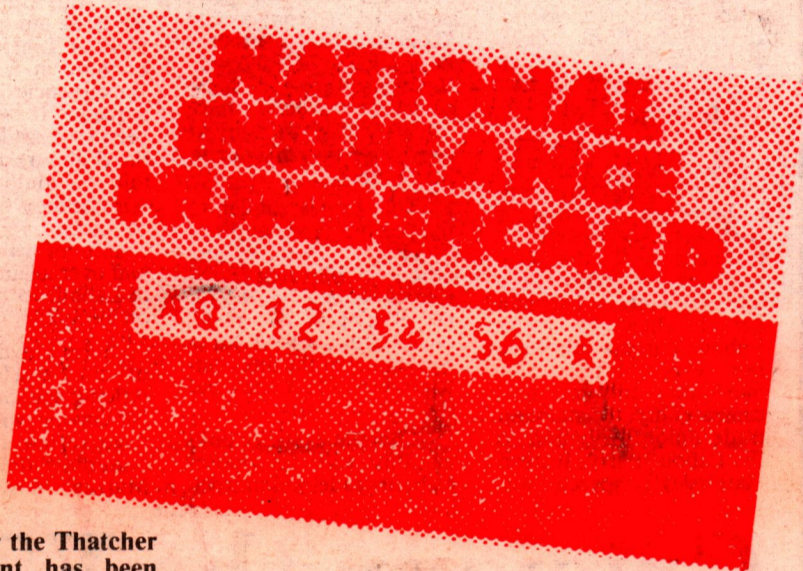


A Socialist ACTION

Identity cards, civil service witch hunt...

Civil liberties under attack



THE DHSS obviously didn't quite understand the irony of this week's announcement of the introduction of their new social security identity card. The hapless DHSS has waited until the beginning of 1984 to announce the introduction of what amounts to a national identity card system.

During the next few years the whole population will be issued with the new card, which will be similar to a bank credit card.

The giveaway in its potential use is that each card will have a magnetic strip on which invisible information will be stored. But the DHSS and the police

will be able to read the information. In effect a national identity card is being introduced by stealth.

The trend to a restriction of civil liberties

under the Thatcher government has been confirmed by the scandalous case of Sarah Tisdall, a Foreign Office clerk charged with leaking a memo on cruise missiles to the *Guardian*. The memo only had the date of cruise missile arrival — hardly something to be kept secret from the population. Yet the full weight of the Official Secrets Act is being invoked, and Heseltine ran to the High Court

to force the *Guardian* to reveal its source of information.

Britain has one of the most restrictive official secrets laws in the world. The decision of the *Guardian* to comply with the High Court order will make every potential informant think twice, and further deepen government secrecy.

Thatcher has started 1984 by graphically

showing that this government stands for a restriction of civil liberties, for control of the population and government secrecy. These moves complement the sinister increase in state powers in the Police Bill. Orwell may not have been dead right about 1984, but Thatcher is doing her best to catch up with his predictions.

Reclaim 1984: Stop the Police Bill

Picket outside New Scotland Yard, Victoria Street, London

Friday 13 January 4.30 to 7.00pm

The picket is also to advertise the forthcoming national demonstration against the Police Bill on Saturday 21 January

Local government assault goes ahead

NEXT Tuesday is D-day for the greatest assault on local government in British history. At a meeting with Tory local government leaders on Monday Thatcher and Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson rejected any changes in the government's rate capping Act. The Rates Bill will be introduced into parliament for its second reading on Tuesday 17 January.

Labour controlled councils. Irvine Patrick, leader of the Conservative opposition on the South Yorkshire council, emerged from the meeting to declare, 'I think a bill like this is the only salvation for an area like South Yorkshire.'

In other words, where the Conservatives are unable to win any popular support for their policies locally they are demanding the government step in to overturn local democracy. Local electors will have massive spending cuts imposed on them regardless of whether they vote for them or not.

The Act has outraged even Tory council leaders. Despite Thatcher and Lawson's pressure tactics this opposition has been reaffirmed by the Tory dominated Association of County Councils.

The rate capping bill shows not only the necessity to defend local government. It is also Labour's greatest opportunity so far to spell out that the Thatcher government is not a defender of liberty and freedom but its greatest opponent.

The real aim of Thatcher's Bill was made still clearer by the attendance at last Monday's Downing Street meeting. In addition to Tory controlled councils major prominence was given to Tory minorities on

Thatcher backs South African raids

LAST week South Africa launched massive air and land raids into Angola, utilising 2000 troops. A resolution of the United Nations Security Council denouncing these attacks was carried with only the United States and Britain not voting for.

The British delegation objected to the 'violent language' of the resolution, but not apparently to the violence used by the South African government.

The South African raids were ostensibly aimed at Angola-based guerrillas of the South West Africa Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) fighting for the liberation of South African-occupied Namibia. But both SWAPO and the Angolan

government claim that the guerrillas were not attacked. On the contrary, the raid was aimed at Angolan troops and installations.

By Paul Lawson

Planes and artillery attacked the Bequela rail line which runs through central Angola. Infantry advanced 125 miles into the country. What is involved here is not another attack on SWAPO, but an attempt by South Africa to bring down the Neto government in Angola. It is part of a widening war engulfing the whole region.

South Africa is pouring money and arms into the UNITA pro-Western guerrilla movement which occupies something like 35 per cent of the country. Pretoria has evidently con-

cluded that the threat from nationalist guerrillas can only be stopped by the destruction of the Angolan government.

At the same time raids against Mozambique have been stepped up in an attempt to force negotiations aimed at stopping Mozambique harbouring guerrillas of the African National Congress.

In face of this new attack on Angola, the refusal of the British government to condemn the raids shows where the Tories really stand. Despite all the hot air condemning apartheid, the Tories see South Africa as a crucial ally against 'communism' and vital for British economic interests.

The next Labour government must do what previous Labour governments have baulked at — break all links with the apartheid regime.



MODERN TIMES



Don't take any notice of her...she's just having another identity card crisis...

Socialist ACTION

The gutless Guardian

IT TOOK a 'liberal' newspaper like the *Guardian* to really plumb the depths of British journalism this week.

The most standard rule a journalist learns is that sources for 'leaks' are never revealed. Journalists to their credit have in the past gone to jail rather than reveal the source of such stories.

The reason is obvious. Journalism and the press exist, among other things, to ferret out those dirty corners of officialdom and public life which governments and the powers that be want to conceal.

Given the actions and powers that exist in the real world those who give information to journalists will inevitably be threatened with intimidation by the very people whose activities deserve to be brought out into the open. Those journalists who reveal their sources therefore threaten the liberty and freedom of everyone in the country as well as propping up precisely those who deserve to have their activities dragged out into public view.

That intimidation is exactly what is happening with Sarah Tisdall — the civil servant charged with leaking information to the *Guardian* on cruise missiles.

The charges brought against Sarah Tisdall under the 'Official Secrets Act' are absurd. No-one, including those who brought the prosecution, believe that Sarah Tisdall endangered so-called 'national security'. The police charges have been brought against her as a pure and simple exercise in intimidation.

The aim of this operation is to silence those who bring out into the light of day the consistent and constant attacks on democracy of the Thatcher government — or any other that deserves to have its activities exposed.

By giving in to the courts, by giving back the documents that would allow its source to be traced, the *Guardian* has taken a significant step to make Britain a less free country even than it was before.

And why has the *Guardian* broken this most elementary rule of journalism? It was spelt out on BBC radio by *Guardian* editor Peter Preston. The *Guardian* had been arguing for weeks that the NGA and the trade unions must obey the law. That a person or organisation could disagree with a law but a 'democrat' must always obey it.

Having served up this historical nonsense, which no journalist involved on a major story had ever accepted before, the *Guardian* was then skewered on its own argument. It had to obey the law.

In its keenness to oppose trade union action the *Guardian* fell below the level of any second rate nineteenth century liberal — let alone the militant campaigner for civil rights it likes to build its image as.

For liberty, as they say, really is indivisible. Once you accept that citizens must abandon their right to break unjust laws then you abandon the basis on which most democratic liberties were won in the first place. Those who defend the NGA, and who went to prison in the past rather than reveal sources, are the real defenders of democracy.

There is a widely known saying about the *Guardian*. This is that after long deliberation and hand wringing it always comes down on the side of repression 'regretfully'. It believes in slavery as long as the slavemasters should use softer whips.

It is a fitting comment on the paper that started as a mouthpiece of nineteenth century Liberalism. But liberalism, as always, is more scared of the organised labour movement, and of socialism, than of the suppression of democracy.

Editor: Alan Freeman

Hattersley questions union links

In a little reported speech last weekend Roy Hattersley outlined major thinking of the Labour Party right wing on the future of the trade unions and on their links to the Labour Party. He argued, 'I think that the trade unions themselves are going to be a diminishing force in British political and industrial life.'

Addressing a centenary school of the Fabian Society Hattersley claimed that, 'The "dependency" of the (Labour) Party on the trade unions is something on which I do not believe we can rely in the future as we did in the past.'

He argued the Labour Party must become more 'a coalition of ideas' and less a 'coalition of interests'.

Hattersley specifically argued that his own trade union, the ASTMS, would vote to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. The decline of the trade unions was however a more general phenomenon based on the decline of the manual working class and the effect of the Tebbit Bill.

eagerly picked up by the *Financial Times* to cast doubts on basic Labour-trade union links.

Writing on the front page under the heading 'Hattersley says unions' influence will decline' John Lloyd, the paper's industrial editor, noted 'The unions are themselves beginning to grapple with these pressures, and influential leaders have privately come to many of the same conclusions as Mr Hattersley'.

This line is similar to the policy already outlined by Frank Chapple and others following the General Election. Chapple, writing in *The Times* on 17 June, called for a weakening of the links between the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Chapple explicitly linked this call for looser Labour-trade union rela-

By John Ross

What makes this Hattersley speech even more extraordinary is that it comes on the eve of the introduction of the new round of Tebbit/King laws into parliament. This is a period when the entire Labour Party would have been expected to put its maximum energies into campaigning to maintain trade union affiliation to the Labour Party. Instead Hattersley's speech was



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

tions with support for urging trade unionists to vote SDP or Liberal, and not Labour, in a number of constituencies. Chapple argued, 'If we had not been so completely tied to the (Labour) party's coat-tails we could have urged our members to vote SDP, or Liberal if they had a chance of winning. Over and over again our loyalty to Labour let the Tories in on June 9.'

John Lloyd, the author of the article on Hattersley's speech is notable for having written a two page review in the *New Statesman* defending Len Murray's position on the

NGA dispute.

What Roy Hattersley's speech shows is just how far up the Labour Party the influence of positions to rethink Labour-trade union links, and for 'non political trade unionism, has gone.

Roy Hattersley's formal position is undoubtedly-

ly that trade unions should vote in favour of affiliation to the Labour Party. But his entire analysis obviously reflects the fact that no really effective campaign on Labour Party affiliation is going to come from the trade union or Labour Party right. Their analysis rules it out.

Crisis in the YTS

'BRITAIN'S AMBITIOUS youth training scheme (YTS) is running out of steam. By now the Manpower Services Commission, which runs the four month old scheme, expected to have filled about 375,000 of the 460,000 places available. In fact only about 300,000 have been filled, and the total is unlikely to pass 350,000. Places have proved hardest to fill in London and other large cities.'

That was how the *Economist* magazine on 7 January noted the crisis which is developing inside the Thatcher governments YTS scheme.

The results of the boycott of the cheap labour YTS scheme by large numbers of young people are now beginning to work through to other parts of the training and education system. *The Economist* noted, 'Many colleges and private training agencies that geared up for greater (YTS) demand face deep financial trouble, since MSC (Manpower Services Commission) grants are paid only for filled places.

MSC is likely to under-spend its £1.1 billion budget for the scheme by as much as £200 million there is no chance of any of the saving being used to bail these colleges and agencies out. The cash will be kept by a grateful Treasury.'

The fact that the Treasury would welcome a 'saving' of £200 million a year on youth education and training shows the reality of the YTS only too clearly. Instead of the government, and the

scheme, being interested in real training and education for young people it is merely interested in reducing their wages to the £25 a week YTS rate.

The goals of government strategy on youth wages were made even clearer in a Department of Employment report *The Relative Pay and Employment of Young People* published just before Christmas. This report attempted to give a 'scientific' basis for the government's case for cutting youth wages.

By Brian Hilton

The Relative Pay and Employment of Young People claimed that a 10 per cent reduction in the average wage of young men would produce a 20 per cent increase in jobs for them. A 10 per cent cut in wages for young women would produce a 15-20 per cent increase in jobs. The message was 'wage cutting is good for young people'.

