of the population is discriminated against by another group, the unionist bigots propped up by Britain, who reject any reform that would make the North of Ireland a democratic or equal society — for if it were a democratic and equal society it would have no reason for existing.

This combination will produce violence for as long as it exists. Because human nature, and that is its strength, will not accept such oppression. It will fight and fight against it — as has happened in Ireland now for two hundred years. And finally Britain will not be able to bear the cost of it and will withdraw.

Ken Livingstone put it entirely correctly in his speech in London on Tuesday: 'Anyone with a sense of history knows that it is inevitable that Britain will withdraw from Ireland. It is folly, which has cost countless lives, to attempt to avoid or slow this process. . .

'It is increasingly clear, to a wider range of people, that no progressive role can be played by Britain continuing on the path of attempting to stop the inevitable. If Britain remains in the North of Ireland it has only one of two choices. It is called upon by unionists to continue to prop up a sectarian state. . . But attempts to impose such serious reforms as would eliminate sectarianism are resisted by unionists — as the record of the last period has shown. . . There is no progressive way forward along either of these roads.'

The reason is that the North of Ireland state is based on a denial of the right of the Irish people to self-determination. It embodies sectarianism and discrimination. As long as it exists there will be no peace in Ireland.

Britain must get out.

- Why Britain must leave Ireland p2
- Sinn Fein statement on Enniskillen p8