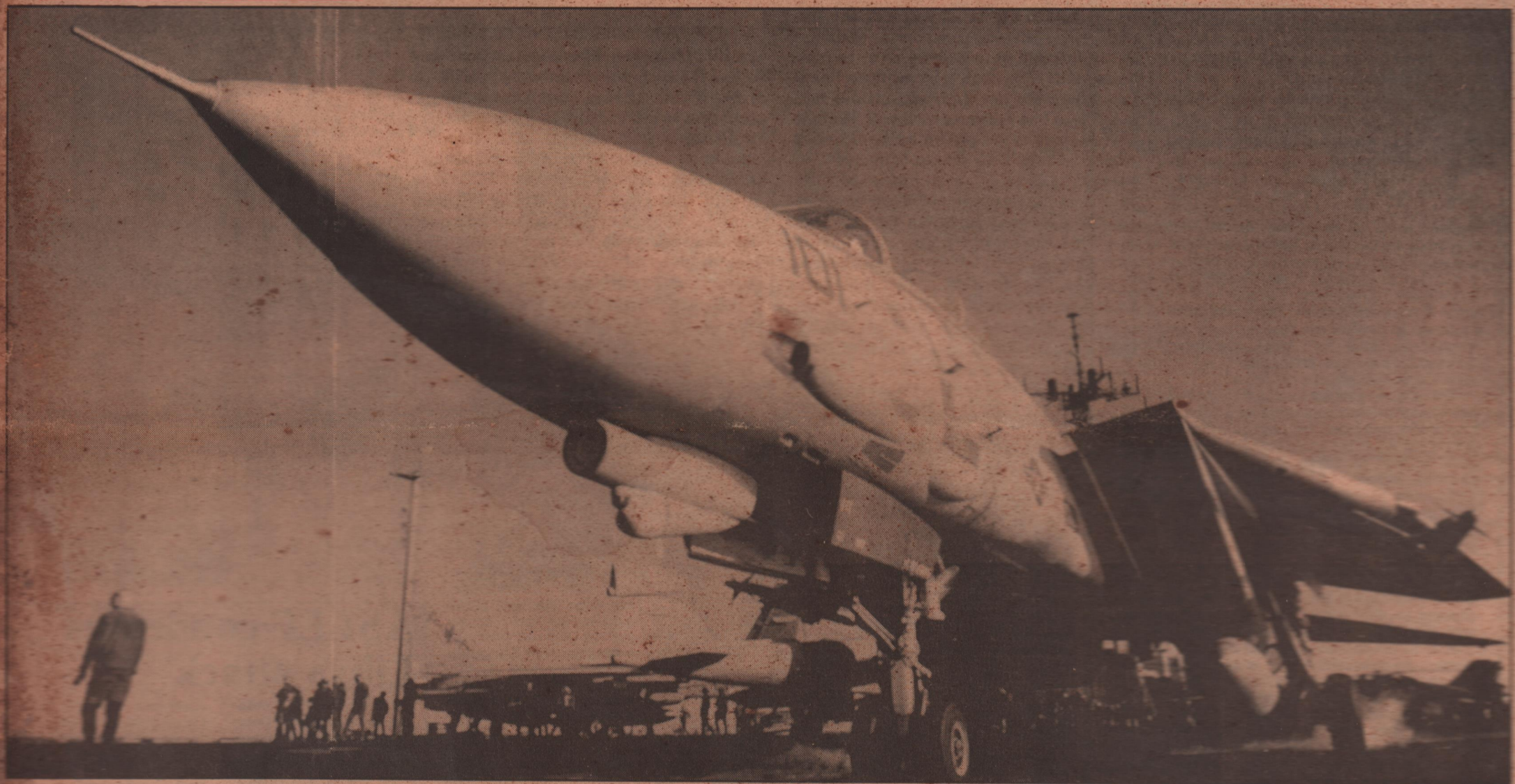


# A Socialist ACTION

## Hands off Libya! Hands off Nicaragua!

# ALL U.S. BASES



# OUT OF BRITAIN

LAST WEEK Neil Kinnock, and the Labour Party NEC, failed to speak for the labour movement. While thousands of people were taking to the streets to totally condemn Reagan's attack on Libya, Neil Kinnock was calling for economic sanctions against that country. The people of Libya found they could no more rely on support from Kinnock than could the miners of this country.

But one organisation, the Labour Party Black Section, did speak for the labour movement. Under the title 'US state terrorism against Libya' it savaged the US and its British allies, and brought out the imperialism and racism of Reagan's attack. Socialist Action

believes this statement should be taken as a model for a response throughout the labour movement.

The Labour Party Black Section National Committee condemns the American bombing attacks on the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi and the support for this international aggression by Britain's Tory government. Margaret Thatcher and her cabinet are the accomplices of a blatant act of state terrorism. When Thatcher gave agreement to American use of British air bases she signed the death warrant for scores of innocent Libyan civilians — including many children — and British citizens in Beirut.

The US attack on Libya shows the urgent need to remove US bases from Britain. It also demonstrates why Bri-

tain must withdraw from NATO.

It has blown the cover of the so-called North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. NATO is not an alliance to defend freedom. It is an alliance against liberation struggles and internationalist socialist governments in the third world.

Whatever Reagan and his cronies might say, the root of the fighting in the Middle East lies in the denial by the forces of imperialism of the land rights of the Palestinian people. The Labour Party Black Section believes there will be no peace in the region until the Palestinians are granted their demand of self-determination. The US has ruthlessly punished Libya for supporting national liberation struggles like this, not because of acts of 'terror'.

Ronald Reagan has whipped up

anti-Arab racism by making hollow claims that the Libyan government organised terrorist attacks around the world. But any such 'terrorist' attacks — and there is no reason to believe US intelligence lies — shrink in puny comparison to the bombing of Libya, the US financed terrorism of the contras in Nicaragua, and Israeli terror bombing of Palestinian refugee camps.

America's demand for tough economic sanctions and a total blockade of Libya are in stark contrast to pathetic western measures being sought against Botha's racist regime in South Africa. Western governments pay only lip service to the demand of black people that the fascists in Pretoria should be brought to their knees and black majority rule fully supported. America's puppets stand indicted of gross hypocrisy.

We call on black comrades, Labour Party activists and supporters, trade union activists, and all those who believe in peace and justice to take to the streets in defence of Libya.

We must demonstrate our revulsion at acts of violence in the Caribbean, in Central America, and the Middle East, the Far East, and Africa, which have made America the biggest exporter of terrorism in the world.

We demand:

- Hands off Libya
- US bases out of Britain
- Britain out of NATO
- Support for the Palestinians

Statement by the Labour Party Black Section National Committee

# SOCIALIST ACTION

## No sanctions against Libya!

NEIL KINNOCK and Labour's front bench have, over the last week, worked hard to head off and deflate the huge wave of opposition which swept Britain in reaction to Reagan's bombing of Libya.

Right from the beginning KinnoCK called for economic sanctions against Libya. He has followed that up with support for Thatcher's illegal and racist expulsion of twenty-one people for the 'crime' of having been born in Libya.

For Gerald Kaufman the only problem with Thatcher's expulsions is that they did not take place earlier.

What kind of lead does this give the tens of thousands of disgusted young people who turned out on the streets this weekend — and the millions more who opposed Reagan's action? Why have the Labour leadership learned literally nothing from the Malvinas war?

The key lies in the whole approach which KinnoCK outlined, right from the beginning of the crisis. He had no opposition to the US campaign against Libya. His criticism was simply that different methods should have been used to attack the country. Economic sanctions and diplomatic boycotts, not bombing, was the way to 'deal with' Qaddafi.

And where did he get those ideas from — for evidently they have nothing to do with the interests of the people of Libya or the children and civilians killed by Reagan's bombs. Nor have they anything to do with 'fighting terrorism' as it is Reagan who is the number 1 terrorist in the world. KinnoCK got his ideas straight from the imperialists of western Europe — including some of those in Britain. They have been pontificating all week about how different methods should be used to attack Qaddafi. That diplomatic campaign, furthermore, will be used to justify further attacks on Libya.

There is not one ounce of anti-imperialism in Neil KinnoCK. Nor could there be from someone who loudly proclaims his British 'patriotism' — the patriotism of the country that ruled the most blood stained and long standing empire the world has known.

Take as an example the new Labour party campaign 'fairness and freedom' launched with such great fanfare on Tuesday. It promises us social reforms and social benefits — as well as more police.

And what about the people oppressed by British imperialism and the international allies it chooses to exist with. Will Britain get out of Ireland? Will it get rid of the US bases that are used to attack not only Libya but also to threaten every semi-colonial country in the world? Will Britain be pulling every single one of its assets, down to the last penny, out of South Africa? Will Nicaragua be supplied with the economic aid it so desperately needs — and the weapons to defend itself against the terrorist campaign Reagan is waging against it? The answer to all of these, naturally, is 'no'.

There is a name for a programme such as Neil KinnoCK is advancing at the moment. It is called social imperialism.

It is a debased and rotten programme. One that stands in the way not only of socialism but even of the most elementary justice, democracy, and humanity in Britain itself — for Britain is complicit if not in bombing, if KinnoCK gets his way, but in every other attack on Libya.

Fortunately there are others in the labour movement who have been prepared to speak out. The response of the Labour Party Black Section, which we print on our front page is one of the best. Arthur Scargill, and others, have spoken out in real terms against the attack. Dennis Skinner and other Campaign group MPs have called for the closing of all US bases. But then these forces are the ones Neil KinnoCK is trying to crush.

Neil KinnoCK has shown once again that *no-one* can rely on him or his policies. Whether you are a miner, a black person, someone waiting for a house in Liverpool, or a child facing American bombs and threats in Libya, you can be sure Neil KinnoCK is waiting to undermine you — with a few weasel words about 'democracy' to cover up the fact that in practice he is going to support your enemy and oppressor.

The labour movement should have nothing to do with Neil KinnoCK's line whatever. The enemy is not Qaddafi's Libya — a country which is part of the Arab peoples who have been fighting to free themselves from foreign oppression for five centuries. The enemy we and they face is imperialism — in all its forms and national colours.

No bombs — and no sanctions either — against Libya. Reagan and Thatcher and those they serve, are *our* enemy — not Qaddafi and the people of Libya.

# Thousands demonstrate

## 'Terrorism defines the acts of people we do not like'

IN AN ALL-DAY debate in the House of Commons on the Wednesday after the US attack on Libya, Margaret Thatcher and other Tories defended to the hilt the decision to support the US attack and the use of British bases from which it was launched. Labour's front bench acquitted themselves miserably. Neil KinnoCK called for economic sanctions against Libya in place of military attacks.

In the same debate, the speech by Tony Benn was noteworthy for its clear condemnation of the US attack and the British government's complicity. 'We must now consider very carefully,' said Benn, 'whether we should not close down all American bases in Britain... I believe most profoundly that the time has come when Britain should realign its foreign policy.'

He went on to debunk the claim that the attack on Libya was a reprisal for Qaddafi's 'terrorism'. He said:

'The official explanation by the prime minister, in very strident statements yesterday and today, is that there were 330,000 American troops in western Europe preserving human freedom and that it was inconceivable that, if they were needed to kill some Libyans as a reprisal for the terrorism, she should refuse to consent. I was strongly reminded of the Suez situation 30 years

ago. The language used about Qaddafi now was used about Nasser then.

'We must be careful not to mislead ourselves when we use language here that is reported outside. Imperial interests do not mix with human rights. For example, when we were an empire we invaded Afghanistan four times; we governed the whole of India without any form of consent from the Indian people. The most powerful country in the world today is the United States. I have warm feelings about the American people and

their traditions — especially because of the defeat in Congress of Reagan's request for \$100 million to pay for the terrorists. I have great respect for the American people.

'However, the same is not true of the American record — the war in Viet-



nam, the attack of the Bay of Pigs, the undermining of Allende, the support of Marcos and Papa Doc for many years, the support of the Greek colonels and the Turkish regime, the invasion of Grenada and, currently the positive financing of the killing of the people in Nicaragua.

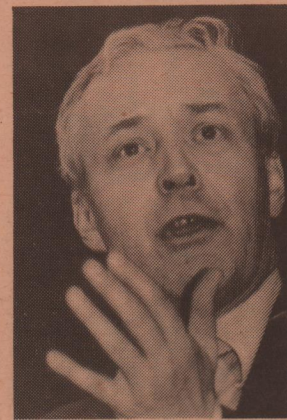
heard the BBC talk about Afghan terrorists attacking the Russian army. I never heard the Maquis in France described as terrorists when they were blowing up restaurants and cafes where the German troops were eating.

'The word "terrorists" reflects the view one takes of certain actions. The attack upon people who are troublemakers — sometimes they are called terrorists or nationalists — is also part of our history.

'I have a long memory on this point. When I was a little boy of five, I was taken to meet Mr Gandhi who was described by Churchill as a "half-naked fakir loping up the stairway of the vice-regal lodge to parley on equal terms with representatives of the King emperor." So much for Churchill, the old imperialist. He had contempt for Gandhi, although Gandhi was not a terrorist.

'The story of British empire is that one begins as a terrorist and ends up by having tea with the Queen. The British empire ended when the British government conceded to force. That is what Conservative members cannot bear. It began as something beyond the pale, but in the end they have to come to terms with it.

'It would be nice to think that all arguments could be settled by a public opinion poll and a quick chat in the cabinet or shadow cabinet.



'The reality is that rights have often been won by force, and none have been readier to use force than successive British governments. When force is used against what we want to hear, we dismiss it as outrageous.

'Why did the prime minister agree to the use of British bases? Was it because of the Falklands war? I believe that there was a debt to be discharged. We did not win the Falklands war by sending the task force; we won because the Americans had a satellite system that informed the British forces of the Argentine positions. They supplied the logistics and weapons, but above all they told us the position of the *Belgrano* so that the *Conqueror* could sink it. The prime minister had an overwhelming obligation — she thought — to pay the price for that American support by agreeing to the use of British bases for the bombing of Libya.'

## ASLEF condemns Libya attack

ON THE recommendation of president Terry Clarke, the ASLEF national executive last week adopted a resolution calling for all US bases to go now.

It says: '... this executive committee is totally opposed to the UK government's endorsement of the bombing of Libya by the US armed forces and to ensure there is no reoccurrence of this nature we call for the immediate withdrawal of

American bases from Great Britain.'

In a letter to branches sent on 16 April, general secretary Ray Buckton draws attention to the CND demonstrations and points out that: 'The dangers of foreign bases in Great Britain has always been clear, and the act of aggression just perpetrated by the USAF endorses, in our view, the correctness of the Society's long-held policy for the closure of all US bases in Britain.'

## Skinner calls for closure of all US bases

IN response to the attack on Libya, Roland Boyes, supported by many Tribune and Campaign Group MPs, has tabled a motion in the House of Commons calling for 'the removal of all United States nuclear weapons from all bases in Britain'.

Two amendments have also been tabled. The first, from Frank Cook MP, strengthens the resolution by calling for all military bases to be removed. But the second, from Dennis Skinner, gets it dead right.

The resolution as he amends it would read: 'That this house deeply dismayed by the manner in which United States bases in Britain have been used to launch unjustified bombing attacks on Libya believes that this raises serious concern about the potential use of such bases for the deployment of nuclear weapons; and asserts that the surest safeguard for the British people would be the removal of all United States nuclear weapons as well as closing down all the American bases in Britain.'