Rather embarrassingly for the report however — in addition to the question of wage cutting itself — its conclusions were contradicted by the figures it contained. These showed that wages for young people have been steadily falling since the inception of the Thatcher government. Moreover, the government's 'wage cutting' message is far above the national average — more than twice as high as the rate of inflation. The real value of the



Photo: GM COOKSON

YTS scheme was also spelt out dramatically in a leaflet produced for employers by the National Institute of Hardware — one of the YTS managing agents. This argued for its members to use the YTS scheme because it gave employers

• extra workforce but at no extra cost ... the equivalent of a year long interview ... (with) no long term commitment.

• the venture will be a big boost to the small independent business — providing welcome help without having to pay a salary or National Insurance Contributions.

• if at any stage during the twelve month period the trainee proves unsuitable, you are able to terminate the contract simply by contacting the National Institute of Hardware

• there are few responsibilities and you won't have a penny to

pay.'

With the real character of the YTS scheme coming out more and more into the open, and with an obvious boycott of it by large numbers of young people, there is a big opening for the TUC and Labour Party to reverse their previous policy, come out against the YTS, and destroy this cheap labour scheme.

Birmingham trade unionists will be meeting on 14 January to discuss the Youth Training Scheme.

The conference, called by Birmingham Trades Council, will be opened by Clare Short MP.

The conference is open to all trade unionists. Registration fee £1.

Conference is at Assembly Rooms, Digbeth Civic Hall, 9.30am-1.15pm.



Defeat the Tebbit laws

THE LONG-PREDICTED Tory onslaught on the trade unions has created an opportunity for the labour movement which we should be ready to seize with both hands.

It is not enough to go on attacking the Tebbit laws, or the new King legislation unless we are also prepared to make the testing of these laws into the occasion for a major political campaign.

No-one should be in any way surprised at the attitude adopted by the TUC General Council, which is in line with the views that they have long expressed.

But we cannot abandon unions which are now in the front line, which would involve us in denying and repudiating the whole history of struggle by generations of trade unionists — and others.

What is really at stake is the whole tradition of political trade unionism, which we thought we had established when the Labour Representation committee was set up over eighty years ago, and which led to the formation of the Labour Party itself, and then to the adoption of socialism in its 1918 constitution.

For it was the steady decline of political trade unionism in recent years which gave the Tories the chance that they had been waiting for, to attack trade unionism, and to try to break the links that it has with the Labour Party. The real test will come with the attempt to enforce ballots.

We must use that opportunity to re-create the politics of trade

unionism and to campaign for the extension of affiliation to every union, and especially those which are not now affiliated, like the teachers, the civil servants and NALGO.

But these campaigns must be organised and led by the branches and the rank and file membership. Here is where the relevance of the Broad Left comes in, and why workplace branches are of such critical importance.

For it can only be by strong and principled leadership at the place of work that we can hope to mount a campaign that will extend affiliations and give real political clout to the other industrial campaigns that lie ahead in the struggle to defeat the application of the present repressive laws, in which the courts are now playing a leading role.

The solidarity that we need cannot be built unless everyone really understands the political significance of attacks like those made on the NGA or the NUJ, who like ASLEF in 1982 are now in the front line.

All social progress has always come from below and we shall be learning that lesson all over again in the weeks and months that lie ahead.

An increasingly non-political TUC, especially now that the composition of the General Council has been changed, may not be equipped to cope with this situation.

That is where the Broad Lefts — working across the whole board — will come into their own. We have seen the transformation of the political prospects

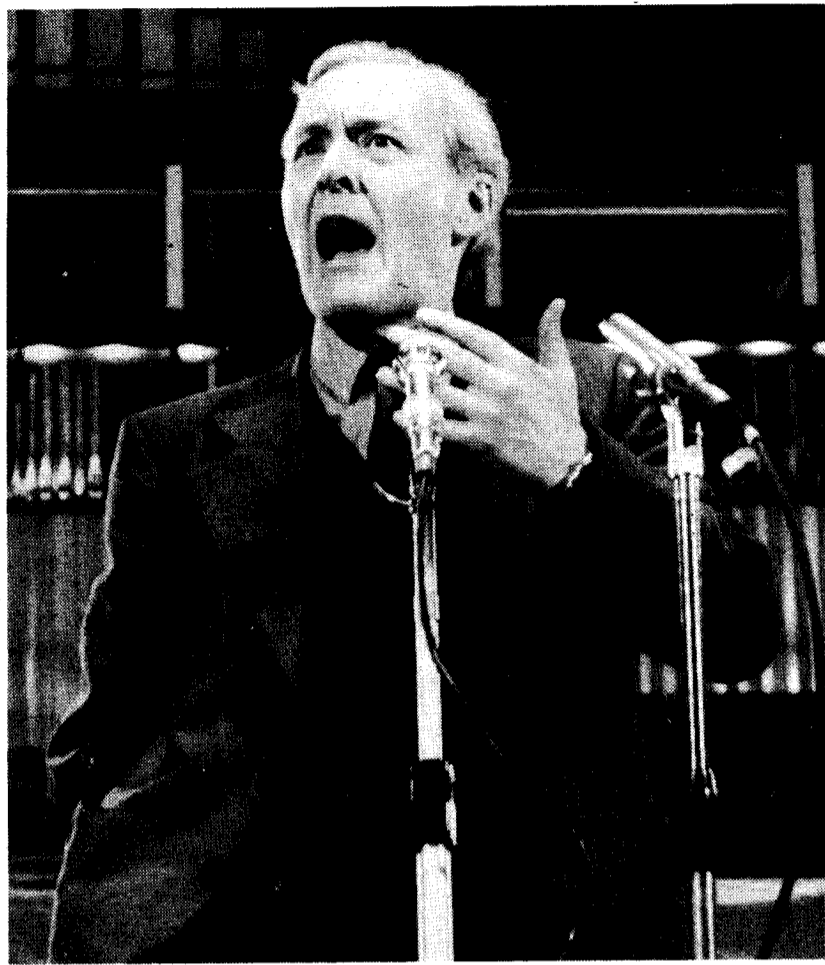


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

By Tony Benn

in a number of major unions over the last few years where the necessary political work has actually been done. That is why the mineworkers shifted and the railwaymen shifted and why the POEU moved to a more radical position.

We would be well advised to ignore those supposedly left com-

mentators for whom the present political situation seems to offer nothing but gloom. For it looks as if some intellectual pessimists are actually engaged in trying to undermine our confidence, as a cover for a shift in policy towards the SDP, and some seem to be hinting that we might actually have to seek an electoral arrange-

ment with the SDP.

This is just another way of re-introducing non-political trade unionism in the guise of 'facing the harsh realities' of our 1983 defeat and we should make it absolutely clear that we will have nothing to do with it.

The answer does not, and cannot, lie with some cosy little electoral arrangement, arrived at, at the top, with a handful of Labour defectors who hate the trade unions even more passionately than the Tory cabinet.

The real answer will be found next time round, as it was before, in solidarity with those who are threatened with legal penalties for upholding long established principles of trade unionism, and in organising a real socialist campaign which will help everyone to understand what would happen to all of us if these attacks were allowed to succeed.

The work-place branches, under principled socialist leadership could strengthen the shop-stewards movement and remind working people that, even with mass unemployment which weakens us industrially, we still have the political weapon at our disposal.

This political weapon is by no means confined to local and national elections, and it will be most crucial in the development of socialist policies and democracy within the unions, and in the ballots which may take place on political affiliation. This is how we should be seeing the challenge of the next period, and if we take the initiative and plan accordingly, we shall rediscover our confidence as well.

Union success in defending youth wages

MAJOR EVIDENCE was published last week of the role of trade unions in defending young people's wages.

The average pay of young workers has been steadily falling as a proportion of full wage rates ever since the election of the Thatcher government. The pay of male workers under 18 has fallen from 40 per cent of the average pay of all male workers in 1979 to only 36 per cent in 1983.

The pay of young women under 18 has fallen from 58 per cent of the average pay of all women workers in 1979 to only 51 per cent in 1983.

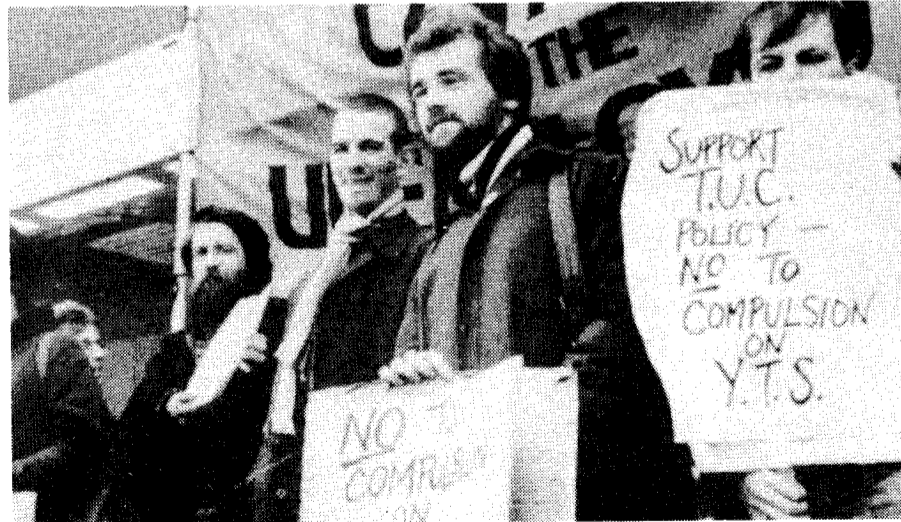
But a new study by the Labour Research Department shows that the relative pay of young workers who are covered by trade union agreements has not fallen by anything like the same amount as among the non-unionised. In 70 per cent of cases where young workers were covered by trade union agreements no decrease in youth rates of pay relative to other workers has taken place.

The majority of cases where young workers pay has decreased relative to all workers, and which are unionised, were in the public sector and in wage council industries. In both areas the Thatcher government has made a special effort to drive down wages.

In four per cent of cases trade unions had succeeded in negotiating agreements decreasing the gap between young workers wages and the rest of the workforce.

The Labour Research study also reveals clearly why the Thatcher government is so keen to use the YTS scheme to attempt to break unionisation among young people. Young workers not protected by union agreements have seen their wages cut back sharply since 1979. Young workers covered by trade union agreements have in the large majority of cases seen their relative wages protected.

The Labour Research Department, in examining 245 wage agreements, could only find one case — glove manufacturing — in which a unionised industry had agreed a youth wage rate as low as the £25 a week of the YTS scheme.



Birmingham demonstration against YTS

Over 65 per cent of manual unions had negotiated wages for young workers of at least £42 a week — £17 more than YTS pay. Nearly half of unionised white collar jobs had youth rates of pay of at least £51 a week — more than twice the YTS rates.

In other words the trade unions since 1979 have been doing a major job in keeping up young people's pay rates. The unions are also negotiating rates of pay far above the

level the government is trying to impose through the YTS scheme.

At a time when the government is attempting to smash trade unionism, and when wide disenchantment exists about the Labour Party among young people, this Labour Research Department study deserves to be given the widest possible publicity. It shows the real base which could exist for a mass Labour Party and trade union campaign to

win over young people to trade union membership, and to support for and membership of the Labour Party.

To be effective however this campaign has to involve the Labour Party and TUC totally breaking with the YTS scheme — the instrument which the government is precisely using to try to break down the youth wages and conditions which the unions have been defending.

Bargaining Report

DECEMBER 1983

YTS in practice p2
The results of a unique LRD survey of shop-floor negotiations around the new Youth Training Scheme, with details of:

- resisting job substitution
- top-up allowances
- union monitoring
- equal opportunities
- permanent employment offers
- health and safety

Young workers' pay p6
Analysis of how 16 and 17 year old negotiated rates are linked to adult rates and ages, with examples of:

- 80 young manual rates
- 53 non manual rates

Alcohol policies p12
How some unions are starting to cope with alcoholism at work by negotiating 'alcohol policies'

Bargaining news p14
A summary of settlements in the first quarter of the new pay round

BR index issues 2130/p16

LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Labour Research Department, Bargaining Report, December 1983. Includes 'YTS in practice' and 'Young workers pay'

Available from Labour Research Department, Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF. Price £2.50

IRELAND UNFREE

Setback in the South

IN THE aftermath of the Harrod's bombing, the Labour Party left — the prime movers behind the dialogue which has done so much to lift the 'wall of disinformation' — could well come under attack. The right wing are anxious to preserve the bipartisan approach of previous Labour administrations. They have no desire to make known Sinn Fein's views. They are happy to have them labelled as bombers.

But we will not return to another 'dark age' where Ireland cannot be discussed inside the labour movement. The balance of forces is now completely different than 1974, after the Birmingham bombings. Popular opinion wants the troops withdrawn. People know that increased repression will not work. Calls to ban Sinn Fein have been put aside as impractical.



Phil Flynn, Vice President of Sinn Fein. He may withdraw from Sinn Fein before taking up his union job.

In the South of Ireland however, Sinn Fein have a real battle to recover from the tide of hysteria following the shooting of a Garda and soldier. This shoot out was the climax of the Tidey kidnapping adventure.

At the Ard Fheis, Gerry Adams went to some lengths to explain that building a party throughout the 32 counties was not only the most pressing task, it was also the most difficult. He said that the tactics and methods by which Sinn Fein had achieved popularity in the North could not be repeated in the 26 counties. His message that the armed struggle was not to be extended into the South already difficult to get across due to the ban on Sinn Fein appearing in the media, now seems to be contradicted by events. This set back is already being felt.

On 12 December, an historic meeting took place in Dublin: a rally of trade unionists, organised by Sinn Fein in alliance with the Communist Party and independent workers, to discuss a campaign inside the unions focussing on the national question. This rally attracted over 1000 workers.

Reference was made to restoring the traditions of Connolly and Larkin, fusing the powerful forces of trade unionism and republicanism. Phil Flynn, elected Vice President of Sinn Fein at the Ard Fheis and shortly to take the leadership of Ireland's largest public sector union chaired the rally.

The shootings came before the perspective of this meeting could be tested. What had been a few right wingers objecting to Flynn's politics, became a full scale witch hunt, whipped up by the media. Within two weeks, Flynn was promising to withdraw from his position in Sinn Fein before taking up his union post.

Sinn Fein have massive opportunities to strengthen the anti-imperialist movement in the South. Fine Gael and Fianna Fail have nothing to offer workers but attacks on their living standards. They will do nothing to break the hold of the multinationals over the economy or challenge the partition which disorients it.

On foreign policy they cannot defend the neutrality of Ireland, and are being dragged into the NATO alliance.

The Irish Labour Party is politically bankrupt. Locked in a coalition partnership with Fine Gael, it offers no alternative. Major unions like the ITGWU and FWUI openly discuss disaffiliation.

A campaign in the unions for a new alignment which challenges both the multinationals and British imperialism could give political direction to the massive resentment against the government, expressed through scores of strikes, occupations and industrial militancy. Let's hope the ball can be picked up from where it was dropped.

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

Don't duck the witch hunt!

AFTER LAST YEAR'S debacle, the 1984 annual meeting of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy promises to be a quieter affair altogether. In fact, it promises to be three quiet affairs. Registered supporters have the choice of attending in London (21 January), in Birmingham (28 January) or in Glasgow (4 February).

The policy of CLPD for 1984 will be the aggregated results of the voting at each of these meetings. Despite this rolling conference, attendance is likely to be down on last year. During 1983, many activists — especially the CLPD left — have drifted out of the campaign.

There are a few controversial items on an otherwise straightforward agenda: the witch hunt, one person one vote, conference voting strength and — slipped in by Clause 4? — 'reform' of the Labour Party Young Socialists. The rightist positions within these debates reflect the LCC influence inside the Campaign.

No agreement has been reached in CLPD on party unity and the witch hunt. A resolution from the Executive, on priorities, patently fails to make up its mind: '...This AGM recognises that the Party's top priority has become Party Unity and winning the next election. This does not mean abandoning our goal of accountability. It does mean that we must take account of this factor when pressing for our aims...'

Yet again, the Executive dodges the central issue: how can there be unity around party policies and the new leadership, when the continuation of the witch hunt is precisely a threat by the new leadership to those very policies?

In place of a firm position, the EC proposes campaigning to remove the arbitrary powers of the NEC and for 'impartial conditions' to be laid down constitutionally.

This does not deal with the issue which broke CLPD's back in 1983.

Other resolutions make explicit CLPD's conundrum. They call for a specific commitment to support those constituencies which have refused to comply with the purge, making clear that party unity, and hence Labour's electoral chances, are damaged by expulsions.

By Carol Turner

A second resolution commits the Campaign to fighting for positive proposals to safeguard the rights of individuals and groups inside the party. Both these resolutions should be supported.

The LCC-CLPD differences are clearly reflected in the one member one vote resolutions. The Executive remain opposed to an illusory democracy which would have the effect of making Labour's leaders less, not more, accountable.

None of the opposing positions go so far as to suggest a postal ballot. Instead, they offer systems of branch voting aggregated to arrive at the constituency's choice. There are great problems with this, not least of which is that the system



Andy Harris, Executive member, and Vladimir Derer, Secretary, CLPD

disfranchises locally affiliated unions.

The key point is that the maximum number of active party members should vote. This cuts down manoeuvring by any section of the party to turn out the vote of 'the quick and the dead', which is more than possible with a postal ballot. At the same time, it is equally important that the accountability aspect of democracy isn't lost.

Any system which bypasses the constituency body to which the elected representatives are accountable — the general committee — runs the danger of releasing these MPs and party leaders from real control by the party's rank and file.

Participatory democracy is best served by branch meeting ballots which mandate branch representatives to the general committee. This preserves delegate accountability — which has been built in many constituencies — and defends the supremacy of the general committee as the main decision-making body of the constituency.

On this basis, there seems no reason to support any of the resolutions seeking to change the Executive's position.

Another tricky issue is the proposal to campaign to change the voting balance at annual conference between the unions and the constituency parties. Several resolutions call for support for Alex Kitson's proposal last year, that constituencies be given a larger share of the vote.

This proposal completely ducks out of the issue of democratising the unions. Further, in a year when the Tebbit laws threaten the foundations of Labour's relationship with the unions, such a campaign would seem premature and optimistic. It would be far better for organisations like CLPD to take up a campaign to urge trade union members to opt into the political levy.

One final, naughty, resolution deserves brief mention: a proposal to reform the Young Socialists by allowing:

- trade union youth sections — and whose ever heard of one? — a 'direct, democratic voice' inside the LPYS;

- the Labour Party annual conference to directly elect the LPYS National Executive; and

- reform of LPYS representation, so that delegate entitlement is 'based upon individual membership, not paper branches'.

This is not a proposal to make the LPYS more democratic but to destroy its autonomy.

Delegates to CLPD's annual meeting should consider carefully the future of the Campaign. If it fails to take a clear position for the right of individuals to organise inside the party and against the expulsions — whatever their constitutional form — it will be unlikely to recover from last year's setbacks.

- Supporters who want a say in the Campaign's fate must register to attend any one of the three AGMs before Saturday 14 January.

Who, me?

MALE ORDER is back due to overwhelming requests for the return of the column. But it's no good you just sitting back and reading it every week. Without a bit of self-activity of the masses I can't promise to deliver the goods.

You can help make Male Order even better by sending in stories, pictures, news clippings — anything you think is worth letting other people know about.

Send material to the address below, remembering to include

your name and address.

More bad news

IT SEEMS that every couple of weeks there's a horror story in the papers about new evidence linking the contraceptive pill to cancer.

Since the recent research linking the pill to cervical cancer, now the pill has also been definitively linked with an increased incidence of breast cancer. Women who have taken the pill for more than four years before having a baby

may run *three times* the risk of developing breast cancer.

So why are all these revelations just emerging about the wonder-drug of the seventies? Because all of us guinea-pigs are just beginning to reap the full rewards of our unknowing participation in the great experiment. The pill was tested on unsuspecting Puerto Rican women before it reached us, but only now are the long-term effects beginning to become apparent.

It might not be too long before the pill is seen, not as the great liberator, but as a maimer and killer of women.



Men club women

WORKING men's clubs have struck another blow against women. Not satisfied with ensuring that women have second-class status in most clubs, they have now voted two to one against women having the right to hold a club affiliation card. This card allows members to visit any club belonging to the Club and Institute Union.

Ericca, the Equal Rights In Clubs Campaign, have said their fight will go on. I think Lenin's remarks along the lines of having to smash certain institutions which can't be reformed in the interests of the working class are pertinent in this case.

Man's man

REAGAN is apparently a 'man's man' according to the results of surveys by his campaign staff. His approach to the Soviet Union, big military budgets and aggressive use of the armed forces seemingly appeals strongly to many white adult American males.

'He's a leader' says Edward Rollins, Reagan's campaign manager. 'He's not afraid of taking action, decisive action. And that appeals to men.'

So now you know!

Compiled by HILARY DRIVER. Send contributions to reach us a week before publication to Male Order, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1.

A scene from Give us a smile, a cartoon film about violence against women (13mins, 16mm, colour).

Available from Leeds Animation Workshop, a women's collective, 0532 484997.

WOMEN FIGHT Sex shops burned

Tables Turned on Brutal Husbands Splash - Woman's attacker ends active resistance up in stream to rape

'Glad to see it's gone!' Angry women responsible for sex shop fire

Women Speak Out Sex shops violence

Men's Protest Sex shops violence

Curfew on Men: New rule makes streets safe third world lesbians protest violence

CND in '84

AFTER THE general election, Mr Heseltine and the media decided CND was dead. After the arrival of cruise, sections of CND's leadership began to prepare the movement for more 'achievable demands'. However, this predicted decline has not occurred.

CND's membership is growing, and its actions proliferating. National conference decisively threw out the leadership's new orientation towards a nuclear freeze campaign. The movement showed its determination to move to a new stage — a campaign to get rid of these new Euro-missiles.

The increasingly aggressive actions of the US, from Grenada to the Middle East to Central America, is fuelling a mass fear of the growing threat of nuclear war.

The trend towards basing CND's campaign on a line of 'non-nuclear defence' is dangerous from a number of viewpoints. It makes a major concession to those who

By Dick Withecombe (CND National Council member, in personal capacity)

But after conference, the approach of many CND leaders is to reorient the movement towards national 'non-nuclear defence'. This is particularly obvious in the latest issue of *Campaign*, the CND groups' newsletter. The major goal is to win a majority, by the next general election, for the proposition that 'Britain can be defended without nuclear weapons'.

argue that Britain needs to be defended from a so-called 'Russian threat'. By doing so, it makes a concession to the very argument that Britain needs nuclear weapons. After all, if there is a Russian threat, and the Soviet Union has nuclear weapons, then there is at least an argument that nuclear weapons are needed to fend it off.

Moreover, a fantastic

build-up in Britain's non-nuclear military forces would be more costly than nuclear weapons, and only add to the repressive forces of the British state. We've seen in Ireland and the Malvinas exactly how such forces would be used.

It is no business of CND and the peace movement to advise the British imperialist state how to best fight the so-called Russian threat, or to repress its enemies at home and abroad.

The argument for non-nuclear defence is used by very right wing people — some who want *European* defence, and others like Enoch Powell who want strong British conventional forces. CND should not be in their camp.

Problem

The real problem is the lack of a major national focus for the movement. The activities of the 1000-plus CND groups have always been one of CND's strengths. But CND has been kept together as a massive, united movement by national activities such as the October demonstration and the Greenham events.

CND conference did call on the national council to organise a major demonstration during the European elections in June, coordinated with the peace movements across Europe. The date of this action has been referred to the National Council of 14 January.

Keen

CND's executive don't seem keen on this decision. It hasn't even been mentioned in the conference reports in *Sanity* and *Campaign*. Hopefully regional delegates at National Council will resurrect this proposal from the executive's dustbin.

The European elections will be a major test of the relation of forces on the 'nuclear question'. CND should take the lead in naming a date, jointly with other European groups, for action across Europe, outnumbering the three million mobilised in October last year. Already questionnaires are being prepared for all candidates, and a joint European-wide campaign will be discussed at the April National Council.

Some European groups are proposing a

joint poster 'don't vote for those who support the missiles' and a self-managed Europe-wide referendum.

After the European election, there is a good case for taking up the campaign against civil defence regulations. When the date of the next major national civil defence exercise is known, it is possible to organise a concerted campaign to disrupt it, along the lines of the successful Hard Rock campaign in 1982.

Another focus is the decision, passed by massive majority at CND conference, to organise a joint demonstration against cruise and Trident with the TUC and Labour Party. The Trade Union CND AGM on 25 February will be discussing building support for this at this year's trade union conferences.

Decline

Far from bringing about a decline, stationing the US Euro-missiles has sparked the continuing growth of the anti-missiles movement. Activists are currently discussing how to stop cruise missiles and the plethora of US bases throughout the country.

The main discussion in many CND groups at the moment is on the preparation of non-violent direct action to prevent the effective movement of cruise convoys out of Greenham Common. Unfortunately there is much confusion over NVDA.

Already one group has come unstuck. To its embarrassment, it blocked busy Christmas traffic on the basis of a false alarm. Hopefully confusion such as this can be sorted out with better coordination from Goodwin Street.