# against U.S. attack on Libya



## Britain: mass protest erupts

**MASS PROTEST** erupted all over Britain within hours of Reagan's strike against Libya. It was the biggest and most rapid explosion of protest at an American or British action in living memory.

The protests were significant in two respects. They were rapid and large — especially given the time available to respond. There were protests in nearly all major cities on Tuesday evening. Saturday's London demonstration was a remarkable outburst. Over 10,000 people spontaneously combined, on CND's initiative, in a highly militant demonstration which, at one point, successfully blocked off London's main shopping street for over two hours.

Second, the political response represents one of the biggest potential breakthroughs for the left which Britain has seen since Suez. A clear, broad mass current has emerged which wants all US bases out of Britain and wants to end the forty-year partnership between the British and American states which has served as one of the cornerstones of imperialist rule from 1945 onwards. How did this action develop?

In London, by Tuesday noon crowds had already gathered outside the US embassy and Downing Street. Several hundred mounted a vigil at number 10 by torchlight and there were arrests as police waded in.

That same night 27 peace and political organisations met in the House of Commons to form the 'Campaign against the War' as CND leaflets flooded out summoning people to Saturday's mass protest. 'US bases out — stop Reagan's international terrorism', they demanded.

Saturday's demonstration, with no more than three days' notice, was huge — at least 10,000, mainly young. Demonstrators blockaded Grosvenor Square but were kept well away from the embassy by police and crash barriers. CND banners predominated but groups came from student unions, trade unions, from solidarity organisations, and Labour Parties.

The protesters came because they were shocked and horrified at what they saw as a barbaric and dangerous act of international terrorism launched by the USA. But it went further. They wanted to end the relationship which made it possible for Britain to be used for such an act. They wanted America's military bases out, and they said so.

There was not a trace of anti-Libya hysteria and banners from CND mingled freely with Palestinian solidarity, Arab student societies and Central America solidarity cam-

paigned. Round the railings of Grosvenor Square prominent large photographs of a Libyan child killed in the raid read 'Is this child a terrorist?' Placards reading 'Reagan is the real madman', 'US bases out', 'Thatcher is the real conspirator' were everywhere.

At the rally afterwards Benn summed up this mood in two well-applauded points. 'There will be no peace in the world without justice,' he said. 'The USA does not have troops around the world to protect democracy but to protect its empire, just as the British did many years ago.'

'It is not enough any more,' he went on, 'to talk about nuclear weapons. When the F1-11s took off from Lakenheath they were not on a nuclear mission. The time has come for CND to extend its campaign to all weapons which threaten to destroy humanity, whether nuclear or conventional. We have to close all American bases.'

At four o'clock the protesters moved off to link up with a rally in Hyde Park addressed by CND leaders, Tony Benn, Denzil Davies and others. But en route it passed Oxford Street: and there it stopped. For over two hours the demonstrators blockaded London's main thoroughfare as traffic backed up for miles in both directions.

This was when the violence started — but not as the media would have it, from rampaging demonstrators. Police could not

bring up transport to conduct mass arrests, so clearly decided to clear the peaceful demonstrators by force alone. Shocked witnesses saw police haul protesters out by their hair, ears or necks, kicking and punching them to try and intimidate them out of rejoining the protest.

At 5.30 the police then tried to move buses through the traffic. The driver of the lead bus refused, on the grounds that the streets had not been cleared and it was a danger to public safety to drive forward. A policeman tried to climb in the cab and drive the bus but could not work the controls. Then, as demonstrators jeered, the driver got out, walked to the bonnet, disconnected the plugs and the fuel feed — and walked off.

**Manchester:** More than 5000 people marched through the city on Saturday. The march was organised by Greater Manchester District CND and followed a successful protest by 500 on Tuesday night, again organised by CND.

CND and anti-missile group banners dominated the demonstration with a smattering of Labour Party and trade union contingents. Speakers outside Manchester Town Hall represented a wide variety of organisations including CND, Greenham Women, Palestinian solidarity, SWAPO, and the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign. Jean Gittings spoke for Women Against Pit Closures followed by Frank Allaun, long time peace campaigner and chair of Labour Action for Peace. Councillor Ken Smith spoke for the city council and Labour Party.

A CND activist group called Cruise Action took the initiative for these protests and had already won over Greater Manchester CND to support such actions by the Sunday before the bombing. After the success of these events and anti-war committee is to be established involving all the different organisations involved in the demonstration.

**South Wales:** twenty-four hour vigils were immediately set up on Tuesday night outside the Welsh Office in Cardiff, the Welsh centre of Tory rule, at the Caerwent US

base in Gwent and at the US air facility in Brawdy, Haverfordwest. In Cardiff 200 people marched from the castle to a rally at the Welsh Office before the vigil began. At the rally speakers from the Labour Party, Plaid Cymru and CND Cymru deplored the bombing of Libya and the use of British bases. As Sue Essex, Labour city councillor said, 'Mrs Thatcher has no mandate from the British people to allow the bases to be used in such a way.'

On Friday evening at a Women Against Pit Closures meeting attended by Arthur Scargill, he took up the US bombing. 'To allow US airforce planes to

be used to bomb cities and towns in a foreign nation on the pretext that they were challenging state terrorism is the action of someone who is not fit to be Prime Minister of this nation,' he said. 'For years I have warned that the possession of nuclear weapons and foreign bases leads you into international conflict ... the Labour Party, within 24 hours of taking office, should tell the United States to take its filthy bases and nuclear weapons back to their own country.' The US, he said, referring to the financing of the contras in Nicaragua, 'are past masters at state terrorism.'

On Saturday demonstrations were held in Cardiff and Newport. Over 2,000 people gathered in Cardiff at a rally representing broad layers of the South Wales trade union and labour movement. They marched again to the Welsh Office to hear speakers from the Labour Party, Plaid Cymru, CND and the Communist Party.



Scenes of protest in London last Saturday

Nottingham South and East Labour Parties, Women Against Pit Closures, the Trades Council, Central American Solidarity, the AAM, the black section and many Asian community groups. Participants from Notts University Student Union included the president.

Every night from Tuesday onwards there were demonstrations of 200 or more in the city centre and the newly-formed Hands off Libya campaign sent six buses to London as well as organising a local demonstration which started at 250 but, by the time it had reached the city centre, had attracted a crowd of several times that size.

**Scotland:** Saturday saw demonstrations in Glasgow, at Faslane naval base, in Edinburgh through the week. Scottish CND called a vigil outside the Scottish Ministry of Defence building which 200 people came to. The biggest Glasgow demonstration, called by Liberation and supported by the STUC and the Scottish through the city centre to a rally addressed by STUC and Labour Party executive spokespeople. Bob Gillespie of SOGAT and the STUC executive said that SOGAT was sending a motion to the STUC and that the labour movement should have responded more strongly to the invasion of Grenada — as it now learned to its cost.

**Birmingham:** 20-25 protesters gathered in the Bull Ring at midday and a larger demonstration at around 4.30 in front of the town hall. The first was called by CND and the second mainly attended by trade union and Labour Party activists, with a strong Pakistani contingent, many from Sparkbrook. CND held a separate protest at the same time because it did not support the demand 'Hands off Libya' raised by these protesters.

By Saturday three coaches to London had been filled and plans are afoot to set up a joint committee on Tuesday.

**Sheffield:** by 4pm on Tuesday 300 people had gathered outside Sheffield Town Hall, on the initiative of women in the peace movement and Sheffield CND. On Tuesday night the trades council executive endorsed the action and backed a joint call for future vigils on Thursday and Friday, and called a demonstration for Saturday together with the District Labour Party. Hundreds came to the vigils and nearly a thousand to the Saturday rally on the steps of the town hall. 2000 signatures had already been gathered for a petition. Speakers included Bob Cryer MEP, Richard Caborn MP, David Blunkett, Larry Whitty, CND, the Latin America Solidarity Forum, and many others.

**Nottingham:** By Tuesday midday, a joint meeting of CND, Nottingham Trades Council and Socialist Action supporters had set up a protest meeting for the following day. Over 100 packed a hall built for 30, coming from CND, the

## WORLD SOLIDARITY



**PROTESTORS** took to the streets across the world against Tuesday's bombing.

**Germany** saw a gigantic response. Though the police claim 20,000 in total — the figure reported in the British press. But organisers estimate bet-

ween 70,000 and 80,000 took part in Saturday's demonstrations, which were held throughout Germany in over 60 towns.

On Tuesday, the day of the bombing, the Green party took the initiative, calling for demonstrations in all cities. Actions took place in nearly 50 cities and the next day local coalitions, with the Communist Party and anarchists mainly taking the lead, held actions. 10,000 demonstrated in Germany as a whole. The Frankfurt demonstration of about 2,000 heard an American woman peace campaigner working for a peace network dealing with soldier's relatives. The next day 4,000 people turned out in the same city and thousands in many other cities.

By now broad coalitions had been formed in all areas and Saturday's huge mobilisation took place. The largest demonstrations, in Hamburg and Berlin, probably numbered over 10,000 each.

In the parliamentary debate both the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats backed up Chancellor Kohl's position that the attack was wrong, primarily because it threatened the sovereignty of European states. The Greens, who defended Libya, received very little media coverage. TV on-the-spot polls showed 80 per cent of the population opposed to the attack.

**Spanish State:** demonstrations took place on the night of the attack in Madrid, Barcelona, and in several towns in the Basque country, Valencia and Asturias. The spontaneous action outside the US embassy in Madrid was banned by the socialist government but by Wednesday it was forced to permit demonstrations all over the Spanish state at embassies, consulates and any building considered to be associated with the attack — such as Barclays bank offices in several towns.

Several thousand took part in demonstrations and meetings on successive nights in the main cities, including two demonstrations of 3-4,000 in Madrid.

Thursday's combined demonstration in Madrid was against the attack on Libya and against US aggression in Central America.

Embassies, consulates and other buildings were attacked by demonstrators with stones and bottles and in some areas barricades were thrown up. There were numerous confrontations with the police and many arrests.

The main initiative came from a broad spread of organisations who had united before to conduct the campaign against entry into NATO, on which the government recently held a referendum which it won, with 40 per cent against. The Eurocommunist wing of the divided Communist Party, however, also held its own meeting on Wednesday night which attracted 1-2,000 in Madrid.

## Build a campaigning student union

NUS CONFERENCE, held Monday 7 - Friday 12 April in Blackpool, was one big contradiction. On the one hand it reflected the outburst of campaigning activity by students in the last year. On the other there was a clear absence of any organised current or leadership capable of drawing together all those struggles into a campaigning NUS.

By Anne Kane

A growth of campaigning action — with students dominating the 2 November demonstration against apartheid, occupying colleges and organising demos against the Fowler review — was the backdrop to the most important shift in NUS policy for over a decade: the adoption of a policy in favour of British withdrawal from Ireland. This should now lead to campaigning action by NUS's one million plus members to get Britain out of Ireland.

However, the executive elections showed what is still to be done to form a campaigning leadership. In the elections Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN, organised by supporters of *Socialist Organiser*) presented themselves as the Labour left campaigning alternative to NOLS. SSiN won three places on the executive, which is composed of supporters of NOLS, SSiN, the Left Alliance, plus one independent and one SWP member.

But contrary to SSiN's claim, their election is not simply because they are regarded as a broad campaigning wing of NOLS. SSiN has the success it does because NOLS refuses to campaign against certain Left Alliance and other candidates. NOLS explicitly prefers an alliance with the coalitionists than with Labour left candidates in the form of SSiN. In the Vice President Welfare election where SSiN candidate Simon Pottinger was elected, NOLS called for a vote for an independent, Linzi Brandt. Opposition to this political alliance of support for non-Labour candidates against socialist candidates resulted in votes being transferred to SSiN.

Without doubt however SSiN also picked up the votes of political opposition to NOLS by those who identify themselves with the Labour Party, rather than the SWP or RCP — but not with the type of NUS leadership that was responsible for the fiasco of the Fowler demo where 35,000 students wearily and pointlessly trailed round the streets of London. This is far from positive political support for SSiN.



The fact is that SSiN's policies do not represent ones capable of turning the student movement into a 'radical youth movement orientated to the struggles of the working class'. On Ireland SSiN were to the right of NOLS. In the debate on Zionism, SSiN capitulated to the anti-semitic view that opposition to Zionism is equal to anti-semitism. On South Africa SSiN raise their criticisms of the ANC above calls for NUS to take a lead in the mass student opposition to apartheid.

In reality SSiN are totally selective in the working class struggles they support. Their aims seem to reduce to linking up with FEs, establishing more Labour Clubs and building Anti Fascist Action (AFA) groups.

The way forward to a campaigning NUS has to be through supporting all struggles of the working class and oppressed. This has to be done through building inside the NUS the type of class struggle alliances that have emerged elsewhere in the labour movement. The resolution passed on Ireland is an excellent basis to begin this by NUS reaching out and winning support for broad labour movement action for British withdrawal.



Part of the 10,000-strong protest at Grosvenor Square last weekend

## CND launches 'U.S. bases out' campaign

THE CAMPAIGN for Nuclear Disarmament is to launch a petition calling for the removal of all US bases from Britain. That was the decision of Sunday's reconvened CND national council meeting, in the light of the 10,000-strong protest outside the American embassy in London the previous day. Simultaneously, dozens of local protests were taking place up and down the country.

The petition will make three demands: US bases out, the publication of all secret treaties, and opposition to the Reagan's Star Wars programme. Local groups will be asked to organise activity around the petition.

Major events are planned at the US bases on Saturday 5 July. These will take place only days before the lobby of parliament already organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament for Tuesday 8 July. That lobby will be

the opportunity to present the CND petition to MPs.

Meanwhile, Labour CND has been organising

By Carol Turner

support within the Labour Party for the same demand. LCND has called a meeting this Thursday of all Labour Party organisations and campaigns to discuss their response to the attack on Libya and support for protest action.

One of the proposals at that meeting will be a resolution to Labour Party

conference in October this year calling for a commitment by the party that all US bases will be closed under a Labour government. At present the party's unilateral nuclear disarmament policy commits Labour to closing nuclear bases, but leaves others, such as the communications bases and those where US troops are stationed, in tact.

● For more information on CND's petition and other activities, contact: CND, 22-24 Underwood Street, London N1 7JG (phone: 01-250 4010). For further information on the activities of Labour CND, contact: LCND Secretary, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, London SW9 6HH (phone: 01-254 0261).

## Black section resolution on Azania

IN OUR previous two issues we published two position papers on South Africa which were discussed by the national Labour Party black section at its recent AGM. Below we print the resolution carried by the AGM which features the black section's action proposals.

THIS conference, mindful of the titanic struggle being waged by our sisters and brothers in racist South Africa, expresses its unflinching resolve to give them support in every possible way.

We recognise the huge importance to black people worldwide of the fight by the Azanian black masses to liberate themselves from white supremacist rule. Not only must apartheid be dismantled, but black people must gain their rightful place as the rulers of the Azanian nation.

We, nonetheless, reject the view of some people in the British labour movement that the battle for freedom in Azania is purely an issue of class. This is

a crude and simplistic reductionist approach which obscures the key issue of race. We salute the courage displayed by those struggling for freedom through the liberation movements like the ANC, Azapo, NFC, PAC and UDF as well as the mighty potential for helping to bring the apartheid regime to its knees shown by trade unions like the NUM and COSATU.