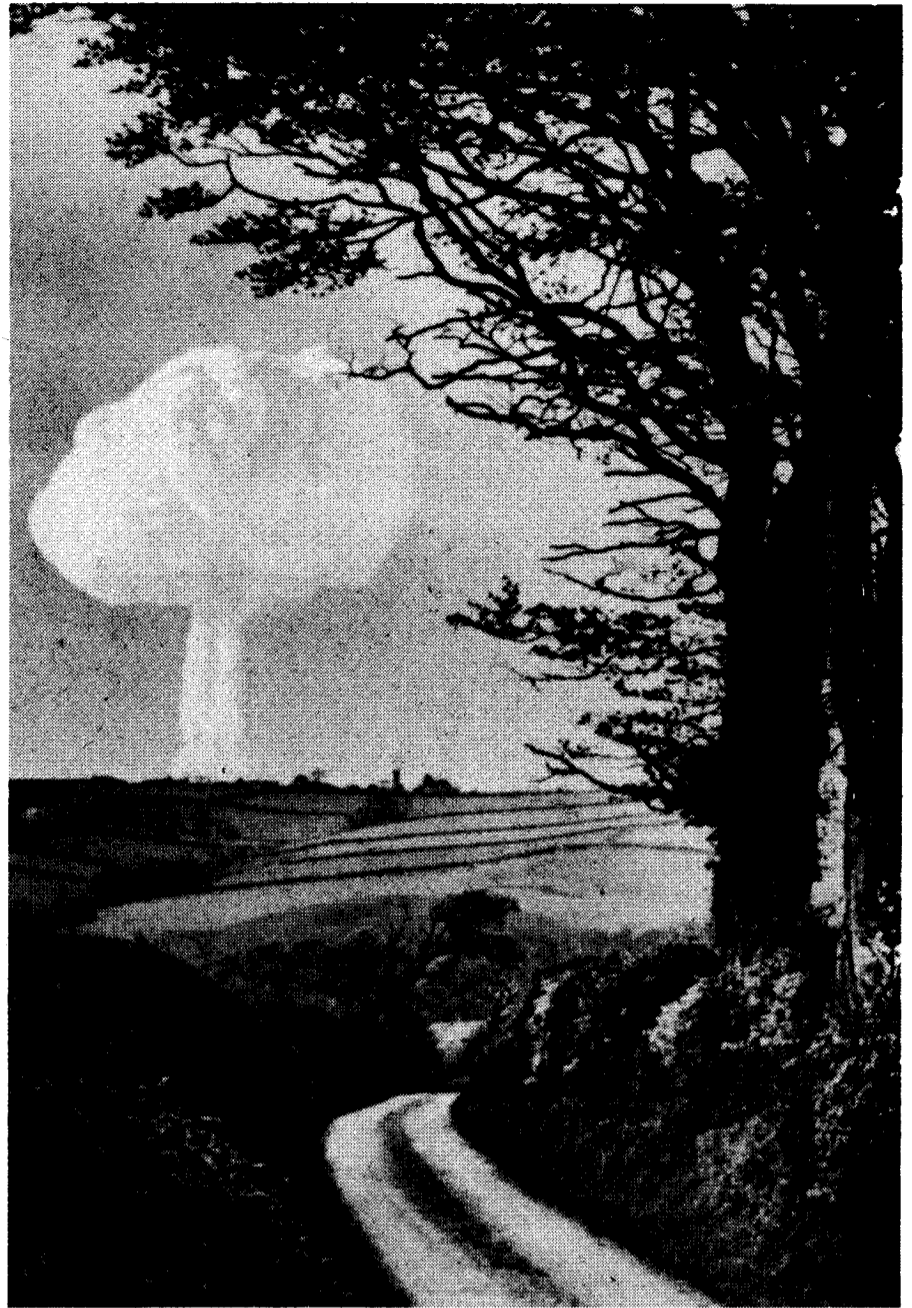
Proposal

The current proposal of CND's Executive is that the only major national demonstration this year should be in October, solely on the theme of Trident. The new campaigning interest in Trident is refreshing. The Anti-Trident Convention in Manchester on 25 February should be supported. Scotland excepted, the movement has been weak in campaigning against Britain's own independent nuclear weapons.

However, for CND to drop the issue of cruise and the US Euro-missiles from its major demonstration would be an error.

CND can grow massively in the next 12 months. Many CND groups are beginning to plan their local activity accordingly. For example, many local actions around US bases are already being planned for Easter.

It remains to be seen whether the CND leadership is also prepared to grasp this nettle. It must organise bigger actions to build a larger movement in 1984.



A mushroom we don't want to find in the English countryside

Greenham - the repression grows

THE DRAMATIC occupation of the control tower by Greenham women after Xmas has exposed the vulnerability of the security base.

Events over the last week have given an indication of how the police and the courts intend to respond to this; the women are to be silenced through fear and repression.

Anne Petit, one of the initiators of the camp, and Helen John have both been arrested since the New Year for allegedly 'criminal damage'. In fact neither of them did anything but go down to the base and look at the silos with friends.

'I was congratulating one of the soldiers on keeping the control tower so secure when he called for assistance. Several jeeps arrived and soon a group of seven police.

'Anne had said and done nothing when a voice called out from inside the base "arrest that woman". Ann was arrested and charged.' Helen explained to Socialist Action.

A similar arrest of Helen herself took place on New Year's day. Other women arrested were in court on Thursday in Newbury and the magistrate — Mr David Miller — caused uproar in the court when he refused to give two women, Ceri



Helen John

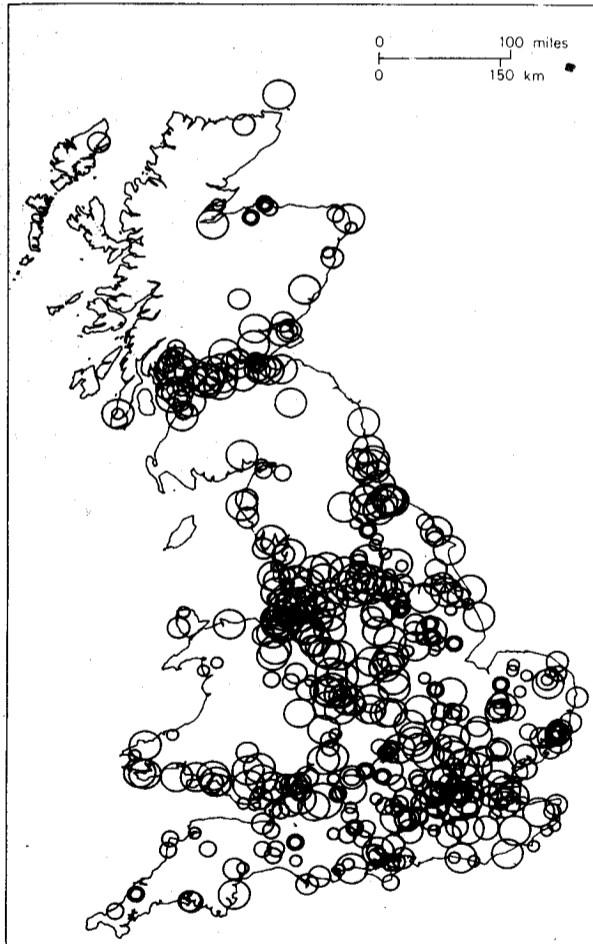
Drysdale and Cheryl Slack, time to pay because he wouldn't accept Greenham Common as their permanent address.

A whip round in the public gallery was required to stop the magistrate sending them to prison against their will.

Helen and Anne are likely to sue for wrongful

arrest. It is clear that a big defence campaign needs to be mounted within CND and the labour movement if the right of the peace women to continue to protest against the weapons of death is to be guaranteed.

If you want to send money ring 01-226 6285 01-251 8046.



Likely targets for a nuclear attack on Britain. Each circle represents a nuclear bomb of several megatons. A real attack might of course be heavier

Labour's options for defence

A Day School organised by Labour CND on NATO and Non-Nuclear Defence

Speakers: Peter Thompson, Bob Cryer, Dr Paul Rogers

Saturday 28 Jan
Sheffield Town Hall

Delegate's fee £2.50 from K Edwards, Hammersmith CLP
Greenwood House, 46 Uxbridge Rd, London



US marines in Grenada

EXPLOSION IN THE

SINCE 1975 the advanced capitalist countries have been gripped by the deepest economic crisis since the 1930s. But the biggest revolutionary explosions have taken place in the third world. JOHN ROSS looks at the forces behind this development and how it is explained by a Marxist analysis of world politics.

The crisis deepens

IT WAS MARX himself, in *The Class Struggles in France*, who explained how a social system breaks up. The crisis of any social system has its origins at its centre — where it is strongest. But collapse inevitably first begins at the 'edges' — where a social system is weakest.

Marx took as his own example Britain — which was in his day the most advanced capitalist country in the world. Marx compared Britain to states such as France, Germany, and Russia.

Marx wrote, 'although the crises produce revolutions on the Continent first, they nevertheless have their roots in England. These violent convulsions must necessarily occur at the extremities of the bourgeois organism rather than at its heart, where the possibility of restoring the balance is greater.'

In Marx's own lifetime the centre of the economic development of capitalism was in Britain. But the revolutions which actually broke out were in 1848 in Germany, France, and Austria, and in Paris in 1871. By the end of Marx's life huge class struggles were beginning to take place in Russia — upheavals which finally culminated in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

This analysis of Marx was not a chance observation either. It mirrored the break up of all previous social systems.

Power

The slave mode of production found its greatest expression in the Roman Empire. Slavery's economic core was in the Mediterranean world — Italy, Greece, and what is now the 'Middle East'. It was in these regions that the slave system's economic contradictions were most acute.

But the actual destruction of the slave mode of production, and of the Roman Empire, was not carried out by forces in the Mediterranean. It was achieved by forces on slavery's periphery — in the forests of Germany.

The strength of the slave owning ruling class was for a long time sufficient to maintain its power in its heartlands of the Mediterranean world. But the economic decline of the slave system led to its overthrow in those border areas where it was in any case weaker.

The entire slave system of the Roman Empire then collapsed under the combined impact of internal economic decline and external assault.

Feudalism, the social system of the Middle Ages, was similarly not over-

thrown first in its core areas of France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Here the challenge to feudal rule was initially contained and defeated. Instead feudalism was first overthrown in Holland and England — states which had been on the periphery of the great feudal regions.

The destruction of the capitalist system also did not start in its strongest centres — in the most advanced imperialist states. The First World War, the event which triggered the first successful overthrow of capitalism, was created by conflicts between the most powerful capitalist countries — which at that time were Germany, Britain and France. But capitalism was actually overthrown first in the 'weakest link' among the imperialist powers — in Russia.

The same process occurred during and after the Second World War as with the First. The events which triggered the Second World War were due to a crisis within the most advanced capitalist states.

The economic collapse of 1929 in the United States led to an even greater economic catastrophe in Germany and the rise to power of the fascist regime of Hitler. With the outbreak of World War II the entire world capitalist system was then thrown into crisis.

But once again the overthrow of capitalism did not take place in the most central and powerful imperialist states. Capitalism survived the Second World War in Western Europe, Japan, and North America. But capitalism was overthrown in the weaker capitalist states of Eastern Europe and — after the war — in China, North Korea, and North Vietnam.

Following the Second World War a prolonged economic boom started in the most advanced capitalist

economies. But revolutionary explosions continued to break out in the semi-colonial countries. In Cuba in 1959, and Indochina in 1975, capitalist rule was overthrown.

Today a new economic crisis has begun in the most advanced capitalist states of North America, Japan and Western Europe. But the biggest revolutionary explosions have been seen in the semi-colonial world.

The process started in 1979 in Central America and the Caribbean. Now major economic and political turmoil is spreading into other states in Latin America and into countries such as the Philippines. Major instability has begun in Pakistan and a number of African states.

The new capitalist crisis since 1975

is following its normal and inevitable pattern. The root of the crisis, its core, is in the economic contradictions of the most advanced capitalist states. The core of world economic contradictions in the United States, Japan and Western Europe. But the actual revolutionary outbursts and crises are developing most rapidly and furthest in Central America and the 'third world'.

The process is lawful and logical. Faced with a general capitalist crisis the revolutionary explosions, in Marx's words, first break out, 'at the extremities of the bourgeois organism rather than at its heart, where the possibility of restoring the balance is greater.'

Capitalism breaks first at its weakest links.

What makes a revolutionary crisis?

THE REASON WHY authentically revolutionary struggles break out in the 'periphery' of a social system — today in the semi-colonial countries rather than the advanced capitalist states — is not hard to discover.

A revolution, including a socialist revolution, is often seen simply as a huge mass struggle. Barricades, general strikes, ruling class violence and working class defence against this violence are the pictures conjured up by the world 'revolution'.

But from the Marxist point of view

such a picture is quite inadequate by itself and therefore wrong. Even the most tremendous oppression of the working class, even the most heroic and prolonged struggle against it, is not sufficient to create a revolution. Indeed nothing that happens simply in the working class is by itself sufficient to create a revolution. A revolution is possible only when the ruling class also is incapable of going on in the old way.

As Lenin put it in his famous pamphlet *Left Wing Communism — An Infantile Disorder*: 'The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions ... is as follows: for a revolution it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to raise the impossibility of living in the old way; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the 'lower classes' do not want to live in the old way and the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph.'

This is the reason why, for example, revolutions have so often broken out in countries defeated in war. In war — for example the First or Second World Wars — the capitalist classes are themselves forced to attack and weaken each other. The crisis produced in the ruling class by the war then combines with rising working class discontent to produce revolution. This was the pattern for example in Russia in 1905 and 1917.