We agree to:

1. Support all black organisations actively engaged in the fight against the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.
2. Support the release of all Black political prisoners.
3. Seek to organise active

support in the black community for the struggle in Azania either by ourselves or in conjunction with other groups supported by the black sections national committee. We will support and build all local or national actions organised by these groups.

4. Endeavour to raise funds to pay for black speakers from Azania to tour labour movement platforms.

5. Support the establishment of a Labour Campaign for Azania.

6. Call for the Labour Party, labour authorities and trade union to organise actions, boycotts, protests and rallies in support of the black struggle in Azania.

We express our complete support for the black armed struggle in Azania. Sanctions alone will not bring freedom.

## NUJ votes for black self organisation

THE NUJ Annual Delegate Meeting (conference) last week, took a major step forward by voting unanimously in favour of black self organisation in the union. It also elected a black vice president, Lionel Morrison.

Taken under a debate on equal opportunities the resolution passed stated 'Chapels should be encouraged to give support to black members in organising in caucuses in line with TUC policy.' The union also voted for positive action on training, job interviews and other areas.

The resolution was moved by Marc Wadsworth, national chair of the Labour Party Black Section, from the National

Race Relations Working Party. It was seconded by London East and supported by the executive. Lionel Morrison spoke in favour of the resolution.

Following the 42 per cent vote at the NUT conference in favour of black self organisation — a vote taken against the recommendation of the executive, this is the second union conference this year to show a major step forward in support for the demand for black self organisation.

The Labour Party Black Section has prioritised a drive in the trade unions to gain self organisation in the unions and support for the demands of the Black Section in the Labour Party.

## LCLGR sets manifesto target

AN ELECTION manifesto' commitment to lesbian and gay rights: that is the target of Labour's lesbian and gay activists. Meeting in London 12/13 April, the Annual General Meeting of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) decided on a major campaign to consolidate and deepen the victory won on this issue at the 1985 Labour conference.

In 1985, Labour's conference overturned national executive committee opposition and carried a comprehensive lesbian and gay rights policy. 'But', warned campaign coordinator Peter Purton, 'unless we win a two-thirds majority we won't even be considered for the Labour manifesto. So in 1986 we are going back with resolutions insisting that the existing policy is implemented, and that the Party gives a clear commitment that the next Labour government will legislate to decriminalise homosexuality and prevent all discrimination against lesbians and gay men.'

In 1985, LCLGR won the support of wide sections of the labour movement. Alliances were built with the Women's Action Committee, the black section, unions such as the NUM, and much of the labour left. 'We are determined to continue these links,' Purton stated. 'If lesbian and gay activists, women, black people and the left work together rather than compete, we will all be much stronger. But of course the trade unions with their block

votes are vital. From now on, LCLGR will be working to persuade unions which supported us last year to support us again, and the others to change their minds.'

The AGM assessed that the need for a new campaign was clear. Despite party policy, Labour authorities like Nottinghamshire County Council are still excluding lesbian and gay rights from their equal opportunities policies and party headquarters have dragged their feet in implementing the 1985 resolution. 'Paper policy on its own is worthless', continued Peter Purton. 'LCLGR demands firm and public commitment by the Labour leadership to lesbian and gay rights. Prejudice is never challenged by staying silent. Our campaign in 1986 will be far from silent and we call upon all socialists and trade unionists to help us bring about the public commitment that lesbians and gay men need.'

● For more information contact Peter Purton, conference campaign coordinator 01-574 2420 or 01-561 9400.



Gay pride marchers in London last year

Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

Photo: PAM ISHERWOOD (Format)

# NEC moves the goalposts

LAST FRIDAY, 18 April, the national executive committee of the Labour Party met. It voted to revise the standing orders for NEC meetings — a change intended to facilitate taking disciplinary action against the 12 Liverpool party members, of course — and to call Pat Wall, selected as Labour parliamentary candidate by Bradford North, for questioning by the executive before his candidature is ratified. Both decisions represent a setback for democracy within the party.

The vote to revise standing orders was carried by 18:4, with 3 abstentions. Only Joan Maynard, Dennis Skinner, Frances Curran and myself voted against the standing orders change; Eric Clarke, Jo Richardson and Margaret Beckett did not vote.

However, it was interesting to note that party

general secretary Larry Whitty proposed changes in the procedure whereby the charges against the

By Eric Heffer

Liverpool 12 will be heard. After legal advice, he said, he will now be submitting a revised procedure when

the 12 appear before the NEC meeting.

In fact, Whitty has adopted the very points that the seven who walked out of the last executive meeting were demanding: that precise, written charges are presented and that the NEC is given the judge's decision in writing. It also appears that charges against one of the 12 will be dropped.

The date for this hearing has not been set. The executive decided that it will take place during May, after the local government elections, but not when. As Dennis Skinner pointed out at the meeting, the ma-

majority want to hold the meeting after they find out when their supporters can attend.

At least the walk-out at the last executive has forced the leadership to adopt the procedures which we argued at that time were demanded by natural justice. Nonetheless, it is quite clear that the overwhelming majority have already made up their minds on this issue. The May hearing will be anything but a fair one.

The recommendation on Pat Wall from the organisation sub-committee had already been referred back to them. In effect that was a decision not to support their recommendation that he appear before the NEC.

But at last Friday's meeting the organisation sub-committee brought

back the same proposal — and this time it got through by 13 votes to 10. Those who voted against were: Margaret Beckett, David Blunkett, Eric Clarke, Frances Curran, Eric Heffer, Joan Maynard, Michael Meacher, Jo Richardson, Tom Sawyer, Dennis Skinner.

Wall will now have to answer to the NEC before he is endorsed as a candidate. Of course, that could well mean that he won't be endorsed.

The decisions of last Friday's national executive committee are regrettable. By continuing with the expulsions of comrades from Liverpool we are going to do untold harm to the party. Throwing people out of the party, or refusing to endorse their candidature, because of their political positions is simply wrong.



Benn, Heffer and Maynard, three of the seven who stopped the March NEC 'trials' — last week Whitty recommended the NEC adopt the procedures the seven had demanded

## Concannon under attack in Mansfield

Mansfield Labour Party's AGM represented a huge step forward for the organisation of a left wing to combat Don Concannon and his right wing mafia.

Centered around the delegates from the NUM and members of WAPC, the left came within a few votes of winning the majority. NUM members were elected to the executive committee and the post of political education officer. Attempt to expel

Militant supporters have also been successfully resisted.

This victory has resulted from a long drawn out struggle against forces who support the breakaway UDM, and who have maintained a sustained attack on the constitutional rights of the party's members. It is the first major challenge that Concannon has ever had to face on his own home ground and should be welcomed and supported by the whole of the left in the Labour Party.

## LCI Conference

THE LABOUR Committee on Ireland holds its annual conference over the weekend 26-27 April in London. Niall Power's secretary's report to the conference registers some of the progress made by the LCI over the past year: the LCI's vigorous response to the Anglo-Irish Accord, its work in the trade unions, the activity of the Labour Women for Ireland and LCI's agitation in the student movement.

This latter has now culminated in the historic decision of the National Union of Students to call for unconditional British withdrawal from Ireland and rejection of the

Anglo-Irish Accord. Over the past three years the

By Redmond O'Neill

LCI and its journal *Labour and Ireland* have

played a decisive role in creating a minority current in the labour movement which rejects Labour's traditional total subservience to the interests of British imperialism in Ireland.

LCI has worked with individuals like Ken Livingstone to promote the dialogue with Sinn Fein. It has toured Irish Trade Unionists for Irish Unity and Independence. The campaign has succeeded in opening up the debate on an alternative anti-imperialist policy to forge an alliance between British labour and the people of Ireland on the basis of support for Irish self-determination.

This is a decisive contribution to the struggle for socialism in Britain and an indispensable part of the 'alliance for socialism' which the British working class must create to break the power of British imperialism. The LCI annual conference will be an opportunity to map out how to build on this and work towards a mass movement for British withdrawal from Ireland.

Unfortunately, it appears likely that the LCI will have to fight off an attempt by a minority to change its political course, by changing the composition of its leadership bodies and by putting its journal in the hands of an exclusively London-based, and therefore unrepresentative, editorial group.

Organisations like the Labour Women's Action Committee have recently had to fight off similar attempts by minorities of Labour Briefing supporters to impose their will on majorities by organisational manoeuvring.

It will, no doubt, be

firmly rejected by LCI activists because the work the LCI has done is too important to allow it to be squandered by sectarianism. Socialist Action urges its readers to support the LCI and LWI, and to attend what promises to be a very important conference.

### NEW LABOUR & IRELAND

APRIL/MAY/JUNE 1986 No 13 50p



#### SIX MONTHS AFTER THE ACCORD

- Anglo Irish Acco...
- Loyalist Reaction
- Extradition
- Peter Hain interview
- Progressive Democrats
- GLC
- O'Shea Trial
- Namibia
- Reviews
- Windscale
- Letters

Labour and Ireland, No 11, out now, price 50p for single copies. Subscriptions (£3 for 5 issues), write to: L&I, LCI, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

## Anti-apartheid News

### March for Freedom 28 June

PREPARATIONS are well under way for the Saturday 28 June march for freedom, which is likely to be the biggest anti-apartheid march Britain has ever seen. It starts at 12 noon in Hyde Park and marches via Whitehall to Clapham Common. A2 black and red posters and A4 black and white leaflets are already available from AAM at 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 ODW (01-387 7966).

### Make your area an apartheid-free zone

SOCIALIST ACTION spoke with JAGUN AKINSHEGUN who is chair of St Pauls, Bristol Apartheid-free zone campaign, one of the first such campaigns in the country. 'The campaign was set up,' he said 'to persuade local shopkeepers or businesspeople to stop selling or trading with the South African regime. We wanted to implement sanctions in our community because the Tory government doesn't have the moral or common sense to implement. We wrote to local shopkeepers followed by a delegation.'

But lobbying was not the only activity. 'We've also picketed Barclays,' he told us. 'And we have been leafletting and petitioning to get the message across. This is more important than persuading a few shopkeepers.' However it also get a good response from the shopkeepers: 'they exist to make money and if people didn't go in and ask about South African goods and refuse to buy them, we would have a hard time persuading them.'

Media coverage is bad, as could be expected, but the message is getting across. Police also tried to discredit the campaign, bringing charges against Jagun for 'Noise Pollution', a charge usually brought by environment officers.

Bristol council has passed resolutions but, says Jagun 'in terms of doing something concrete they've been slow, as the ban doesn't extend to the docks, which are crucial.'

The campaign now plans to petition for a statue in honour of Nelson Mandela: 'Bristol is full of statues in honour of capitalists who exploited African people for profit — to have one in honour of someone who stands for peace and freedom would be great step forward.'

### North West conference

TWO HUNDRED delegates came to Manchester Town Hall for the north west labour movement conference on Southern Africa on Saturday. The conference was opened by Peter Heathfield who explained how the judiciary was used to obstruct the NUM in its long battle to withdraw pension fund assets from South Africa.

Diane Abbott received prolonged applause when she exposed the hypocrisy of British and American governments who refused to impose sanctions on South Africa while carrying out bombing raids on Libya.

Mwahafar Ndilula of SWAPO condemned the US government for attempting to link South African withdrawal from Namibia to Cuban withdrawal from Angola. And Simon Sapper, AAM trade union organiser, reported on the growing support for the movement among trade unionists. The conference organisers extended the lunch break to allow delegates to take part in the mass rally against Reagan's war in Libya.

A well-attended NUM workshop decided to use the broadsheet to help improve awareness on the issue among miners in the north west. NUT delegates took the opportunity to set up an anti-apartheid teachers' group, and engineers decided to organise a speakers' tour of district committees.

Women delegates heard a report by Jean Gittings of Women Against Pit Closures and agreed to establish a women's network to build solidarity among women in the north west. The black activists' workshop discussed ways of increasing the profile of black people in the anti apartheid movement.

The largest workshop at conference was that on the Labour Party and Southern Africa.

The workshop agreed to mount a campaign to secure a manifesto commitment to break all links (including diplomatic links) with apartheid in South Africa. Several delegates also stressed the importance of implementing existing regional party conference policy, which includes a pledge to organise a regional demonstration in co-operation with the north west TUC and the AAM.

The final plenary session pledged full support to the AAM and its ten-point programme of action and set up a liaison committee.

**Gorton LPYS**  
Public meeting

**HANDS OFF LIBYA — NO US BASES**

Speakers:

Jacque Greenfield, Greater Manchester CND  
Bob Trublood, Central America Campaign  
Yome Mombo, Khan Moghul, prospective councillors

Monday 28th April, 7.30pm, Longsight Library

Nottingham Hands off Libya Campaign

**PUBLIC RALLY**

Speakers:

Sharon Atkin, prospective parliamentary candidate, Notts East CLP  
Mick McGinty, vice-president, Notts NUM

Representatives from local Pakistan and Afro-Caribbean communities and from Nottingham CND

Friday 25th April, Pakistan Centre, Woodborough Road.

# IMPERIALISM AND THE

## The lessons of Libya

**WHEN PEOPLE** woke up last Tuesday morning to find that US planes had attacked Libya from British bases a visible shudder went through the country — and through British political life.

The rapid demonstrations which took place in almost every major city during the week were the tip of the iceberg. The first opinion polls, taken for the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Guardian*, showed 69 per cent against the bombing raid on Libya and only 29 per cent in favour. More strikingly still the poll for Channel 4's 'News at Seven' showed 40 per cent now favouring the removal of all US bases.

*Tribune*, which has recently been devoting itself almost exclusively to being the house journal of Kinnockite witch hunting, was forced to break with its master and call on its front page for the removal of all US bases 'nuclear and non nuclear'.

CND mobilised within hours of the attack, called Saturday's extremely successful London demonstration, and headlined its leaflets mobilising for the demonstration with the demand for the ending of all US bases in Britain. In the week following the attack CND has received a flood of membership applications and donations.

One area where the political atmosphere did not penetrate of course, was the new style NEC of the Labour Party. It seems that only two members present, Eric Heffer and Dennis Skinner, were prepared to vote for a resolution demanding withdrawal of all US bases as well as condemning the attack — Tony Benn, who supports this call, was at another meeting.

Neil Kinnock made another of his predictably feeble and lamentable displays in the House of Commons — Kinnock is increasingly only stirring when attacking *Militant* not Reagan or the Tories. He led the way in calling for economic sanctions to be taken against Libya for terrorism 'instead of' military action.

Kinnock, in his supposed zeal for the fight against 'terrorism', needless to say did not call for economic sanctions against the United States — which is at present preparing and arming the Nicaraguan contra terrorists as well as

having carried out direct terrorist acts against Nicaragua such as mining the gulf of Corinto.

But despite Kinnock and the NEC's best efforts it is clear that the reaction to Reagan's attack on Libya is going to be a turning point in British politics. It can also be a major turning point for the left. It is therefore vital that what is taking place is understood.

The first and most urgent task is to stop the attack on Libya itself. Some sections of the left, noting the differences which emerged between the United States and the Western European capitalist powers, have first and foremost concentrated on this inter-imperialist clash — notably the obvious difference in approach between the US and Europe.

But this is wrong. No matter what weight is given to exploiting the contradictions between the imperialists, which is important and which we deal with later, the *first* aspect of the situation is the defence of a semi-colonial country, Libya, under attack by imperialism. 'Hands off Libya' is the very first demand that must be raised by the labour movement.

That becomes all the more important because of the decision by the EEC states for actions against Libya such as restrictions of Libyan diplomats. The left must be against these sanctions against Libya as well. The source of problems in the world, and Middle East, is imperialism — not Qaddafi. There must be no fudging on this whatever.

The diplomatic sanctions used by the EEC states can, and will be, used to whip up an atmosphere where new military and other attacks by the United States and its allies on Libya will be claimed to be justified. At the United Nations Security Council France, together with Australia, joined with the United States and Britain to veto condemnation of the US raid on Libya — which is another reason why sections of the left are wrong to tie condemnation of the attack on Libya to support for, or illusions in, the United Nations.

From the practical and political point of view of defending Libya, and the future of world politics, however, the conflicts between the imperialists shown over Libya — and more important the relation of forces between the working class and capital that underlies these conflicts — is important.

From the point of view of practically defending the Libyan people the dif-

ference between the US air strikes and the present diplomatic actions taken by the EEC states is important — even though the left must oppose both.

For the attack on Libya brought out into the light of day for a large number of people a key part of the structure of world imperialism — that is the relation between Britain, western Europe and the United States, and the real nature of that alliance.

Since 1945 the central pillar of the world imperialist system has been the relation between the United States and western Europe. NATO is the core of American military policy. The EEC countries have an economic weight, and military capacity, not even remotely rivalled by any of the United States' other allies. Break that link of western Europe and the United States and imperialism would be enormously weakened.

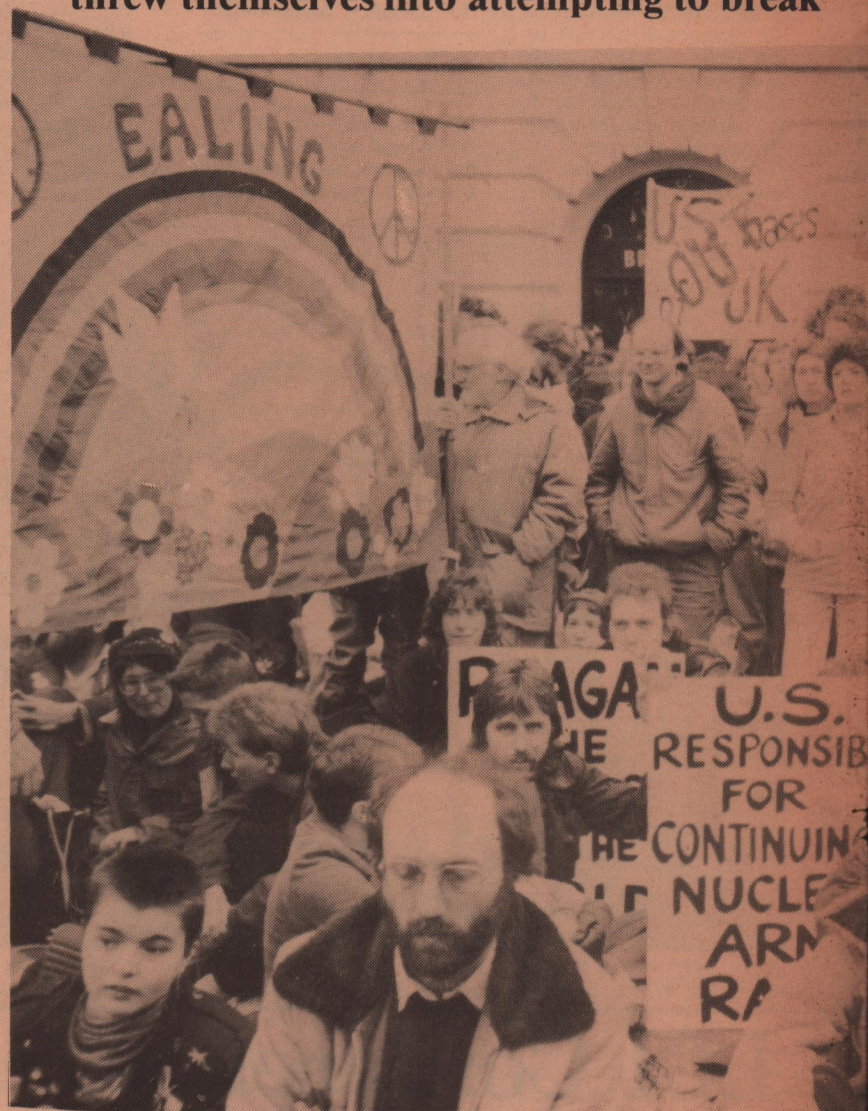
That alliance, furthermore, is threatened by two enormous pressures which combine to aid any working class struggle in western Europe against it.

Firstly NATO and the Atlantic Alliance was directly constructed against the USSR — a force with which the west European working class has neither any interest nor any desire to have a war. Secondly the 'Atlantic Alliance' is directly aimed against struggle or revolution in the third world.

That last aspect, of attacks on third world countries, came to the fore during the American war in Vietnam. The threat of war with the USSR, and the threats against it to free up US resources for attacks on semi-colonial countries, dominated the anti-missiles movement. The attack on Libya directly poses the threat to third world countries from the NATO.

But the long term reality is that *both* developments — both any upsurge of struggle against imperialism in the 'third world' countries and the strength of the USSR — combine to reinforce west European working class opposi-

**THE WEEK** since the United States attack on Libya has seen rapid development in politics. First thousands of people took to the streets to oppose Reagan's attack and Thatcher's complicity. Opinion polls showed massive opposition to the raid. Then Kinnock, and the Labour leadership, threw themselves into attempting to break



...tion to support for links with United States imperialism.

That opposition is of direct aid to those fighting imperialism throughout the world. The fact that the EEC put forward *purely* diplomatic sanctions against Libya, and France and Spain refused to allow US planes to overfly their territory to attack it, aided mobilising action against Reagan's assault. The fact that the EEC, unlike the United States, has refused economic sanctions directly aids that country — just as the west European trade with Cuba directly aids both it and Nicaragua. 'When the enemy is divided we are strengthened' is an elementary law of politics.

Nicaragua, with its skillful use of the differences between the 'Conradora' group of Latin American countries and the United States — and its playing off of western European trade versus US economic boycotts — has shown once more the practical importance of exploiting the conflicts between the capitalist states and their ruling classes.

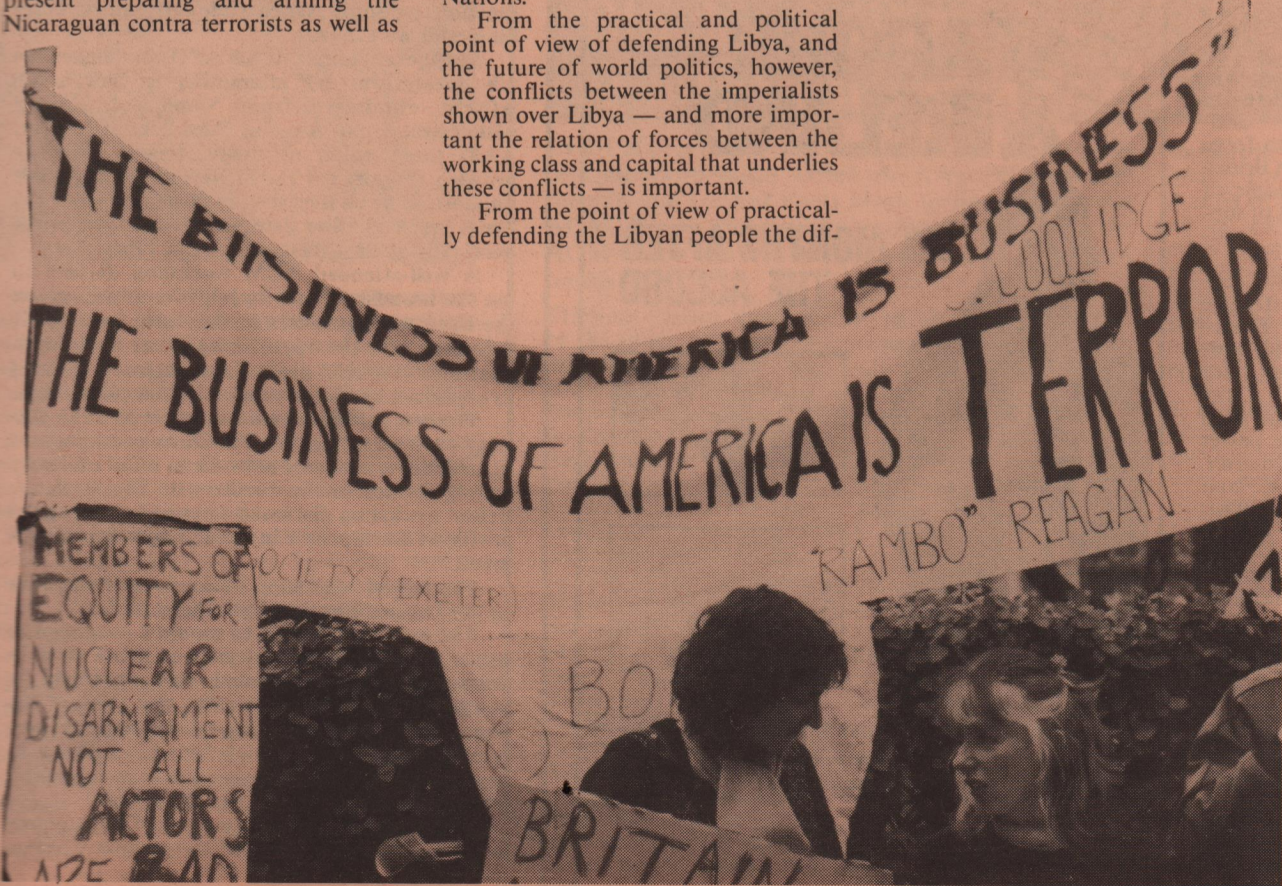
But in western Europe the most important conflict is *not* between the west European ruling classes and the United States. The west European capitalist classes are relatively incapable of any real independence from the United States. The decisive conflict question is the conflict of the west European *working class* both with US imperialism and its own ruling classes. The decisive feature of the political situation is not the ruling class conflicts with the United States, but the rise of anti-imperialism among the working classes of western Europe.

## The rise of anti-imperialism

**SINCE THE** mid-1960s three great waves of what the press likes to refer to as 'anti-Americanism' — but which in reality have as their most fundamental feature a struggle of the working class and its allies against imperialism — have developed in Europe.

The first such wave was the struggle against the Vietnam war in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The second was the struggle against the Cruise and Pershing missiles starting in 1979. The third, which started with the reaction to the attack on Libya, we profoundly believe is the opposition to the attacks against the semi-colonial countries which the United States and its allies are preparing.

Each of these waves of opposition has gone politically and socially deeper than the one before. Active opposition to the Vietnam war only touched in a mass way students, and a significant layer of young people. The second wave of struggle, that against Cruise and Pershing missiles, deeply touched the working class movement but it still only questioned a particular, extremely central, weapons system.



# LEFT

**up the developing movement against the US. They threw all Labour's weight behind the EEC's diplomatic actions against Libya, Thatcher's expulsions of Libyans, and Kinnock's call for economic sanctions. JOHN ROSS looks at the reasons for the huge outburst of protest and the frantic drive of Labour's leadership to head it off.**



## e of an imperialist left

What is notable about the reaction to the attack on Libya is that it has questioned, for the first time, the entire military basis of the alliance with the United States. The demand for the withdrawal of all US bases has been turned in one stroke from a fringe issue into a minority but extremely serious view in the labour movement. It has also openly blown to pieces Neil Kinnock's sophistical distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear US bases. Thousands of people who had mobilised against nuclear weapons made the leap to directly demonstrating as well against a military attack on a semi-colonial country.

These facts are of profound importance for the people of Libya, the course of British politics, and for every other semi-colonial country threatened by imperialism. Because the presence of these American bases in Britain is not only a threat to the USSR and Libya, but a direct military threat to every semi-colonial country — as last week's attack showed.

The struggle to remove these bases from Britain is a directly anti-imperialist struggle. It is one in which victory would aid the struggle of the

people of the entire world. It also shows — as does the way in which CND and its base mobilised against both the Malvinas war and the attack on Libya — the anti-imperialist dynamic of the anti-missiles movement.

This deepening anti-imperialist struggle has been combined with a social deepening of the radicalisation in the working class. In the United States it is naturally not surprising to find that the only section of the population which in its majority opposed the US attack on Libya is the black community — polls show support among whites for Reagan's attack running at over 70 per cent.

In Britain what is occurring is that the deepening of anti-imperialist struggle is, logically, being combined with the remaking of the composition of the working class itself — notably an enormous increase in the proportion of women and black people in the working class.

As Trotsky once wrote: 'Opportunist organisations by their very nature concentrate their attention on the top layers of the working class.' The struggle against imperialism, and every working class struggle, has pro-

gressively brought into action more and more oppressed layers of the working class and the working class community.

Women, of course, have played a leading role in every struggle of the last period — including in the miners strike and at Wapping as well as for abortion, equal rights, and every other demand of women. Another manifestation has been the leading role of women, above all the Greenham women, in the anti-missiles movement.

Women Against Pit Closures and Greenham women logically and naturally formed links and alliances in their struggles. Demands for, and the reality of, women's self-organisation in the Labour Party and trade unions has continued to deepen.

A further step forward was taken with the creation of the black section in the Labour Party. By turning into the Labour movement the black section has created the first nationally structured movement of black people in Britain. The black sections development is necessarily directly linked to the struggle against imperialism throughout the world — because the virulent racism of British society is itself a product of the imperialist past and present of our society. The black section necessarily has to defend not only black people in this country — as in the police attacks on the black communities in Handsworth, Brixton, Tottenham, and Southall — but those subject to racist rule in South Africa and imperialist terror in Libya and Palestine.

The series of statements issued by the black section shows that deepening political course and its development as a major anti-imperialist force in the British labour movement.

The radicalisation of women and the black community in turn has added its weight to what is the oldest struggle against imperialism which takes place both within and outside the boundaries of the British state — that against the British occupation of the north of Ireland.

That Irish struggle for freedom has itself penetrated more deeply into the British labour movement with the radicalisation of Sinn Fein in Ireland linking itself to a dialogue and support from the left wing of the Labour Party. That struggle in Ireland has received particular support from the black community, from miners, from students and from the women's Labour Party conference. This year the National Union of Students voted to become the first mass organisation in Britain to explicitly call for total British withdrawal from Ireland.

This deepening process of radicalisation and proletarianisation is extending into wider sections of the population. The popular and 'serious' press has written about the disappearance of the working class and that everyone is becoming 'middle class'. In reality the exact opposite process is occurring.

The period since World War II has seen one of the greatest expansions of the working class in history — above all the drawing of women into the workforce and the creation of an entire new black community. This is showing up in a radicalisation of quite new and previously 'conservative' sections of the population.

The white collar unions have not only grown enormously in the post-war period but changed their relation to the labour movement. Prior to the 1960s key white collar unions, for example NALGO and the NUT, refused to affiliate to the TUC. They however joined during the 1960s — in the case of the NUT in 1970. Increasing militancy culminated in 1985-86 in a teachers strike which was unparalleled in its militancy in the entire history of white collar trade unionism in Britain.

The same process is now being taken through in a more institutional form with the decision, with considerable chance of success, of white collar unions to ballot on establishing political funds — the CPSA and NUJ

having already decided to hold ballots, and the IRSF having voted to establish a political fund already.