A similar example to Russia, on a lesser scale, was seen in Portugal in 1974. The Portuguese dictatorship of



Salazar and Caetano was gradually worn down by the long wars against national liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. The Portuguese dictatorship was then overthrown by an internal military coup and the Portuguese ruling class fell into acute crisis throughout 1974 and most of 1975.

More recently — and again on a lesser scale so far — a similar process has taken place in Argentina. The Argentinian military dictatorship was shattered by the war with Britain waged over the Malvinas. This released the rising social tensions inside the country and Argentina has been plunged into increasing political turmoil.

It need not only be war that produces a crisis in the ruling class. It may be simply that a political regime has lasted too long and has become ill-suited to the needs of capitalism itself.

For example in France a major cause of the general strike of May/June 1968 was that the personal rule of de Gaulle had lasted too long not simply for the working class but also for the needs of the French ruling class. De Gaulle had already been challenged by sections of French capitalism in the elections of 1965. Then by 1968 his entire regime had become intolerable to the working class and was rocked to its foundations by the student riots and the general strike that followed.

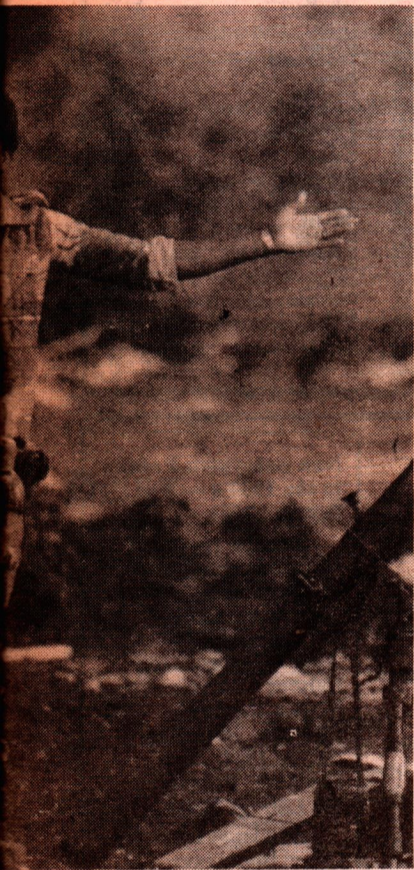
Even although de Gaulle won the elections which followed the May/June 'events' — as capitalism did not wish a



CRISIS IN THE THIRD WORLD



Muslim militiaman in Beirut



Capitalism in decline

THE FACT that socialist revolution depends not just on the situation of the working class, but also on the strength of the ruling class, explains why the first advanced revolutionary struggles during a capitalist crisis break out in the semi-colonial countries. It is also why the first revolutionary victories occur in the 'third world' states.

The working class in the advanced capitalist states is fully capable of revolutionary activity. In the 20th century alone the aftermath of the First World War, Spain in the 1930s, and many countries in Europe during the armed resistance to Nazi rule saw genuinely revolutionary struggles. But in Western Europe, North America, and Japan, the *ruling classes* are immeasurably stronger than those which existed in Eastern Europe or which exist in the semi-colonial states today.

The different strengths of the ruling classes in the different types of capitalist states is in fact an inevitable product of the imperialist system itself.

The ruling classes of the United States, Japan, and Western Europe draw for their resources and power not simply on the exploitation of the working class of their own countries but also of the working class and oppressed of the entire world.

The capitalist classes of semi-colonial states — such as Argentina, Brazil, the Philippines, or El Salvador — are in contrast only able to live from the exploitation of their own working classes. Furthermore these semi-colonial countries are themselves subject to pillage by imperialism — a fact which destabilises them and weakens the development of the local ruling class itself.

It is also in the semi-colonial countries that the most extreme expressions of the international economic crisis are experienced. The capitalist classes of North America, Japan, or Western Europe, in contrast to the Philippines or El Salvador, are able to use their imperialist position to defend their states against some of the most extreme effects of the crisis.

Thus for example the real wages of workers in the advanced capitalist countries have fallen, at most, by perhaps four or five per cent in any year since 1975. But in a country such as Peru real wages in 1982 fell by twenty five per cent in a single year — and this from a far lower level than exists in any imperialist country.

Even within the semi-colonial coun-

tries the ruling classes have differing degrees of strength. The ruling class of Brazil, for example, is subjected to imperialism. But the Brazilian ruling class nevertheless has major economic assets and resources of its own.

The ruling class of a country such as Nicaragua under Somoza, in contrast, was dominated primarily by a single corrupt family utterly dependent on imperialist backing.

Victorious

It is for this reason that revolutions, even within the semi-colonial states, have been victorious first in those countries with the weakest ruling classes of all — for example in Indochina or the countries of the Caribbean and Central America — rather than in the more developed states of Latin America.

This development of victories of the world struggle for socialism most easily through the 'weak links' of the capitalist system — and the much greater difficulties of victory in the advanced capitalist countries — was in fact one of the chief lessons drawn from the Russian Revolution by its leaders.

The reason the socialist revolution broke out first in Russia was not that the working class in Russia was stronger than in more advanced capitalist states — on the contrary it was weaker than in a country such as Germany, Britain or the United States.

The reason that the revolution broke out first in Russia was that the Russian *ruling class* was far weaker than that in the more advanced capitalist states.

As Lenin wrote in April 1918, 'a backward country can easily begin because its adversary has become rotten, because its bourgeoisie is not organised ... It will be different in Western Europe; there it will be immeasurably more difficult to begin.'

Culture

In fact a contradictory process takes place. The fact that states such as Russia — and later China, Vietnam, or Cuba — were far more backward economically, with far weaker ruling classes, than in the advanced capitalist states made it far easier to conquer power there than in the advanced capitalist countries.

But at the same time such economic backwardness made the actual building of socialism far more difficult. The

economic backwardness of Russia produced not only the Russian revolution but also helped create many of the bases of Stalinism.

In the advanced capitalist countries the tremendous problems of poverty and bureaucratism which were faced in Russia or China after their revolutions would not be encountered. But at the same time the fact that Germany, the United States, Britain, or Japan have far stronger ruling classes than in the semi-colonial countries makes the actual conquest of power by the working class immeasurably harder.

As Lenin put it in June 1918, 'The whole difficulty of the Russian revolution is that it was much easier for the Russian revolutionary working class to start than it is for the West European classes, but it is much more difficult for us to continue. It is much more difficult to start a revolution in West European countries because there the revolutionary proletariat is opposed by the higher thinking that comes with culture, and the working class is in a state of cultural slavery.'

Conquest

Again in December 1919, in Lenin's words, 'we have seen for ourselves that the revolution's development in more advanced countries has proved to be slower, considerably more difficult, considerably more complicated. This should not surprise us for it was naturally easier for a country such as Russia to start a socialist revolution than it is for the advanced countries.'

These views of Lenin were also explained by Trotsky — and by the Communist International in its early revolutionary period.

As Trotsky put it, 'the conquest of power by the proletariat in countries which have entered the path of capitalism very late in the day, like our country (Russia), is easier than in countries with an extensive bourgeois history and a higher level of culture.'

Thus for example in regard to the United States, 'This is the most important difference between the proletarian revolution as it occurred in Russia and the revolution which will occur, say, in America. In that country, prior to the conquest of power, the working class will have to surmount the most colossal difficulties but once it has conquered power, the pressure on those fronts on which we were compelled to fight will be far less.'

Similarly for Britain, 'for the British working class to break through to real proletarian power, to dictatorship, will be incomparably harder than it was for us.'

This difference between the situation in the imperialist countries and in the semi-colonial states determines the development of revolution within the capitalist world. The possibilities for actually constructing a socialist society, and for socialist democracy — are objectively greatest in the most advanced capitalist countries. But here the enormous power of the imperialist ruling classes makes the conquest of power by the working class far harder than in a number of semi-colonial countries.

Crisis

In contrast tremendous difficulties are faced by the working class after it has taken power in the semi-colonial states — as has been seen in China, Cuba and Vietnam. But the working class of a number of these countries has a real possibility to take power — as can be seen in Central America at present. This possibility does not exist in the imperialist states today.

The development of the capitalist economic crisis since 1975 is therefore coherent and logical in its effects. Its centre is in the great imperialist states. The greatest explosions it produces however are in the semi-colonial states.

There is a crisis in Wall Street but it is the Somoza regime in Nicaragua which is overthrown. Detroit and American industry are in recession and therefore there is a coup in Nigeria and rioting in Tunisia.

As the crisis of the world capitalist economy deepens even more extreme explosions will develop in the semi-colonial countries. At a later phase they will also begin to take place in the more developed capitalist states.

This process of world politics is not random or incoherent. It reflects the fact that world capitalism is not made up of independent states. It is the structure of world economics and world politics which dominates over every individual country within it. World capitalism exists as an enormous reality with its own structure and logic.

That structure today is producing an immense mounting crisis in the 'third world'. This is what we see on our television screens every night in the pictures coming from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Lebanon, Nigeria, or Tunisia. It is going to deepen in the years to come.

NGA — biggest defeat for 50 years?



Many workers supported the NGA on pickets and lobbies

I WANT to challenge your reporting of the TUC's abandonment of the NGA.

Your front page (SA 38) describes the events 'as the greatest defeat of the trade union movement for fifty years. There should be no illusions on that'. I think you have illusions and what happened in Bristol in the NGA dispute is the reality your illusion obscures.

In the week after the bloody mass picket, and before the TUC decision, we organised and built in

five days an NGA support rally through the Labour Parties and trade unions. This drew 400 people.

On the Wednesday of the TUC decision, the TGWU 3/111 branch, with 30 to 40 people present, passed without opposition a resolution condemning the TUC's 'traitorous role'. It layed out a plan to hold a special meeting to discuss any action, when or if the NGA calls for it.

The rally showed that there was massive

combative support for the lead the NGA had given. In this respect your criticism of the NGA leadership was the wrong emphasis at the wrong time.

Our branch meeting showed that there was no sense of qualitative defeat of the working class, in the working class itself.

There was anger yes, but what was most noticeable was that the branch as a whole, left and right, attacked Murray — we recognised that our closed shop and living standards were on the line.

What's more, we were not fatalistic about the possibility of winning. The greatest defeat for 50 years?

That would be a qualitative defeat, which broke the combativity of the working class. That's

not the story of the NGA dispute. Not only did the rank and file turn massively behind the NGA, broad sections of the bureaucracy were forced to do so too.

Hundreds of thousands of workers now understand more clearly the part Murray and the TUC play against the working class.

The fact that Murray had to use his whole authority in the way he did showed that he could not fudge a compromise. His coming out as so open a saboteur shows the increasing polarisation of the classes.

That is the real underlying process at

work. The NGA dispute is a defeat, but also a gain.

Socialist Action's role should have been to organise its leaders to explain the lessons of that setback, in the context of mobilising further support — for a 24 hour general strike, for a recall TUC and so on.

I hope you will alter a line that bears little relation to the thoughts or needs of worker militants — or at least explain why you come to conclusions that have escaped the rest of us.

MIKE EAUDE, trade union liaison officer, Bristol East Labour Party.

CP history, which version?

JOHN Mathieson (SA 37) may not like Bob Pennington's version of the history of the Communist Party, but there is a considerable body of evidence to support what the article says.

It is no accident that Klugman's official history of the CP in Britain ends at 1926 because they have been unable to produce a credible account of their subsequent behaviour.

No doubt the rank and file were sincere, dedicated and self-sacrificing members of the working class. But Pollit, Gallagher and their like knew exactly what was going on — see for example **JR Campbell's Soviet Policy and its Critics (Left Book Club 1939).**

They defended mass murder and slander, crossed picket lines and declared that a vote for Fenner Brockway was a vote for Hitler.

Was this 'carrying the banner of Marxian socialism' as Mathieson alleges?

He claims that he never met a Trotskyist. But if he was in the CP he wouldn't. The policy was to 'treat a Trotskyist as you would a nazi' — see *Clear out Hitler's Agents!* by William Wainwright in 1942. Odd that so much warning had to be given about almost non-existent people!

RHONA BADHAM, East Ham, London.

Write to us!

This is your page. Send us your comments, criticisms or even congratulations. But please be brief — letters over 300 words will be cut. Write to: Letters, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP. (Tel: 01-359 8180)

Fund Drive: Good start to the new year!

WE ASKED you to scrape together a little extra for the Xmas break and we certainly got it. Thanks to all our readers who chipped in.