Another symptom of the same process is the struggle taking place in the NUT for unification with the NAS/UWT and the creation of one single TUC affiliated teachers union — a fight also for the teachers unions to rid themselves of the last vestiges of a 'professional' outlook.

Of course it will take a long process of development before the main white collar unions move from establishing political funds to affiliating to the Labour Party. But the direction of motion — first affiliation to the TUC, then the establishment of political funds and deeper involvement in the labour movement — is clear.

Finally, of course, it was the miners strike, the historical vanguard of the entire British working class, that first gelled and centralised this entire process — and symbolised the profound developments taking place. Scargill and the NUM leadership in the strike showed not only the miners but the entire labour movement how to bring together and ally all these developing forces.

The miners consciously allied with women, the black community, gays and lesbians, the Irish people, and anyone who was prepared to support them. They also reached out directly for international support. They themselves have become the backbone of supporting all those in struggle nationally and internationally. The NUM in the strike became the most advanced mass force ever seen in the British labour movement. One that combined resolute class struggle with the social alliances that are necessary for the labour movement.

The process which is taking place in Britain, and on a lower level in other west European imperialist countries, is clear. A profound social recomposition of the working class — a break with a male white dominated labour movement, and the massive entry of women and black people into the workforce — is being combined with a growing anti-imperialist political development. As this process is still only at its beginning, it constitutes the most important developing force for socialism in Britain for six decades — indeed the most important in the history of the labour movement since the rise of British imperialism.

The political dynamics of this process are clear both in Britain and western Europe. Naturally the last place to which the mass of the working class turn is a direct onslaught on their own imperialist ruling class. If that were occurring today we would be talking about an immediate struggle for socialism in Europe. Only the most advanced sections understand the need for a total struggle with their own ruling class. Instead the mass of the working class and oppressed first turn to partial expressions of struggle against imperialism. But each progressively bring the working class successively closer to a full scale clash with its own imperialist ruling class.

The most general development since the 1960s is the wholesale clash of sections of the west European working class with US imperialism. This growing opposition in the working class to US imperialism explains a considerable amount of hesitancy of the European capitalist states in supporting the US — they fear not only for their own international interests but for political stability in their own countries. For clashes with US imperialism bring the west European working class into conflict with their 'own' ruling classes and their interests.

First the general radicalisation of the struggle against US imperialism spills over into opposition to direct west European imperialist interests. Thus, for example, the movement against Cruise and Pershing missiles spilled over in Britain into increased support for British unilateral nuclear disarmament. In west Germany, for the first time since the 1950s, the anti-missiles movement produced a party, the Greens, which is opposed to west German membership of NATO — against

the core of west German foreign policy.

Secondly the west European imperialist ruling classes are not capable, in present conditions or historically of any thorough going break with the United States. Since 1914 most of western Europe has had no economic, social, or political equilibrium outside its relations with the US. 'Opposition' to US imperialist actions is weak and vacillating by the ruling classes — whereas the opposition of the working class is thorough going and decisive.

The west European ruling classes cannot today break with NATO, cannot remove US bases, cannot utterly oppose the attacks on semi-colonial countries — in short cannot do any of the things that would represent a real break with US imperialism and its policies. The west European ruling classes, particularly the British, cannot grant the types of demands on this field that are being generated in their labour movements. The opposition of the west European working classes to US imperialism therefore leads them to outflank, and directly clash, with their own ruling classes — a process we have been seeing in Europe ever since the beginning of opposition to the Vietnam war.

There are, of course, major forces in western Europe which are attempting to utilise the clashes with the United States for their own reactionary imperialist purposes. One of them, Neil Kinnock, leads the Labour Party. Their aim is to drag the working classes of western Europe behind west European imperialist interests instead of the direct ones of the US. Mitterrand's policies in France, Gonzalez in Spain, or Soares in Portugal show exactly that development, and also the way they fail to really oppose the United States policies.

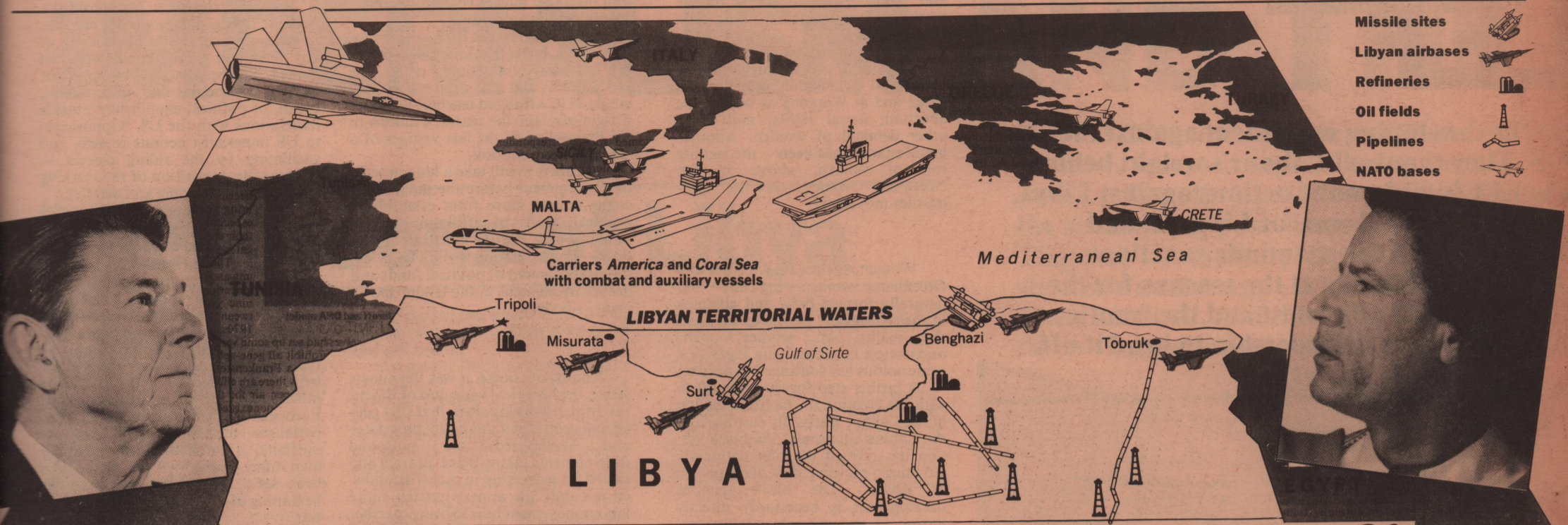
Kinnock opposes the bombing of Libya not because he is against imperialist attacks on semi-colonial countries — he supported the Malvinas war fully for example — but because, from the point of view of the west European imperialists, he prefers other forms of attacks on Libya than direct military assault or economic sanctions.

But Kinnock, or Gonzalez, cannot prevent a profound and increasing movement of sections of the working class into conflict with imperialism. West Germany with the anti-missiles movement, Spain with the anti-NATO movement, and Britain with CND were the countries where there were the biggest protests against the US attack on Libya — that is against direct military assaults on a semi-colonial country.

This process is the most important development in British and west European politics — the most decisive in its implications for the future. Out of the miners strike, for the first time since the 1920s, real class struggle forces emerged in Britain — forces that, in Arthur Scargill's words, 'stand and fight'. That left was itself rooted in the huge post-war transformations of the working class and the international developments that accompanied it. The really decisive task was to link that left, and new forces that develop, to the international struggle against imperialism. That is directly what is taking place under the pressure of the class struggle — as the reaction to the attacks on Libya shows.

There are still many confusions and mystifications in that left. Tony Benn for example, in the very same speech in which he savagely attacked Reagan's bombing of Libya, could state that he stood both for the existence of Israel as a Jewish state and for a state for the Palestinians — as if the two were not completely contradictory. Confusions about 'detente', the role of the Soviet bureaucracy, and similar themes still exist. Different forces develop at different speeds.

But the deep opposition to the attack on Libya has given yet another boost to the convergence of forces which emerged out of the miners strike, and out of the transformations within the labour movement, with the international struggle against imperialism. That is the most important and fateful development in British politics. The most important to push forward in every way.



# Why the U.S. hates Qaddafi

**THE UNITED STATES prepared its attack on Libya with one of the greatest campaigns of vilification and 'disinformation' in recent history. Qaddafi was declared a 'mad dog' by Reagan. Libya was portrayed as a gigantic and powerful terror state.**

In reality Libya has a population of only 3.6 million — marginally bigger than Nicaragua. Its economy is only one fifteenth the size of Britain's — and one hundredth the size of the United States. Britain spends fifty times as much on arms as Libya, and the United States three hundred times as much.

The US and British ruling classes hate Qaddafi not because of any military or 'terrorist' threat he or Libya pose to them, but because Qaddafi's is one of the remaining Arab nationalist states in the Middle East — one which continues to oppose US and British policies.

**JOHN ROSS looks at the nature of the Qaddafi regime against the background of the rise of the struggle for Arab liberation.**

The modern history of the 'Middle East' can only be understood against the background of the long struggle by the Arab peoples to free themselves from the direct and indirect rule of foreign powers — first European, then the United States and Israel in combination with the European powers.

The long permanent European rule of the Arab states began in 1830 with the French invasion of Algeria. In 1839 the British seized Aden at the tip of the Arabian peninsula. In 1860, for the first time, a French army was sent into Lebanon — although this time it withdrew.

Generalised European conquest of the African Arab states started in the 1880s. In 1881 France seized Tunisia. In 1882 Britain took effective control of Egypt. In 1898 Kitchener undertook a full scale invasion of the Sudan. In 1912 Morocco was made a French protectorate. In 1911 the Italians had invaded Libya.

## Revolt

Penetration into the eastern Arab world by the European powers was initially held back by the Turkish empire. The defeat of Turkey as a German ally in World War I — a defeat under the pressure of Arab revolt — was used by Britain and France to expand their rule in the Arab East.

Britain had directly instigated Arab risings against Turkish rule. These started with Husein, Sherif of Mecca, rising in revolt against Turkey on 5 June 1916 — the campaign being referred to in racist British legend as the activity of 'Lawrence of Arabia.' Saudi Arabia was the state created by this struggle.

By 1919 Turkish rule had been

overthrown. The Syrian National Congress, meeting in Damascus in July 1919, proclaimed independence for a united Arab Syrian state covering what is now Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel.

But the British and French had no intention of allowing Arab independence. Already in 1917 Britain had issued the 'Balfour Declaration' favouring the establishment of a Jewish settler state in Palestine — the nucleus of the future state of Israel. The French and British proceeded to seize and divide the liberated Arab territory.

France took control of Syria and artificially partitioned it — for purposes of 'divide and rule' — into Syria and a Christian dominated Lebanon. The British seized Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine — and established de facto domination over what became Saudi Arabia.

Everywhere the European powers established or maintained reactionary local rulers — notably the monarchies in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, and Libya. These regimes were based on the large landowners. This was coupled to the consolidation of Zionist settlement in Palestine — which was resisted by intense Arab struggles.

World War II shook European rule in the Middle East to its foundations. The British seized the opportunity of France's defeat by Germany in 1940 to push the French out of Syria and Lebanon in 1943. But the anti-French movement the British had themselves encouraged turned into pressure for Britain to get out — which it was forced to do in 1948.

## Nationalism

The decisive event in the rise of modern Arab nationalism came on 23 July 1952 with the overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy — and the establishment of a government whose main figure became Nasser.

Britain and the United States had the aim both of encircling the USSR and confronting the radical Arab challenge. By 1955 they had organised the Baghdad pact — whose direct members were Britain, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan. Nasser in turn played a key role in establishing the non-aligned movement at the Bandung conference in 1955 — together with Nehru from India, Chou-En-Lai from China, and Tito from Yugoslavia.

On 26 September 1955 the Egyptian government announced it was signing an agreement with Czechoslovakia to purchase arms — the first arms agreement signed with an East European state by an Arab country. This decision was followed by mass demonstrations in its support in Egypt.

In July 1956 Nasser announced nationalisation of the Suez canal. In October and November 1956 Israel, France, and Britain invaded Egypt. Amid massive opposition from the Arab world, and direct pressure from

a United States which feared the consequences of the British action, the British, French and Israeli forces were forced to leave Egypt. It was a gigantic victory for Nasser making him the dominant figure of the Arab world.

Two years earlier, in 1954, revolt against French rule in Algeria had started. In 1956, confronted with this threat, the French were forced to concede independence to Morocco and Tunisia. Sudan gained its independence the same year. After a further six years of struggle Algeria gained independence from France in 1962 — one of the great revolutions of modern history.

In 1958, the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown. Armed struggle for the liberation of Aden from British rule started in 1965.

## Independence

The establishment of the Qaddafi government in Libya represented part of this massive upsurge of struggle against European, US, and reactionary Arab rule. Libya formally gained independence in 1951. In reality however the British, and then the United States, maintained total domination over the country. Libya was ruled through the reactionary monarchy of king Idris. The US constructed the giant Wheelus airbase — the largest outside the United States — which commanded the eastern Mediterranean.

In 1960 the discovery of oil began to transform the Libyan economy. From 1960 to 1977 Libya had one of the fastest economic growth rates in the world — an average of 17 per cent a year. In 1969, under the impact of these economic transformations, and radicalisation produced in the Arab world by Israeli aggression in the 1967 'Six Day War', Idris was overthrown.

The new regime under Qaddafi undertook rapid social reforms. 700,000 hectares of land were distributed to small landholders and two million hectares brought under cultivation. A minimum wage of £100 a month was introduced. Free medical care was established.

These major reforms created mass support for the Qaddafi. The government presented itself as following a 'third way' between capitalism and socialism summarised in Qaddafi's *Green Book*.

## International

On the international front Qaddafi utilised the rapid growth of the West European economies during the late 1960s and early 1970s, to achieve a special economic relationship with western Europe and secure relative economic independence from the United States. By 1982 66 per cent of Libya's exports went to Europe — with 19 per cent going to France and another 18 per cent to Italy. In turn Libya became a significant market for European goods. Italy supplies 29 per cent of Libya's imports and West

Germany 16 per cent. With these economic features it can be seen there were not simply political but economic considerations which held back the European countries from endorsing the US attacks on Libya last week.

## Weakness

Politically Qaddafi initially pursued a course which combined opposition to Israel with virulent anti-communism. Libya was one of the chief backers of the reactionary coup in the Sudan in 1970 which smashed the Sudanese Communist Party and the Sudanese trade unions. In this Qaddafi followed the Nasser path — which had combined a foreign alliance with the USSR with ruthless suppression of the workers' movement and Communist Party in Egypt itself.

Internally Libya is ruled officially by the direct democracy of peoples' committees. In fact such committees are specifically excluded from the police, the army, the oil industry, banking, and insurance — that is all the decisive areas of the economy and the state apparatus. Libya has in fact a dictatorial regime — which nevertheless achieved major reforms for the masses compared to the previously existing state of affairs.

In foreign policy Qaddafi has pursued a radical brand of Arab nationalism — Nasser being Qaddafi's openly acknowledged hero. Libya has proposed at various times political union to Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan and Syria — following the path of Nasser's union of Egypt and Syria.

## Opposition

Libya pursues a total policy of opposition to Israel. It provides economic aid to Nicaragua. It has also supported the IRA. Internationally Libya has become increasingly aligned with the foreign policy of the USSR.

The United States attacks on Libya have grown precisely as the Nasserite wave of Arab nationalism has run its course. The most important success in US foreign policy during the 1970s — indeed one might say the only one — was precisely in exploiting the weakness of the Arab nationalist regimes which emerged in the 1950s and 1960s.

States such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq nationalised massive sections of their economy. But their state apparatuses remained firmly capitalist. Nasser's army for example was in direct continuity with that left by the monarchy. The Nasserite, Iraqi, and Syrian regimes deliberately went out of their way to crush independent working class organisation.

With the onset of the new economic crisis of the late 1960s and early 1970s the old 'nonaligned' path followed by Nasser was blocked. The 'radical' Arab states, above all Egypt,

began to turn to varying degrees back to stronger links with imperialism. This process rapidly accelerated after Nasser's death in 1970.

In 1972 Nasser's successor Sadat ordered all Soviet military advisers to leave Egypt. In 1973 Egypt allied with Syria to launch the 'Yom Kippur' war. The aim of the war was to establish a better bargaining position for the Egyptian bourgeoisie with the United States. The same year Egypt was opened up to foreign investment.

## Agreements

The treaty of friendship between Egypt and the USSR was ended. In November 1977 Sadat made his visit to Jerusalem to become the first Arab leader to recognise Israel. This opened up the process which led to the Camp David agreement and full recognition of Israel by Egypt.

The Camp David agreements in turn heightened the aggression of the Israelis who in 1982 invaded Lebanon to attempt to impose a further client state on their northern border. Since then Israel has been attempting to pull Jordan into negotiations on its recognition.

With Egypt now directly allied to the United States Libya became a direct target for the United States. In 1977 Egypt, backed by the US, provoked a war with Libya in which Egyptian planes bombed and strafed targets within Libya.

In 1981 US naval and air forces carrying out 'manoeuvres' in the Gulf of Sirte shot down two Libyan aircraft. In 1982 Washington banned the import of Libyan crude oil into the United States. In January 1986 Reagan ordered a total ban on all trade, commercial contracts, and other transactions with Libyan assets in the United States. Reagan ordered that all US citizens should leave Libya.

On 24 and 25 March 1986 US ships penetrated into the Bay of Sirte and began attacking Libyan targets. It also emerged at that time that in July 1985 the United States had urged Egypt to invade Libya.

## Struggles

The regime of Qaddafi is not socialist. It suppresses independent organisation of the working class in Libya. While it supports highly progressive struggles — against Israel, of the Irish people for independence, of Nicaragua — it has sold out other for its own purposes — for example the Polisario Front fighting for the independence of the Western Sahara from Morocco.

But Qaddafi's regime has brought real gains for the Libyan people. It is infinitely superior to anything imperialism has to propose for Libya. Socialists should have no hesitation in fighting alongside it against the assault launched on Libya by the United States and Britain.



# Reagan's state terrorists

ON 5 JANUARY 1984 Edgar Chamorro was woken in his home in Tegucigalpa, Honduras by a CIA 'advisor'. Chamorro was at that time a leader of the Frente Democratico Nacional (FDN), the leading organisation of the 'contras' who are fighting to overturn the Nicaraguan government. He was told to read out a statement on the FDN radio claiming responsibility for mining Nicaragua's ports — an operation which blew up a Dutch dredger, a Panamanian tanker, a Liberian ship with British crew, a soviet tanker and a Japanese cargo vessel.

Six months ago Chamorro submitted sworn evidence to the International Court of Justice in the Hague that the whole operation was carried out by agents employed directly by the CIA and operating from CIA mother ships.

Chamorro was unable to submit his evidence in person because, since he has broken with the FDN and spoken out against US policy, immigration officials will not let him leave the USA where he now lives.

This damning evidence from the horse's mouth, and much other, will almost certainly lead the International Court, the UN's highest legal body, to find in favour in Nicaragua's complaint against the USA's flagrant act of terrorism.

The USA, however, will pay no attention. Earlier in 1985 Reagan announced that the USA would not recognise the court on Central American matters for two years. Then on 1 October, after the court decided to go ahead anyway, the USA announced it would no

longer accept the court's jurisdiction except for 'mutually submitted' cases — that is, cases it thinks it can win.

The USA has thus effectively abandoned any pretence of legality, threatened with a judgement which could not but find it guilty of overt and flagrant state-financed terrorism.

Nothing could make clearer what the contras actually are: a straight creation of the USA. Originally they drew in a number of bourgeois figures such as Chamorro himself, and the famous 'Comandante Cero', who were involved in the overthrow of Somoza.

They also succeeded in drawing in forces from among the North Atlantic Coast population of Nicaragua, particularly the Miskito Indians, who were alienated by early mistakes of the revolution.

But the overwhelming bulk of the FDN's cadres were drawn from former Somocista guards, more or less directly subordinate to the 900 or so 'CIA advisers' now with them in Honduras. Comandante



Cero was taken out of action by a bomb widely considered to have been planted by the CIA itself, because of his opposition to these ex-Somocistas.

The FDN is very little more than an arm of the US government with no independence, financed, directed, and run by the CIA and the US military.

It is for this reason that they have precious little support within Nicaragua and this in turn is the root cause of their military reverses, not — as Reagan tries to maintain — because of their lack of weaponry.

But this in turn drives them to tactics of very brutal and destructive terror. Reports abound of kidnappings, mass shootings, assassinations, rape, and torture.

Their initial strategy,

revealed in 1983, was to seize border settlements and establish 'liberated zones', creating a corridor through which Honduran and US forces would enter.

Operation 'Big Pine', which was held in Honduras in May 1983 when the plan was supposed to take effect, involved 1,600 US soldiers and 4,000 Honduran troops in a simulated maritime invasion of a foreign territory by Honduras with backing from US marines and paratroopers.

The plan failed because the 1,200 ex-Somocista troops who entered Nicaragua from Honduras immediately after Big Pine were isolated and defeated by the FSLN and had to retreat. Thereafter the contra tactics increasingly turned to terror, the purpose of which was essen-

tially to sabotage the Nicaraguan economy.

By August 1984 a report to the UN showed that Nicaraguan casualties stood at 4,038 civilians of whom 854 were murdered, 3,031 kidnapped and 153 wounded. 134 children under 12 had been killed and 37 maimed. In addition 3,353 members of the armed forces had been killed, bringing total casualties to 7,391.

This is as if, in Britain, someone had killed 100,000 civilians, kidnapped half a million, and killed off a number of soldiers equal to the entire armed forces. This is real state terrorism on the grand scale. This is what president Reagan wants his £100 million for. This is the future Reagan wants to offer the world. Don't let him!

## Namibia South Africa's illegal trial

SEVEN Namibians have been found guilty of 'terrorism' in an illegal trial in South African occupied Namibia.

The seven accused changed their pleas to 'guilty' on 27 February on some 70 counts under South Africa's Terrorism Act — after 108 counts and charges of propagating communism under the Internal Security Act were dropped.

The seven face the prospect of lengthy imprisonment when the trial resumes for evidence in mitigation of sentencing on 16 April. The convictions of the seven were obtained on the basis of evidence from detained state witnesses held incom-

municado for over a year. Only 26 of the 154 witnesses had appeared in court so far, but evidence was already coming forward of assault and torture. One of those detained, Thomas Nikanor, died in the notorious Osire detention centre, allegedly after hanging himself by his socks from a nail.

The seven accused are: Frans Angula 28, Norbert Ankombe 25, Elkan Shoombe Simon 21, (all are general workers); Bernardinus Petrus Shikongo 47, Desiderius Ankombe 26, (both teachers); Erastus Uutoni 28, (an insurance broker) and Volho Kshilulu 22 (a scholar)

The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) has called for a major campaign to stop this trial and secure the release both of the seven accused and the large number of state witnesses.

The courts in Namibia are imposed on the Namibian people against international law and are condemned world-wide. The position the British Government has consistently taken over such trials is 'to refuse to consider intervention until the judicial process is completed.' This in effect constitutes a recognition by the British Government that these courts are in some way legitimate and offer a fair legal process.

The seven pleaded guilty to undergoing military training, possession of arms and explosives, reconnaissance of security forces and sabotage within Namibia.

When the trial began proceedings stopped after the defence stated that the South African laws being applied were in contravention of the 'Bill of Rights' endorsed by President Botha as the platform of his puppet 'transitional government' last June. But Justice Strydom ruled that no 'competent authority' had been established

to overturn the laws.

The South African occupation of Namibia is illegal in international law, and the United Nations has recognised the right of the Namibian people, led by SWAPO, to wage an armed struggle in order to end the illegal occupation and bring about the independence of Namibia. The Namibia Support Committee has already organised a picket on 15 April and is circulating a statement.

For more information contact: Namibia Support Committee, Terry Short, on 01-482 3885.

### Statement for the release of the Namibian prisoners

I the undersigned:

NOTING the illegality of South Africa's presence in Namibia and that HM Government considers the 'Interim Government' established by South Africa in Namibia as 'Null and Void', acknowledge that South Africa has no legal jurisdiction in Namibia; Condemn the trial of seven Namibians and their conviction in Windhoek where the accused are charged under South African imposed legislation including the Terrorism Act; Urge HM Government to intervene and call for the immediate release of the seven and reaffirm its commitment to the implementation of UN security Council resolution 435 for the independence of Namibia.



### South Korea

More than 50,000 people demonstrated against the government in Kwangju on 30 March in response to a call from the New Korea Democratic Party to demand constitutional revisions to provide for direct popular election of the president. Under the present constitution he is chosen by an electoral college. This was established by the present incumbent, dictator Chun Doo Hwan who took power in 1980 with US backing.

Opposition to Chun Doo Hwan has been rising since the fall of Marcos. The day after he was ousted the NKDP issued a statement saying 'We are all watching the Philippines because there are striking similarities to South Korea'. A wave of vicious police attacks on NKDP members followed its decision to launch a petition, for which they seek 10,000,000 signatures, demanding the constitutional changes. The police announced that the petition violated the present constitution and anyone who signed it was liable to be jailed for up to seven years. The NKDP's offices were raided and temporarily closed, and 300 NKDP members placed under house arrest.

There are 40,000 US troops in South Korea, one of the USA's most vital Pacific military bases. After a period of hectic economic growth it has suddenly been hit by the gathering economic storms over Japan and the USA, on whose custom it is heavily dependent.

### Haiti

Since Duvalier was overthrown the USA has sent \$384,000 worth of riot gear to the Haitian army including 150 shotguns, 10,000 rounds of birdshot, 5,000 teargas canisters, gas masks, and bulletproof vests.

Haitian youth attacked during an anti-government protest on 21 March also claim that the US supplied rubber truncheons used to beat them by the police. The US embassy issued a statement saying the army was being given riot gear so it would have 'the capacity to confront internal security emergencies without having to resort to infantry weapons'.

The New York Times of 4 April also said that the USA was considering sending a number of military advisers to 'teach techniques for internal security'.

The biggest security problem facing the new 'democratic' government is a rising wave of protests demanding elections to replace the military ruling council who took over from Duvalier.

### France

The Socialist Party's 'left' opposition CERES has voluntarily dissolved itself and the party leadership has decided to make a drive to capture the 'right-wing' voters. The leadership regards the election, in which the fascists for the first time entered parliament and the right wing parties took over the government, as a success because their party rebuilt itself at the expense of the Communists.

The Communist vote fell to 10 per cent and the Socialist Party vote rose slightly to 30 per cent. The Socialists now feel there are no further gains to be made to their left.

The Communist Party, meantime, has entered a very deep crisis and is racked with internal debate and criticism. A number of regions have called for an extraordinary party congress.

### Holland

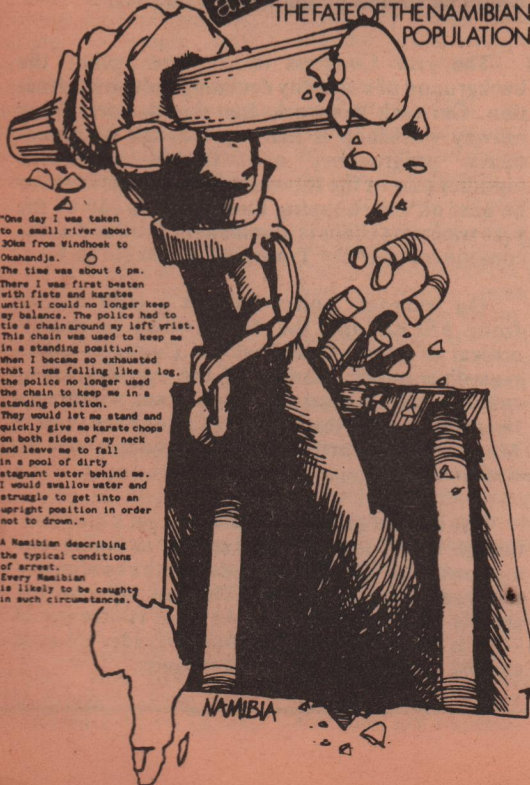
Municipal elections on 19 March registered sharp gains for the PvDA (Partij van de Arbeid, the Labour Party). In the big towns its vote rose by up to 12 percentage points compared with four years ago.

Main losers were the Liberals and their partners in Holland's coalition government, the Christian Democrats. But the smaller left-wing parties, who presented common slates in many areas, also lost votes.

National elections take place on 21 May. The PvDA is the only big party to oppose cruise missiles and attacks on the social security system.

Immigrants were entitled to vote for the first time. In Rotterdam and Utrecht between 83 per cent and 87 per cent voted for the PvDA.

#### POLITICAL PRISONERS and REPRESSION THE FATE OF THE NAMIBIAN POPULATION



"One day I was taken to a small river about 30km from Windhoek to Ohahangwena. The time was about 6 pm. There I was first beaten with fists and knives until I could no longer keep my balance. The police had to tie a chain around my left wrist. This chain was used to keep me in a standing position. When I became so exhausted that I was falling like a log, the police no longer used the chain to keep me in a standing position. They would let me stand and quickly give me karate chops on both sides of my neck and leave me to fall in a pool of dirty stagnant water behind me. I would swallow water and struggle to get into an upright position in order not to drown."

A Namibian describing the typical conditions of arrest. Every Namibian is likely to be caught in such circumstances.

# Reviews

## Chapter House Dune

THE FIFTH volume of the *Dune* series, *Chapter House Dune*, has just appeared in paperback. Author Frank Herbert died recently, so one of the best known — and best — science fiction sagas of all time has ended unfinished.

Reviewed by Alan Freeman

*Dune* popularised 'sword and sorcery' fiction. Instead of death rays and rocketships, writers fill their universes with wizards, emperors and gladiators. A flimsy scientific veneer may put them in the distant future, but in fact they flee the horrors of the modern world into the past.

Thus to create *Dune*, Frank Herbert spent literally years researching mediaeval history — not European, but Arab history. *Dune* is a dead ringer for ninth century North Africa. For the spice trade, read the gold trade. For the Fremens, the 'free tribes of Arrakis' read the desert nomads. And Paul Maud-dib is Mohammed, combining mystic prophet, revolutionary leader and founder of a new imperial dynasty.

Why is such writing popular? Fantasy fiction is an escape from the world of money and from the world of machines.

Money degrades and depersonalises. It converts relations between people into relations between things. Human values are sacrificed on the altar of Mammon by the universal priests of corruption.

Machines are the ultimate in inhumanity. They not only stand apart from humans but they rule over them. With the first 'Dark, satanic mill', they became symbols of slavery.