J Swinbourne	£30.00	Bristol	86.00
S Field	10.00	Birmingham	100.00
H Fuller	10.00	Liverpool	150.00
F McCarthy	17.00	Armstrong	25.00
W Hamilton	5.00	D Cottingham	5.00
G Stewart	6.00	S Kennedy	200.00
Ealing supporters	559.00	Anon	100.00
Camden	1611.50	H Smith	5.00
Sheffield	390.00	Spalding/Cox	20.00
Harringey	205.00	RRae	4.00
Edinburgh	180.00	J Hartley	5.00
South West London	354.00	E Coleman	6.00
Glasgow	228.50	M Silver	1.00
Leamington	110.50	C Potter	15.00
Preston	186.00	Stoke	4.00
Islington	374.25	Camden Xmas dinner	14.50
Cardiff	133.00	JBW	40.00
Manchester	935.00	AG	30.00
M Shooter	20.00	Southampton	65.00
D Draycott	6.00	Huddersfield	25.00
C Langford	30.00	Swindon	35.00
J Boyle	20.00	Leeds	50.00
P Sterr	80.00	H Sabey	30.00
R Moxham	6.00	I MacDonald	1.25
C Mason	8.00	Hemel	25.00
G Headley	1.00	Coventry	40.00
G Carey	5.00	K Moore	10.00
Anon	7.00	E Saraga	10.00
A Potter	4.00	Anon	2.00
Anon	10.00	G Moore	1.00
D Burn	10.00	G David	12.00
Ian Parker	10.00	P Holbourne	2.00
Middlesborough	60.00	Anon	7.00
'Office collection'	10.00	Crawley	30.00
E Griffiths	10.00	Brighton	10.00
East London	460.50	M Coulson	12.00
Houslow	126.51	Anon	9.00
South East London	537.00	J Ferris	15.00
Brent	729.00	Mansfield	25.00
Nottingham	170.00	Anon	1.00
Leicester	57.50	D Carter	1.00
Bath	57.50	TOTAL	£9009.51

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DIARY

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

- #### International
- **The Politics of Health in Zimbabwe** Hour long video available for meetings or functions. £10 (payable in advance). Send to Books for South Africa Fund, PO Box 50, London N1.
 - **Sri Lankan Research & Information Group** will provide speakers on the current situation there for meetings. Write to 9 Grays Inn Buildings, London EC1.
 - **No Intervention in Central America (NICA)** is a broad based coalition of solidarity groups, human rights orgs, aid agencies and

- **political parties.** More details from NICA 20/21 Compton Terrace, London N1 01-226 6747.
- **From War in the Third World to the Third World War** — new pamphlet published by El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 50p. Order from ELSSOC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1 01-359 3976. ELSSOC have also produced a 1984 calendar showing scenes from life in the liberated zones, £3 from same address.

Advertisement

For a Reagan-free Caribbean

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

- **Central America and the Caribbean** A series of open educational videos and speakers at Peckham Labour Club, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5: 17 Jan Honduras; 24 Jan El Salvador; 31 Jan Grenada; 7 Feb Evening of Central American culture. Admission £1/UB40 free. Organised by Stn London Central American Group, contact Edwin 01-733 7706 for details.
- **Guatemala benefit** with new film about Guatemala and an eye-witness report from Nicaragua by Stanley Clinton-Davis. Rio Cinema, Dals'on. Thur 26 January, 7pm.
- **Trade Unionists from El Salvador** Trade Union leaders from El Salvador will speak at a rally with Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn, Ken Cameron, Fire Brigades union general secretary and a representative of the NGA. Mon 23 January, 7.30, County Hall, London.
- **25 Years of the Cuban Revolution**
 - **Celebration** with Cuban Ambassador, film, food, music. 2.30-11.30pm, Africa Centre, King Street, Covent Garden, London, Sat 14 January.
 - **Britain-Cuba Resource Centre** Information about

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- activities, subs to Granma weekly review and newsletters from 29 Islington Park St, London N1.
- **Womens study tour of Cuba** 4-20 April, information from BCRC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

Yiddish lessons. Learn the language of the Jewish labour movement! Beginner and intermediate classes commence weekly in January, Central London. Teacher, Barry Smerin, organised by the Jewish Socialist Group cultural and anti-fascist project. Further details from JCARP, Southbank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1.

Ireland

- **Day school on Ireland** Sat 28 January, 11am, Chetwynd Room, Kings College, Cambridge.

Organised by Cambridge and Norwich Troops Out Movement. Creche available.

- **Day School on Ireland** County Hall, London 28 Jan. Organised by Labour Committee on Ireland. Agenda: Republicanism and socialism; Republicanism and feminism; Irish and British trade union movements; British Labour Party. Open to LP and LCI members, 10.30am-5pm. Tickets at £1 from LCI, Box 42, 136 Kingsland High Road, London E8.

Lesbian & Gay Liberation

- **Nottingham Labour Campaign for Gay Rights** meets monthly. Next meeting 18 Jan, 8pm, Salutation Inn, Maid Marion Way. Details: Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton 0602 780124.
- **London Labour Campaign for Gay Rights** new office at 39 Chippenham Rd, W9 2AH 01-286 9692, open Tues-Thur 11am-7pm. (Westbourne Grove tube. Bad access, help available).
- **Labour Movement Lesbians** is a new

organisation of lesbians in the labour movement to support each other and organise initiatives on issues that affect lesbians. Next meeting 28 Jan, A Woman's Place, Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, London WC2, 2pm. Further information from Sarah c/o Feminist Library, Hungerford House, Victoria Embk, London WC2.

Civil Rights

- **Campaign against the Police Bill National march and rally** Sat 21 Jan, Brockwell Park, London. Details of these and other events from NCAPB, 50 Rectory Rd, London N16 01-249 8334.

- **Brixton Campaign Against the Police Bill** pre-march public rally, Fri 20 Jan, 7.30, St Matthews Mtg place, Brixton Hill, London SW2. Speakers include George Jerrom NGA, Paul Boetang GLC, Ted Knight, Newham 8 Campaign, GMBATU, NUPE, National Police Bill Campaign, Relatives for Justice (Ireland).
- **Stop the Police Bill** Hounslow public meeting, 19 Jan, 7.30pm, Town Hall, Treaty Rd, Hounslow. Speaker: Suresh Grover (Chair National Campaign against Police Bill). For details of local transport to demonstration on 21 Jan phone Hilary Driver 01 560 8800.

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

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

Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1, price 35p.

Anti-cuts campaigns

- **London Health Service Campaign.** 34 Dalston Lane, London E8 3AZ 01-249 8086.
- **Hayes Cottage Hospital Occupation Ctee,** Grange Rd, Hayes, Middx 01-573 5593.

Miscellaneous

- **GLC workshops** Employment and training for the future. 26 Jan Greater London Training Board; 9 Feb Greater London Enterprise Board; 23 Feb Cooperatives. Black Women's Centre Brixton, 41A Stockwell Green, London, SW9, 7-9.30 pm.

Socialist Action

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RALLY

COME AND HEAR LEADING TRADE UNIONISTS FROM EL SALVADOR

Edgardo Ortiz
a leading member of the public employees and health union, and executive member of CUS, El Salvador's largest trade union federation

Juan Jose Vargas
a leading member of the graphical workers union

Arthur Scargill
NUM President

Ken Cameron
FBU General Secretary

Tony Benn
Speakers invited from the executives of NUPE and NGA

Monday 23rd January 7.30pm
County Hall (near Waterloo Station) London

Organised by the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign

The American spy-plane

THE SOVIET government's statement of 6 September of this year, the documentary data presented at the press conference held by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, as well as the testimonies of numerous foreign specialists have revealed completely and reliably the true aims behind the military-political provocation committed by the special services of the United States of America in the Soviet Far East on the night of 1 September 1983 ...

We shall not repeat the evident facts that are already well known and have been published in the press. At present, new data is coming to light, which provides additional evidence that the South Korean plane was not only fulfilling an intelligence assignment but represented just one link in an overall system of large scale intelligence operations. These were carried out on 31 August — 1 September with the use of a number of intelligence systems over an area from Soviet Chukotka to the Primorye Territory.

Here are some of the additional facts that have recently become known.

Firstly, it has become established beyond any doubt that the Boeing 747 of the South Korean Air Lines had taken off from Anchorage in Alaska, where there is a stop-over airfield, 40 minutes behind schedule.

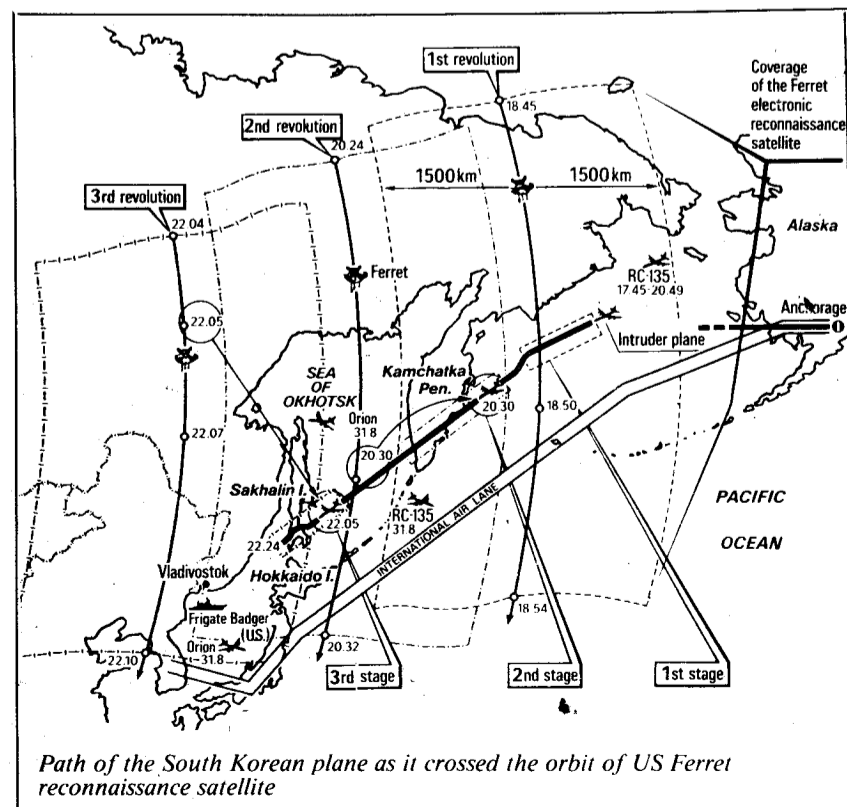
An airlines representative explained the delay by 'the need for an additional checking of the onboard equipment', although no malfunction had been found.

Delay

But another fact has now come to light. That delay was needed in order to synchronise the plane's approach to the shores of Kamchatka and Sakhalin with the flight of the American reconnaissance satellite Ferret-D.

This satellite is designed for radiotechnical reconnaissance on a broad range of frequencies used by Soviet radioelectronic installations. The satellite is capable of detecting such installations within a strip of land about 3,000 kilometres wide. Its orbital period is 96 minutes.

As can be seen from the diagram, on the night of 1 September the Ferret satellite appeared over Chukotka at 18 hours 45 minutes Moscow time, and for about 12 minutes flew east of Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands.



Path of the South Korean plane as it crossed the orbit of US Ferret reconnaissance satellite

ON 1 SEPTEMBER last year United States Secretary of State George Shultz announced that the Soviet Union had shot down a South Korean airliner over the Sea of Okhotsk.

To anyone acquainted with the methods of US administrations there was only one logical explanation of this event. No airliner manufactured by the US,

and owned by one of the United States closest allies, goes 'off course' over one of the most sensitive military areas of the USSR for two and a half hours 'by accident'.

The United States obviously either organised or agreed to this flight and its 'error'. The reasons for this would eventually come out.

In addition to the material which

has already been produced in the West on the South Korean flight we are printing here the official Soviet account of the events. This is not because there is in general any reason to believe accounts of events given by the Soviet government. But in this case the facts given are irrefutable.

The following article appeared in the journal *International Affairs* by P. Kirsanov and has been edited by Socialist Action.



On that circuit, the satellite had the opportunity, immediately before the intrusion into Soviet air space by the South Korean plane, to monitor the Soviet radioelectronic systems on Chukotka and Kamchatka and to determine their exact location and level of activity — thus assuring the first stage of the intruder plane's flight.

On its next orbit the Ferret satellite appeared over the Soviet Union at 20 hours and 24 minutes. At 20 hours 30 minutes Moscow time on 31 August, precisely at the moment of the intrusion of the trespasser plane into Soviet space, the Ferret-D satellite was over the area of Kamchatka. At that moment the second stage had begun of the flight of the South Korean plane over Soviet strategic installations and into the southern part of the Kamchatka Peninsula.

It was only natural that the violation of the USSR's air border had forced a doubling of the activity of Soviet radio and radiotechnical defence systems — which was what the organisers of the flight had counted on. All this exceptional radioelectronic activity was registered by the Ferret spy satellite. At the same time the satellite could also monitor the work of the Soviet radiotechnical defence systems on Sakhalin and Kuril Islands.

Finally, a new circuit of the Ferret satellite coincided with absolute accuracy with the last, third stage of the Boeing 747's flight over Sakhalin.