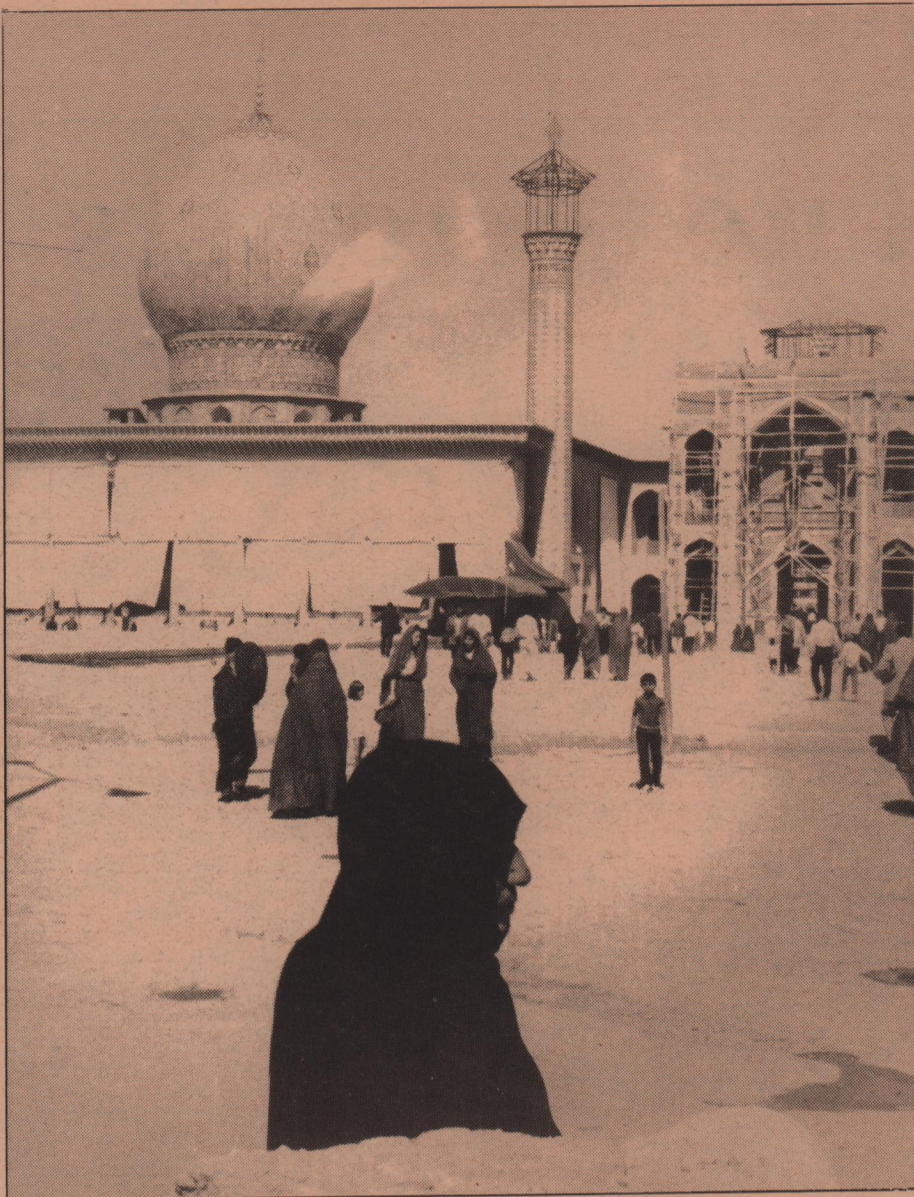
In pre-industrial myths and fairy stories, the horri-

ble and inhuman is beast-like — in short, natural. Humanity fights its own creator. In the industrial age it fights its creations. The inhuman is now artificial. It is no longer a natural violation of humanity but a human violation of nature. Evil is no longer the Beast but the machine.

Science fiction, with precious few exceptions, misses the connection. The menace is not just money or machinery, but their fusion as capital, once our liberator, now threatening to destroy all nature, humans included.

Science fiction therefore divides in two. The Star Wars solution owes its origin to Samuel Colt and Henry Ford. It is the gadget — the personal machine. Han Solo's rocketship is a badly disguised Ford Mustang. The raygun is a thirtieth century revolver. These images put machines under individual, personal control. The car, the washing machine, the personal hi-fi give birth to the personal neutron bomb — the Wild West road to salvation. Single handed Luke Skywalker destroys the ultimate Big Machine — the Death Star — with a coupé and a sixgun.

*Dune* is the polar opposite. Religion has purged machinery leaving only the humans. Unable to leap forward to a world whose humans collectively control their creations, sword and sorcery leaps



backward to the feudal virtues of personal loyalty and honour. The genre is both anticapitalist and profoundly reactionary.

In the third volume of the saga, *God Emperor of Dune*, Herbert takes this to its limit with the three thousand-year rule of the emperor to end all emperors: all-seeing, all-knowing, a fusion of god, human, prophet and beast, the ultimate tyrant — himself the product of

Islamic-style revolution, a desperately pessimistic comment on the struggle for liberation.

It is to Herbert's credit that he spent the next two volumes trying to lead his fantasy humans out of this dead-end. God is overthrown by Love. The gift of prophecy is withdrawn.

The all-female Bene Gesserit change from an ambiguous, sinister and manipulative cult into the guardians of the universe

and the true heroines of the epoch, from a feudal, hierarchic guild into a self-sacrificing, plebian and democratic party complete with faction fights and even splits and fusions.

Escape to the Islamic middle ages or to the Hollywood Wild West? Neither solves our problems here on the real earth, but if faced with a choice between Han Solo or Darwi Odrade, I know what I would opt for.

## Other Books

The Other Book's mail order service offers a wide selection of socialist, anti-imperialist and radical literature. The following selection on and by women is available by post:

**Shifting Horizons: a testament to women in the miners' strike**  
Lynn Beaton, Canary Press, 265pp, £5.65 + 40p p&p

**Women Under Apartheid**  
International Defence and Aid Fund, 120pp black and white photographs plus text, £3.50 + 46p p&p

**For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears: Women In Apartheid South Africa**  
Hilda Bernstein, IDAF, £3.50 + 34p p&p

**Part of My Soul**  
Winnie Mandela, Penguin, 164pp, £2.95 + 28p p&p

**South Africa: The Struggle For A Birthright**  
Mary Benson, IDAF, 314pp, £4 + 59p p&p

**Women and the Cuban Revolution**  
Edited by Elizabeth Stone, Pathfinder Press, 156pp, £3.95 + 28p p&p

**Women and the Family**  
Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, 78pp, £2.25 + 18p p&p

**Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women**  
Joseph Hanson and Evelyn Reed, Pathfinder Press, £3.95 plus 28p p&p

Cheques and postal orders payable to Other Books. Orders with payment should be sent to: Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. If the total value of books ordered is over £10, then simply add 15 per cent for postage and packing.

These and other books, together with a wide selection of magazines, posters and postcards are also available from Birmingham's Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth (just off the main shopping centre) (phone 021-643 5904)

## Defend the weekly paper

ALL NEWSPAPERS cost more money to produce than is realised in sales. Socialist Action is no exception. We cannot cover our costs through advertising revenues like the Tory press. We can only rely on our readers to make up the shortfall.

Socialist Action needs £250 per week extra from its readers to survive as a weekly. If we don't get this amount, quite simply, we are forced to drop an issue.

In the present period of rapid political events a weekly Socialist Action is indispensable. Think what the consequences would have been if we had been unable to produce a paper last week in the aftermath of the US bombing of Libya! Socialist Action was able to go beyond pure outrage and explain why Libya had to be defended and why the vicious racist campaign against it had to be repudiated. And it provided the facts and argument to allow our supporters to go out and argue the case.

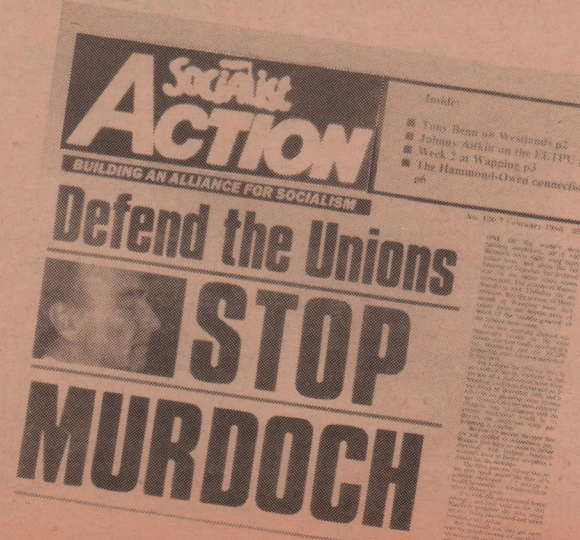
As a result Socialist Action supporters were out country-wide pushing forward protest actions and rallies. It is in the big political events especially that the indispensable role of our paper is realised.

We have a fund drive target of £15,000. This was to have been realised by Easter. Up to date £12,508 has been raised. So the editorial board has decided to extend the drive to the end of May. Please help us achieve our target. Thanks to the six readers who have taken out

## Supporters bankers order

Fill in this form and send it to your own bank. We will be notified by your bank.

Please send £ . . . . . ( pounds) on the day of each month, starting in the month of . . . . . , to the account of Socialist Action, a/c No. 70372315 at the Cooperative Bank, Islington, sort code 08-90-33, until further notice.



# IN THE UNIONS

## STUC Conference

THE 89th Annual Conference of the Scottish Trades Union Congress is being held in Aberdeen from 21 Monday to 26 Friday April. The final agenda consists mainly of motions deploring the continuing decline of Scotland's industrial base, condemnation of current government legislation in all areas, and many strong statements opposing Tory policy in both the private and public sectors.

By Jim McGrory, NUR Delegation Member (personal capacity)

A few motions call positively for mass mobilisations of the Labour Movement against the Tories and Composite E from the NUM commits the STUC to this, linking opposition to the Tories with calls for a Scottish Assembly.

Other motions, such as that from Ayr Trades Council, congratulate the NUM on its heroic struggle and commit Congress to campaigning for reinstatement of the sacked miners — urging affiliates to provide maximum financial support. An important lobby of the Conference is to be mounted by sacked Scottish miners, linked to a fringe meeting sponsored by the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign — a reminder to Congress that for some the struggle to defend mining jobs still goes on.

Two EETPU motions are likely to be strongly opposed; one on trade union recruitment which has provoked an amendment from AUEW-TASS criticising the 'one union, no strike' deals, and another motion on energy policy urging uncritical support for the Southern Scottish Electricity Board's nuclear development programme.



Only one motion on the North of Ireland appears, pledging opposition to plastic bullets, to the PTA, and to the Emergency Provisions Acts. No mention of the Anglo-Irish accords, removal of British troops or the Anti-Strip Search Campaign is made.

A comprehensive motion on South Africa includes calls for increased support for the Anti Apartheid Movement, active support for COSATU, and an investigation (which is long overdue) into alternative areas of investment for Trade Union pension schemes. A motion from Aberdeen and Paisley Trades Council reflects the concerns of the STUC Womens Conference, by calling for resolutions from the womens conference to be taken at Congress, and for creche provisions at trade union meetings. The STUC General Council are moving a constitutional amendment which will give the womens section an extra seat on the General Council, although this would be elected by the whole Congress.

The year Congress takes place against the background of a steadily declining industrial situation. Gartcosh steelworks has closed, Springburn railway workshop is halfway through its redundancy programme, and Dalzell steelworks (another part of the Ravenscraig complex) looks to be next on the chopping block. By the end of the year transport chaos is imminent in Scotland as the consequences of the Transport Act begin to bite.

On transport policy there is a joint motion from ASLEF and the NUR which is sharply critical of Strathclyde Regional Council's policy regarding public funding of the ever-decreasing rail network. Several lines face grant withdrawal (ie, closure) after the Regional Council elections in May, when a further transport budget will be drawn up.

The current print strike does not get a mention, though it will undoubtedly appear in emergency motions. Neil Kinnock will address the conference on Wednesday afternoon. The last item on the agenda also promises to be the most controversial — it is a motion from Edinburgh Trades Council against witch hunts and prescriptions.

# Wales pit women rally

OVER 500 activists from the mining communities, and the support movement, heard Arthur Scargill at a meeting organised by the South Wales Women's Support Groups (SWWSG) at Caerphilly in the Rhymney valley last Friday. It was a real platform of struggle.

The Rhymney valley had 12 collieries in 1952. There is only one left now. The secretary of Penallte Lodge told us in opening the meeting that it is still fighting for its existence. 'The support of women was one of the great things to come out of the strike,' he said. It was on the role of women that the meeting largely concentrated.

Sian James, Chairperson of SWWSG, made a contribution that Arthur Scargill was later to describe as 'brilliant'. Sian pointed out not only the role of women in the strike, but that the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign is now the most important campaign and the defence of the sacked and jailed miners was the most important message we had to get across. To give in now, and not to defend the union, would be to leave nothing.

Sian called on all miners to think again

about redundancies, and talked about the tragedy of the open cast sites scarring the environment when the deep mines were being

**By Maggie Simpson**

closed. Sian had joined the Labour Party since the strike believing in the need to fight for change.

Brenda Thomas spoke about the striking printworkers. Women have played a major role in the strike — having learnt from the miners dispute.

Heather Smith from Silentnight spoke of their 10 month strike for the reinstatement of sacked workers. After 10 months on strike life is hard indeed for the Silentnight strikers. She appealed for continued financial support from the labour movement, support for their picket lines, and support for the rally the Silentnight strikers are organising on 17 May in



Keithley.

Linda Pengwern from the Blaenau Ffestiniog support group that campaigned for the slate quarry workers in their seven month dispute, acknowledged the inspiration of the miners strike. She also argued that there must be a fight against attempts to divide Wales along either North/South lines or on the question of language. We must fight for one Wales that will fight for justice and the working class.

In opening his speech Arthur Scargill described this platform of those in struggle as a testament to the miners strike. Acidly he pointed out to intellectuals like Eric Hobsbawm that the NUM did not pick the timing of the strike — but that the government and the NCB had chosen it with their pit closure programme. He went on to explain the gains and lessons of the strike and why he did not consider it a defeat.

Twenty four pits have been closed, not the seventy that the government wanted. That is a gain of the strike. The strike generated a political movement in the working class

that can be witnessed in the struggles of Silentnight, the printers, the slate quarry workers, and Women Against Pit Closures.

The only crime of the NUM was to fight for jobs. In doing so the miners union challenged the right of the employers to cut livelihoods, challenged the heart of the system, and asserted the miners rights to determine their own futures.

In defying the government call for a ballot the NUM lost its funds. In asserting the right to picket many miners were sacked or imprisoned. As a result of Orgreave 500 miners were charged with incitement to riot. All charges were dropped. In the course of the strike the lesson was that 'there was no justice in a capitalist system of society.'

Miners were accused of violence when the police should have been condemned. The pickets at Orgreave were not about 40 lorries but the battle of one class against another.

Scargill once again called for the NUM to have Women Against Pit Closures as associate members.

## NCU right threatens takeover

FROM 28 April members of the National Communications Union (NCU) will be balloted on the election of their national executive council. Following the election in a workplace ballot of John Golding to the position of Union General Secretary last month, there is widespread speculation that the NCU's right wing are set to take over.

The elections come at a critical time for NCU members employed in British Telecom and the Post Office. Bosses are demanding cuts of between 30 and 50 per cent, among NCU represented engineers who have voted on industrial action to defend their jobs.