The intruder plane entered the USSR's air space in the area of Sakhalin at 22 hours 05 minutes Moscow time. The Ferret satellite appeared at 22 hours 04 minutes over an area of Yakutsk, and at 22 hours 07 minutes reached the latitude of the northern part of Sakhalin Island. At that time, as was to be expected, the Ferret satellite monitored the work of all the Soviet Union's newly alerted air defence radiotechnical systems on Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands and the Primorye Territory.

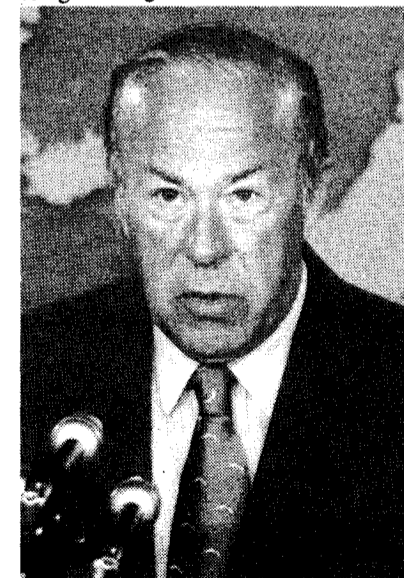
No 'accident' can be used to explain such an accurate and repeated coincidence of the flight of the plane violating Soviet air space with the flight of the spy satellite. There is no doubt that the moment of the penetration by the intruder plane into Soviet air space had been carefully planned in advance so as to assure the maximum gathering of information by the US Ferret reconnaissance satellite. The Boeing was delayed at the Anchorage airfield precisely in order to achieve this result.

Secondly, throughout its duration, the flight of the South Korean intruder plane was carried out in the working area of the US Loran-S radio navigation system. This is capable of determining the true coordinates of a plane with high accuracy and at any moment.

This fact is being carefully concealed by the United States. Attempts are being made to prove that the main trouble was the accidental programming of incorrect flight coordinates into

the plane's onboard computer. It is not being revealed however, that such a steady deviation from the true course could occur only if the error had been committed not once, but on at least 7 control points on the route.

It is clear that this is impossible and is totally ruled out as an explanation. And even if such an event did occur, it was only because the 'error' had been introduced quite consciously and deliberately by those who prepared and organised the intelligence flight.



Secretary of State George Shultz

The same conclusion also follows from a study conducted by specialists of the national civil aviation authority of Britain. Their findings were announced on British television on 14 September. That television report stated that the whole flight had been modelled with the use of a computer and a flight simulator of a Boeing 747. Twenty seven variants of the flight had been examined.

The findings of the study revealed the absolute impossibility of such a large deviation of the plane from the set route occurring both in the case of malfunctions in the navigation system or of an incorrect programming of the flight assessment in the plane's computer. It was also stressed that the

crew commander, using the onboard radar, could immediately find out the plane's deviation from the route by comparing the terrain with the map.

All the actions of the Boeing 747 confirm that at all times it was under perfect control. Only this can explain its manoeuvring along the route in terms of its speed and altitude. The plane crew saw the warning manoeuvres of the Soviet air defence planes and tried to evade them — although they realised that this ran the risk of weapons being used against the plane.

These actions convincingly demonstrate that the plane was complying with orders from the ground. As it had specialised intelligence equipment on board it did not, of course, wish to land on a Soviet airfield since it would be caught red handed.

Thirdly, prior to and during the violation by the South Korean plane of Soviet air space, there were in the area of its operations other planes besides the RC 135 reconnaissance plane whose presence has been admitted earlier. Another RC 135 was flying along the Kuril Islands, an Orion plane was over the Sea of Okhotsk north of Sakhalin, and a second plane of the same type was over the Sea of Japan.

The US frigate *Badger* was on duty in the area of Vladivostok. There is also convincing evidence showing that an E-3A (AWACS) plane was operating in the area where the violation of Soviet air space had occurred, monitoring the flight of both the intruder plane and our fighters.

In short, from 31 August to 1 September there was a whole intelligence complex deployed and functioning in the Soviet Far East which included: a Boeing 747 equipped with appropriate radiotechnical intelligence systems; several specialised reconnaissance planes; a number of US naval ships; the ground tracking stations on the Aleutian Islands, in Hawaii, Japan and South Korea; and, finally, the electronic reconnaissance satellite Ferret.

System

All these systems were aimed at obtaining as complete information as possible on the Soviet air defence system in the Far East — especially in the areas of important strategic installations on Kamchatka and Sakhalin — as well as on the individual installations themselves.

When these realities are understood then other, at first glance 'strange' facts, also come to light. The normal crew of a Boeing 747, including flight attendants, is up to 18 people. In this case there were 29 crew members. Who were these extra 11 people? Of course, they were specialists servicing reconnaissance equipment installed on the plane.

And finally the pilot of the plane was South Korean Air Force (reserve) Colonel Chan Ben. Chan Ben is one of South Korean airlines most experienced pilots, who has a reputation as the best pilot of the airline and is known for his links to US intelligence.

No secret is made of the collaboration with the US special services of the second pilot of the plane — South Korean Air Force Lieutenant Colonel (reserve) Son Don Win.

Against this overall backdrop of facts it is not difficult to see the real meaning of the hypocritical statements made by Reagan, Weinberger, Schultz, Kirkpatrick and others.

There is a well known phrase which immediately puts everything in place in this 'mysterious' occurrence: Who profits? One only has to ask this question to make it clear whose interests were served by creating this 'incident' and who wished to benefit from it.

The Lebanese crisis and the PLO

The aftermath of the Israeli invasion and the split in the PLO have caused a big debate among the solidarity movement in Europe. The following article is a greatly abbreviated version of a talk given by a militant of the Revolutionary Communist Group of Lebanon. The editing is by Socialist Action.

THE ISRAELI offensive in 1982 had the open objective of crushing the PLO militarily. But it's becoming very clear that the Israelis' boast that this had been achieved was wrong. At best a partial destruction of the PLO was achieved. The best proof of that is that the Palestinian resistance is playing a leading role in the fighting against the Israeli occupation in South Lebanon. That's why the Israelis are now carrying out air raids against the Abu Musa-led PLO 'dissidents' in the Bek'aa valley and the Lebanese mountain area.

What the Israeli invasion did achieve was to remove from the PLO its areas of autonomous operation — in South Lebanon and West Beirut and the Palestinian camps.

Obviously the scattering of large sections of the PLO fighters to various Arab countries is symbolic of the loss of areas of autonomous operation and control.

As far as the Lebanese left is concerned we have to differentiate between the anti-imperialist currents like the Nasserists and Communists, and the bourgeois currents like the Druze PSP and the Shi'ite *Amal*.

The latter are not anti-imperialist at all. The former were disarmed by the Israelis. But the bourgeois currents — for example Jumblatt's PSP which did not fight the Israeli invasion at all — have maintained themselves.

Sections of the PLO in the parts of Lebanon not occupied by the Israelis, and those fighters who returned from exile to the Bek'aa valley, are still in a position to fight. But now they are under much tighter control by the Syrians.

They have fought against the multinational force alongside the Druze militia, but only as an auxiliary force. But their main role has been in the resistance to the Israeli occupation in the south.

The problem of the Lebanese left is not just a military one but a political one. These forces were closely allied to the Syrians and the PLO, which in the last few years developed as an elitist military force, not relying on the Lebanese mass movement.



Yasser Arafat with Fateh troops

The Israeli invasion put the seal on the gradual loss of mass support of the Lebanese left, its failure to develop the mass movement, as opposed to relying on an alliance with the Palestinians and the Syrians, who had a bureaucratic and even repressive attitude towards the Lebanese masses.

Failure

The failure of the Lebanese left has allowed the growth of the Shi'ite Islamic confessionalist groups. This is a big step backwards.

Amal is not, as it is often described, an Islamic fundamentalist group — its demand is *not* for an Islamic state, as in Iran. They just want a bigger say for the Shi'ite bourgeoisie in the state apparatus, a bigger slice of the cake. The Shi'ite population, being the poorest was always a main base of the Lebanese left. Now this has been gravely weakened.

The Israelis put in Bashir Gemayel as Lebanese president. He was the leader of the 'Lebanese Forces' — the Christian Maronite militias which had some autonomy from the Phalange party. Bashir Gemayel's fascist militia had always been allied to the Israelis.

But Bashir was soon assassinated, and he was replaced by his brother Amin — a businessman and a real

representative of the Christian bourgeoisie, linked to big business interests.

The economic interests of the Lebanese bourgeoisie have always been as a go-between between the Arab world and the West. In other words they couldn't contemplate a simple alliance with Israel, to the exclusion of links with the Arab world. So Amin Gemayel made a turn towards an alliance with the Saudis and the United States, which brought the Phalangists into conflict with the Israelis. It started in a very bitter way in a row about who was responsible for the massacre of the Palestinians in the camps.

Control

Since they cannot control Amin Gemayel the Israelis seem to have given up supporting a centralised state under Phalange control. But of course this is still the objective of the United States and the multinational force which has as its open objective the defence of the Gemayel government.

The political history of the Arafat leadership is one of further and further concessions to negotiated solutions — a West Bank mini-state — as opposed to the liberation of Palestine. It is now very far from its

original objectives and programme.

Fateh was by far the largest organisation of the PLO. It included all sorts of political currents from ultra-rightist currents to even revolutionary currents. You had a permanent political struggle between these different currents. But they could all remain in the same organisation as long as it was engaging in the military fight against Zionism, whatever its diplomatic policy was.

Invasion

All this changed after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. For the first time there appeared to be a real possibility for a Palestinian involvement in a negotiated settlement. First there was the Reagan plan which called for a Palestinian 'entity' on the West Bank under Jordanian control. Arafat opted for that framework when he responded favourably to Hussein's call, complementary to the Reagan plan for a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.

Hussein had already put forward this proposal in 1972 — but at that time everyone in the PLO rejected it, denouncing it as a reactionary plot to eliminate and defeat the Palestinian cause.

In 1982, instead of denouncing it Arafat went to Amman for talks with

Hussein. So the position of the radical nationalist wing of the PLO was to denounce these manoeuvres by Arafat. This is even easier to understand when you remember that people like Abu Musa and his original groups were composed of people who had been army personnel in the Jordanian army up until 1970 and who had left the Jordanian army to link up with the PLO during 'Black September'. It was inconceivable for them to accept a Palestinian mini-state under Jordanian control.

The Syrians were also opposed to Arafat's course because they saw it as a step towards a second 'Camp David' — a settlement including the Palestinians and Jordanians but excluding them. In view of all this opposition Arafat could not go forward, so he had to be cautious. So he understood that to go further in that direction of a deal with Jordan and the US, he had to break the opposition.

Conflict

Arafat deliberately provoked a conflict with the dissidents by appointing deserters to the key leadership positions of the fighters and ordered the dissident leaders to go to Tunisia.

After twelve years of courageous fighting against the Israelis — and even against the Syrians in 1976 which Abu Musa led — they were not prepared to go and rejected the new appointments. The fighting started by Arafat's forces attacking the dissidents. The Syrians at first were neutral, but quickly saw their opportunity to support the dissidents with the possibility of bringing the PLO fighters under their own control.

But as a matter of fact the dissidents were opposed to the removal of Arafat's forces from Lebanon — after all their programme is for the fighters to stay in Lebanon. Arafat is no longer interested in having an effective fighting force. He wants to rely on his support among the Palestinian masses on the West Bank to carry forward his diplomatic manoeuvring.

In my view the demands of the dissidents should be supported — for a democratic conference of Fateh, for no capitulation, for the fighters to remain in Lebanon. But there can be no support whatever for their disastrous alliance with the Syrians, which will prevent them playing any independent role and which Arafat has used very effectively to discredit them.

In the recent fighting in northern Lebanon neither side could be supported. The Arafat leadership is a bourgeois leadership which is objectively selling out the revolutionary struggle of the Palestinian masses. On the other side the dissidents are, despite themselves, acting under the control of the Syrians. Neither side could be supported.

Nigeria coup: product of third world crisis

LAST WEEK'S MILITARY coup in Nigeria overthrew the civilian government of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The coup has been given a warm response by Western capitalist powers. They are hoping that the military government, led by Mohammed Buhari, will be able to provide order and stability to sort out the economic chaos which the country has fallen into.

This chaos is itself a product of the deepening crisis in the third world. Nigeria is the second economic power in Africa — only behind South Africa. The source of this wealth has been Nigeria's position as a major oil producer.

However Nigeria, like Mexico, has been hard hit by the slump in oil prices and revenues. Moreover the huge wealth ac-

cumulated over the past decade has been squandered in massive corruption by the ruling class. The new capital at Abuja — Nigeria's 'Brazilia' — has been abandoned half completed, a testimony to the pillaging of the economy by the rich.

The unpopularity of the overthrown Shehu Shagari government stemmed from the austerity measures and poverty

which the mass of the population has suffered while the elite prospered. The irony of the situation is that among the new military government's first acts was an announcement of new austerity measures to meet the country's external debts to the IMF and the international banks.

By Tony Smith

The situation in which Nigeria finds itself illustrates the vulnerable position of the third world countries — even the richer ones. While the world price of their basic export commodity, oil,

stayed high then foreign debts could be run up and the industrialisation begun. When the price of the export commodities dropped, then crisis ensued. While the masses didn't benefit greatly from the situation of 'wealth', when this ended the masses were called upon to sacrifice even more.

The tragedy is that while the Nigerian working class has expanded numerically and trade union strength has grown, no party of the working class, even of a reformist nature has emerged. Until that happens, Nigerian politics will continue to be dominated by the ruling class and its army.



Soldiers in the streets of Lagos after the coup

Rally to support the NGA

COLIN BARNETT, secretary of the North West TUC has put out a strong call for the trade union movement to support the demonstration in support of the NGA organised for 28 January in Warrington.

Writing in a personal capacity for *Labour Herald* he said, 'Thousands of trade unionists should turn out to take part in the demonstration to support the National Graphical Association, called for January 28 in Warrington.'

'The North West TUC, which has organised the march, has taken the view that we are there to help trade unions in struggle.'

'That is why we want this demonstration to be much bigger even than the one that took place in December, when 3,000 trade unionists rallied to show their support for the NGA.'

Barnett added, 'It is vital that the issues of trade union principle involved in the dispute between Messenger Group owner Eddie Shah and the NGA are not lost sight of.'

'Any trade union, finding itself in difficulties and requesting help, should find the whole movement ready, able and willing to come to their

assistance...

'Our action is clearly within the framework of the decisions of the Wembley conference of 1982.'

'In fact, the Wembley decisions are even harder than the action we are proposing.'

Union

'And it is the responsibility of all the individual union leaders who make up the TUC General Council to think how, precisely, they are going to assist a union that has always been very generous for its support for others in their struggles.'

Barnett finished by explaining what should be

the response of the movement to anti-union laws. 'It is absolutely right that the labour and trade union movement should fight this dispute right through to the end.'

'That means we must be prepared to defy — with all the consequences that will arise — unjust laws ...'

'The history of the



NGA pickets

trade union movement has been one of a struggle against unjust laws. The present NGA dispute is part of that continuing history.

'Anyone who is not aware of the lessons of that history, that we must stand up to unjust laws, is doing both themselves and the entire trade union movement a grave disservice.'

'Warrington.... NGA on the line'

AN ELEVEN-minute VHS video tape called 'Warrington ... NGA on the line' has been produced about the dispute at the Stockport Messenger Newspaper group.

Made by members of the TGWU, ACTT, NALGO and GMBWU, it features incidents of last years mass picketing — giving the trade unions' view of these as opposed to that put out by the media. It includes rank and file eye-witness accounts of the actions of the riot

police and interviews with NGA officials immediately after the police had destroyed their communications van.

Copies of the tape are available from the Merseyside Trade Union, Community and Unemployed Resource Centre, Hardman Street, Liverpool for a £5 deposit. The deposit will be refunded when the tape is returned on the agreed date. Telephone 051-709 3995 for details.

The tape is available for showing at trade union, Labour Party and other solidarity meetings.

NGA March and Rally

Saturday 28 January
Warrington

assemble 1pm
Coop Hall, Winwick Road

supported by NW Region TUC

Birmingham Trades Council resolution

Birmingham Trades Council deplores the action of the TUC, particularly the General Secretary, for not giving full support to the NGA in its dispute. Birmingham Trades Council gives full support to the NGA and calls upon the TUC to:

- Reverse its decision immediately
- Honour the decisions of the 1982 Wembley special conference

● Support all fights against anti-union legislation and employers using such legislation

● Recognise that breaking laws designed to destroy unions is legitimate. Birmingham Trades Council urges all affiliated union branches to send similar resolutions to their national executives. Passed unanimously.

Rover workers prepare for strike

LAND ROVER workers are incensed by BL's worst ever pay offer of three per cent. By a majority of two to one, the 8500 Rover workers voted at a mass meeting to strike from Friday 13 January.

Management claims that the deal is worth £12 a week. But the unions point out that this includes consolidation of bonuses already earned and that the real increase amounts to only £3.

The biggest vote for a strike was at the Solihull plant in Birmingham,

where 4774 voted for strike action, with only 381 against.

By Celia Pugh

But in smaller plants threatened with closure the vote did not go so well. BL have announced the

closure of smaller plants in Birmingham and the gearbox plant in Cardiff, with the loss of 1500 jobs. The work will be transferred to Solihull. In Cardiff only 25 workers accepted the stewards recommendation to strike against the pay offer, with 400 against.

Clearly there needs to be a firmer lead against closures from national union officials, to achieve a vital unity against BL. With no plan of action

from union leaders, the smaller plants are reluctant to follow the Solihull lead for strike action on pay.

Victory and solidarity for the Rover strikers could be the blow BL needs to force a retreat from their swingeing attacks on jobs, union rights and conditions. It would be a welcome challenge to the weak kneed inaction of the union leadership.

Sell out in the shipyards



UNION negotiators from the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions have sold out the 60,000 shipyard workers who voted in their vast majority to strike against the British Shipbuilders' pay offer.

In November, mass meetings of workers rejected the 2 per cent BS offer which was tied up with redundancies, privatisation and changes in working practices.

With some small concessions — like talks over the timing of this so called 'survival plan' and the backdating of the pay deal to last November — the union negotiators have fallen for BS blackmail about a national strike leading to yard closures.

Yard closures and massive redundancies are already planned by BS and the deal signed last week knocks huge holes in the shop floor organisation and unity needed to fight

This isn't the first time that national union leaders have fallen for this blackmail and made concessions to British Shipbuilders to 'save our industry'.

By Sian Hughes

The 1979 Blackpool agreement accepted transfer of labour and voluntary redundancies. Yards without work were placed on a 'care and

maintenance' basis and have never reopened. In the last six years the workforce has been slashed from 90,000 to 56,000.

As with all practised blackmailers, BS management are coming back for more and the union leaders are running scared.

Stewards

But their members will not let things rest there. Shop stewards in the National Combine Committee are incensed by the sell out and will be reporting back to mass meetings in the next few weeks.

Like Sid Weighell, the deposed rail leader, the sell out merchants of the Confed won't hear the last of this.

Rubber workers strike

ONE HUNDRED and thirty workers at the Philips Rubber Company in Manchester have been on strike since 3 January to improve the company's four per cent pay offer.

Basic pay for process workers, most of whom are women, now stands at £48 a week.

The workers, all members of the Transport Union, are demanding £75 a week for millers and press operators and £65 for process workers. TGWU full time of-

ficial, Walter Wainwright explains 'The employees were working under Dickensian conditions when I first went to the factory. I was physically sick because of the fumes.'

By R Wilkes

'We're simply asking for rates of pay comparable with the rest of industry'. John Hood, TGWU steward at the factory added that the safety committee was powerless to improve filthy, unhealthy conditions as management would not

allow them to meet. Management have been just as obstructive on pay, despite £170,000 profit last year.

The strike, which is official, is solid. Everyone participates in picket duty, on four hour shifts.

Solidarity is vital to win. Dunlop workers have already agreed not to handle material from the company and Engineering Union fitters from Carter Brothers have refused to install new machinery.

● Donations and messages to: Mr Riley, 3 Smeaton St, Cheetham, Manchester 8.

A Socialist ACTION

Kissinger commission backs US war drive

WHEN REAGAN appointed Henry Kissinger as head of the special commission on Central America, he described him as 'a very distinguished American, virtually a legend in that field'.

A legend Kissinger certainly became in the early 1970's when, as Secretary of State, he commended the United States destabilisation of the elected Allende government of Chile, with the words 'I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people'.

Reagan echoed this in his speech to launch the special commission in the summer of 1983.

By Celia Pugh

'We must not allow totalitarian communism to win by default' he said. 'Without the necessary funds, there's no way for us to prevent the light of freedom from being extinguished in Central America'.

The invaded population of Grenada know what this 'light of freedom' amounts to. So too do the 40,000 civilians killed by the army and death squads in the US backed regime in El Salvador.

US military and economic aid to repressive regimes in the region has rocketed — by 650 per cent to Honduras in the last

three years and by 500 per cent to Guatemala in the same period. Now the Kissinger commission proposes another \$8 billion in the next 5 years to aid imperialist intimidation in the region.

Of course, the popular Sandinista government in Nicaragua will get not a cent of this aid. Instead the US administration are backing Contra forces who massacre supporters of the revolution and bomb key economic installations.

The special commission on Central America was carefully selected to include only supporters of Reagan's foreign policy. To deflect mounting opposition from working people inside the United States, the commission has announced that aid must be tied to human rights improvements.

But previous stipulations of this kind for the

certification of aid have not stopped Reagan getting it. Indeed, the commission gives the go-ahead for two years of uninterrupted aid to the regime in El Salvador.

Salvadorean President Magana has just shifted 3 army officers to diplomatic posts abroad because of their proven links with the death squads.

But these cosmetic tinkering do not alter the total involvement of the Salvadorean army in the death squads operations, army raids and bombings — like the killing of 118 villagers in north east El Salvador in November by the crack American trained Atlacati battalion.

Colonel Adolfo Blandon, the newly appointed chief of the army high command, who coordinates the war effort has earned a reputation as a death squad organiser.

Reagan will sweep aside these abuses of human rights in his efforts to crush the popular forces of the FMLN/FDR in El Salvador and topple the Nicaraguan government.

The commission's proposal for a 1000 strong 'special rapid reaction force' are a sign that the Reagan administration is prepared for direct military intervention in the region in 1984.

Talbot strike

Left wing leaders shamed



Nora Trehel, leader of the Poissy CGT

LAST WEEK the strike at the Talbot Factory at Poissy outside Paris became the scene of bitter fighting between strikers and workers wanting to return to work. For three days — last Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday — pickets fought scabs outside the factory. Hundreds were injured during this fighting.

The strike at Poissy was triggered by last year's decision by the Talbot management to sack 1,905 workers as part of their restructuring plans. The factory employs 17,000 workers, but Talbot has been hard hit by the economic crisis, losing both market share and profits.

By Phil Hearse

Francois Mitterrand's Socialist-Communist government negotiated a decrease in the proposed redundancies from 2900 to 1900. On the basis of this agreement the Poissy secretary of the pro-Communist CGT trade union, Nora Trehel, proposed acceptance of the deal. She was backed by the company union, the CSL, and the right wing union Force Ouvriere.

But the deal was opposed by many workers at the factory and particularly by the usually pro-Socialist Party union, the CFDT. The battle lines were set between unions as the CGT declared a strike and sit-in at the factory — rejecting the negotiated deal as '1905 redundancies too many'.

The bitterness with which the conflict between the unions has been fought out is fueled by two factors. First, the overwhelming majority of the workers at Poissy are immigrant workers from North Africa and French-speaking African countries. In a situation of

growing racism in France and a growth of the influence of the extreme right, the division among the unions was bound to be used as an excuse for racist attacks on the striking workers.

For many of the immigrant workers there is no possibility whatever of an alternative job if they are sacked.

Moreover, the CFDT has experienced a drastic decline in membership and influence since the Mitterrand government came to power and has thus taken a turn to more militant tactics in industrial disputes as a means of regaining its strength.

The pro-Communist CGT on the other hand is more concerned with the Communist Party policy of keeping its ministers in the government, and has

thus been adopting a low profile in industrial disputes.

Last week's fighting at the plant followed the decision of Mitterrand's cabinet to send 1000 riot police into the factory on New Year's Eve to evict the strikers. The CGT and the two right wing unions then organised their members to attempt to return to work — a move militantly resisted by the striking immigrant workers.

As a result of the fighting the Talbot management closed the factory indefinitely.

Last Friday two marches were organised to protest against the violence at the plant. In Poissy itself the Gaullist mayor organised reactionary local people in a march against 'leftist violence'.

In the centre of Paris at the same time, the CGT led its loyalist battalions through the streets in a shameful march supporting the workers who wanted a return to work and calling for 'more

negotiations' with the management.

The Poissy events have disgraced the leaders of the two main reformist parties in France, the Socialists and Communists. Both have shown themselves willing to try to solve Talbot's problems at the expense of the most exploited and oppressed in French society — the immigrant workers. Both have connived in the use of riot police against strikers.

In particular the pro-Communist CGT, which prides itself on being the 'hard' union of the industrial workers has shown itself willing to sacrifice workers interests to CP *real politik*.

Poissy makes many of the parts used by the Talbot plant in Coventry. If work is not resumed soon lay-offs could start in Britain. The interests of British workers however are the same as those of the CFDT strikers, not those of the Stalinist-led scabs. Every effort must be made to win solidarity among British workers for the Talbot strikers.



Dissident CGT workers demanding no sell-out from the Socialist-Communist government



Henry Kissinger

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