At the same time BT's breaking of union agreements on job security and working practices have led to a rash of local actions in recent months. In Glasgow 3½ thousand engineers walked out after management tried disciplining workers carrying out an overtime ban. Despite BT's massive profits last year Glasgow had declared 146 jobs 'surplus to requirements', due to an arbitrary cut in the wages budget.

The union's 'Broad Strategy' — a blueprint for an industry run for

'people not profit' adopted after the defeat of the anti-privatisation struggle — has proven an ineffective weapon in fighting against managements attack on jobs. Under the misnamed Job Security Agreement, BT have been successful in gaining union complicity in the erosion of 15,000 jobs in the last 3 years.

Against this background, the union's right wing, ousted in 1983, have been gaining ground. The election of John Golding has galvanised their supporters around the EC ballot. A well orchestrated anti-Militant witchhunt against the left executive members has widened divisions in the Broad Left.

Sitting members of the EC elected as part of the BL slate have refused to be identified with the BL on the grounds that to do so

Through the strike the miners had learnt of the suffering of black men and women, and received the support of many black communities.

The Chartists, the Tolpuddle martyrs, the Suffragettes and the Greenham women were not defeated declared Scargill. As far as the miners strike goes, 'the achievements of the strike can't be measured in days and weeks but will be numbered in years.'

Scargill said there had been a decimation of the South Wales coalfield when there should have been 12 new pits. Labour Party policy is to stop nuclear power stations and this should be implemented.

On Libya Scargill considered that Thatcher's support for Reagan's attack to be the act of someone unfit to govern. The Labour Party should not be pursuing a policy of witch hunts but the fight the government. Within 24 hours of the Labour Party coming to power the US bases should be out of the country.

It was the first time Arthur Scargill had spoken in the South Wales coalfield since the strike.

would get them kicked off. In reality EC candidates on the BL slate have always been reluctant to identify too closely with the BL, but in addition calls are being made from within the BL to break away from Militant supporters, and set up an alternative 'left' organisation.

What will really determine the fate of the current left on the EC will be its failure to launch any fight throughout the miners strike on pay or defense of jobs.

It's call now for support for the Post Office workers, and for a national overtime ban in BT represents its first attempt to lead a struggle against management attacks since it split over obeying the courts in the anti-privatisation fight three years ago.

Socialist Action supporters in the NCU are in favour of maintaining the widest possible unity of the left in the union against Golding and the right, and are campaigning for members to vote for the united left slate in the EC elections.

## Anti-victimisation strike at Ford

'A' AND 'B' SHIFTS in the sealer deck in the paint, trim and assembly plant at Ford, Dagenham voted to stop work on Monday 21 April against the victimisation of a woman new starter. The strike reinforces the position of the branch leadership who maintained that the woman, and another woman sacked earlier, were dismissed for their previous union activities in British Telecom (BT). As a result of the union campaign a secret BT form has come to light.

The form is designed to obtain information on BT workers' union and political activities. The Ford Central branch of the TGWU (1/1107) has published it. (See box). Ford deny any collusion between themselves and BT in sacking the women. They say the first woman was sacked for bad references (but refuse to disclose the reasons) and the second for not declaring her university degree.

Originally, Ford maintained it did not employ graduates on line production work. But because that is so evidently false (the union's district official, Steve Hart, has a Cambridge degree and worked on the line for eight years) they changed their story.

They now say it is the failure to disclose the information which they object to. Correctly, the union maintain there is no obligation to reveal qualifications which have no bearing on the work performed.

If there were any doubts before about the sackings, the evidence of the BT form clearly reveals systematic political vetting by the BT bosses and collusion by Ford. The company, however, claims it discovered the woman's degree by telephoning around the universities.

The union does not believe management's story and a 'failure to agree' was officially registered with the company at the woman's final appeal on Monday.

But official recognition has not been easy to achieve. It required the combined effort of the PTA Shop Stewards Committee to guarantee the real issue of blacklisting would be raised in the final appeal. And despite huge support for the strike, official backing was dropped the next day under pressure from the company. Shop stewards are furious with the union official.

Ford bosses are extremely unhappy about being caught with their fingers in the till. They know that in effect it

reopens the case of the first woman sacked by the company.

They will use anything they can and anyone they can to help them reverse the gains made by the union. The PTA Shop Stewards Bulletin has already warned the workforce that Fords may use the red-baiting trick.

Ford bosses want to obscure the real nature of the sackings and the kind of blacklist they operate. University degrees, lateness, undisclosed prison records, red-baiting, bad references — these are the excuses they use. It is all a smokescreen. In fighting to defend the rights of its new members the TGWU branch has performed a service to the whole labour movement.

Had they lay down and played dead not only would they have created a precedent for Ford bosses to weed out union activists, but the scale of organised victimisation by BT and Ford would have lain buried. This is now a national political issue based on concrete evidence of collusion between two major companies to vet their employees' union and political activities. Whatever information is held by the BT unions should now be brought out into the open, and a campaign waged to defend the right of workers to be active in their union.

Of course, such a campaign will meet fierce resistance from our bosses. It will generate a red-baiting reaction in the national press which will be backed by the government. Its aim will be to establish the right of employers to control what newspapers and magazines we can subscribe to, what ideas we can express and who we can associate with. And like every bully the bosses will pick on the weakest. That is just what Ford tried to do with new starts. But they didn't reckon on a fight from the union branch continuing.

## VICTORY TO THE PRINTWORKERS

The Lessons of the Miners Strike

Speakers:

JOHN LANG

(Deputy FoC, SOGAT Times Clerical)

MARK HUNTER

(Sacked Miner from Notts)

DOREEN WEPPLER

(NUR member, Socialist Action Supporter)

KINGSLEY ABRAMS

(Labour Party Black Section)

Wednesday 30th April 7.30pm  
St Bride Foundation Institute  
Bride Lane (off Fleet Street)

## Power workers ballot on action

POWER AND Electricity Board manual workers are currently being balloted by the EETPU, GMWU, TGWU and the AUEW — the four industrial unions in the power industry — over this year's pay and conditions claim. All four unions are campaigning for a vote for industrial action in response to a 5½ per cent offer. The ballot is widely expected to produce a big majority for action.

Many rank and file power workers have felt that they have been a soft touch in negotiations over recent years. They feel that the showdown over pay

**By Ray Sinfield,**  
EETPU Power  
Distribution shop  
steward  
(personal capacity)

and single staff status should have been fought two years ago when the miners were on strike victory would have been certain.

The fight for equal holidays and allowances, leading to single staff status, would destroy the double standards in the industry between manual workers and the management union, the Electrical Power Association (EPA), led by John Lyons.

The combination between the management and the EPA works at the expense of the industry's manual workers. The struggle between the EETPU and the EPA, who have been political bedpartners in recent years, has become increasingly bitter, with the EPA constantly frustrating the demands of the manual workers.

The UK electricity supply industry has been acclaimed as the most efficient in the world. This efficiency has been achieved at the expense of manual workers, who have seen their numbers drop from 142,000 in 1967 to 78,000

today. Flexibility and increased productivity for manual workers has been seen by the Tories as a green light to prepare for privatisation. Both management and the EPA have cooperated to undermine pay and conditions of manual workers in the industry.

The difference in conditions and holidays between the EPA members and the manual workers is a constant source of frustration. The EPA is not threatened by the use of outside contractors. But contractors are increasingly being used in manual areas with scant regard to agreed procedures.

The EETPU is still reeling because of criticism by its own members over its role in Wapping.

The union's leadership is trying to win back the confidence of Power Electricity Board workers who had previously been its base within the union. But amongst the rank and file there is fear of a sellout or a repeat of the ballot a few years ago when a large majority was registered for strike action but which the Chapple leadership called off without rebalotting the members, and with barely any improvement in wages and conditions.

Hammond and the EETPU executive would dearly love to pursue this course once again. The rank and file must build up the pressure to ensure that this does not happen.

# Socialist Action

SOGAT · NGA · AUEW · NUJ · SERTUC  
**PRINTWORKERS  
MARCH FOR JOBS**  
GLASGOW/NEWCASTLE TO WAPPING

JOIN US ON  
**SATURDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY**  
**IN LONDON AT 7-30**  
**ON THE EMBANKMENT**

SOUTH EAST REGION TUC IN COOPERATION  
★ WITH THE JOINT MAY DAY COMMITTEE ★  
**Announce a major march and  
★ DEMONSTRATION ★  
★ AT WAPPING ★**  
**MAY DAY**  
Thursday May 1st 1986  
Assemble Tower Hill from 8-pm

# Wapping stop the retreat



## What printworkers demand

**PAUL HARRIS** deputy FOC at the *Sun* was at the lobby of the SOGAT executive and spoke to Socialist Action about the threat to the dispute.

THE problem with even talk about purging our contempt of court is that it gives the impression to our members not directly involved, and the rest of the trades union movement, that we have lost. It is good that the NEC didn't go along with the demands to purge our contempt, but 'keeping it under review' continues to do damage to our fight to win support from the rest of Fleet Street and the rest of the trade union movement.

There is no doubt that we are hurting Murdoch and that there is a huge amount of sympathy for our cause. But this will only be tapped by stepping up action. Without a clear and militant lead, the rest of the membership has no sense of direction. This is why the ballots at Benrose and News International at Watford went against us. The reason Brenda (Dean) gave for even calling a ballot — which she had no need to do — was that Murdoch was looking for any old excuse to close these two enterprises. But if we lose the national fight they'll lose their jobs anyway. We are all in it together and this is what the leadership needs to ex-

plain.

What Brenda has to take on board is that it is only because of our action so far that Murdoch has been forced to make any offer at all. The present SOGAT proposals to News International capitulate to every single one of Murdoch's original demand — 'Murdoch's Dirty Dozen' — which we highlighted in all our leaflets right at the beginning.

No serious appeal has been made to the rest of the trade union movement. I was up a Askern colliery in Doncaster last weekend and they told me that they are still waiting for a direct appeal from our NEC for financial and physical support.

But we are not taking the leaderships faint-heartedness lying down. The rank and file leadership is fanning out across the country calling for support on May Day and in particular for the mass picket on 3 May. The joint clerical chapels have made a demand that the leadership calls and campaigns for a total stoppage of Fleet Street on that day. We have still got everything to win.

The Wapping dispute is now in a critical period. Figures just published for the News International titles show that the boycott campaign mounted by the print union leaderships as their main tactic is having little or no effect on their distribution and sales.

The unions and printworkers are therefore faced with the urgent need to review their tactics and consider new ways of stepping up the action. But instead the national executive committee of SOGAT at its meeting on Monday discussed ways of retreating from the fight with Murdoch. Although it decided, for the time being, not to purge the contempt of court imposed for its instruction to its members in the wholesalers not to handle News International titles. But this was simply a postponement.

By Brian Grogan

Meanwhile SOGAT's leadership has put to Murdoch proposals for ending the dispute which capitulate on every key point of Murdoch's demands. They would accept:

- No recognition of chapels or branches and no negotiations at local level. Instead, the SOGAT

leadership proposed a single joint union body with sole negotiating rights — thereby accepting non-recognition of the unions and, needless to add, abandonment of the closed shop.

- No minimum staffing levels, no union rights over hiring, and complete flexibility of working with no demarcation lines.



- An EEPTU-type no-strike deal

In this framework, the SOGAT leadership are considering the stunt offer of Murdoch's former Grays Inn Road premises to produce a 'labour movement' paper.

A similar weak-kneed response has come from the executive of the National Union of Jour-

nalists. After the national NUJ conference had repudiated the executives failure to institute disciplinary proceeding against those of its members working at Wapping, the executive still refused to act — in defiance of conference deci-

The retreat of the union leaderships does not reflect the mood and

militancy of the rank and file. The sacked Murdoch workers are still organising regular mass pickets down at Wapping and have put out a call for support from the rest of the labour movement on May Day and Saturday 3 May. In response to news of the leaderships retreat, they called a lobby of their executive meeting.

## Justice Campaign success in Notts

LAST SUNDAY saw the Festival Hall in Kirby-in-Ashfield packed to capacity at a rally in which Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn headed the platform. The mood of the meeting, organised by the local Notts Justice for Mineworkers Committee, was confidently jubilant. ANN HOWIE reports on this big success for the Notts NUM.

'We want a world free from war; a world free from want; a world in which this union, and the men and women who form part of it, become the leaders of making a better society in which to live.' Scargill's words sum up the uncompromising tone of last Sunday's Justice Rally, which had been initiated by Notts Women Against Pit Closures, in response to escalating Coal Board attacks on the NUM in Notts.

The response was tremendous. Over 650 people packed the hall, and included several delegations from other NUM and Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC) areas from as far away as South Wales and Durham. Many others

were turned away by the venue management. The atmosphere built up to one of militancy, and determination to fight as long and as hard as necessary to achieve justice for victimised miners, and for one united union again in the mining industry.

As well as defence of the NUM a strong feeling of internationalist solidarity ran through the rally. It was typified by the roaring ovation which greeted Scargill's announcement that one of the guest speakers invited to this year's NUM conference is the Honorary President of the South African NUM — Nelson Mandela.

Once again, WAPC was at the centre of the action. Gwen MacLeod

pledged the commitment of the women's groups to continue fighting for the aims of the NUM: 'Even if you don't want us to, we'll still be there, because we know the job that needs to be done.'

Clearly the position of the NUM in Notts is steadily improving. With COSA the white collar section, the NUM now has 8,000 members, and the UDM faces a collapse as its leadership and function are discredited. Speaker after speaker highlighted the need for the whole labour movement to campaign against threats of breakaways. But also every speaker described the role of political leadership which the NUM still plays in the British working classes.

'The NUM must be at the forefront of the next general election campaign,' said both Benn and Scargill. And this sentiment was echoed by the

representatives of SOGAT 82, Lambeth Council and Silentnight strikers on the platform. They all explained the way that the miners' strike had shown the way for these present battles, providing inspiration to workers here and the world over.

As Tony Benn said, the political issues raised during the strike helped to clarify all of Thatcher's policy: linking attacks on trades unions and on local government; black oppression and the Irish struggle; nuclear policy, the arms race and Namibia.

Benn went on to explain that the strength gained from these lessons, and the Justice Campaign in particular, must be used to build unity in the labour movement — not only to win the next election, but then to force the Labour leaders to carry out Labour's policy.

Sharon Atkin, member of the black section

and newly selected to fight Nottingham East for Labour, gave her commitment not to 'downplay' the miners' struggle in her election campaign. 'Labour owes the miners a lot,' she said, 'and it must repay the debt.'

The message from the rally was clear: no compromises, no delays, no excuses, but action. As Scargill put it, 'Labour must be as ruthless with their class as Thatcher has been with ours.'

This meeting showed a new consolidation for the NUM and all forces supporting it in Notts. It marked a significant remobilisation of forces which had receded for a while after the strike's end. It also showed the depth of political awareness which goes on developing among the miners and their allies. One thing is certain: Notts NUM is alive and kicking to fight on in the name of justice for mineworkers.

## SUBSCRIBE

### Free Book Offer!

Take out a years inland subscription and we will send you free one of these books:

JUSTICE: The Miners Strike 1984-86  
by the Campaign Group of Labour  
MPs

On Afro American History by  
Malcolm X

OR The Struggle is  
My Life by  
Nelson Mandela

RATES:  
Inland  
6 months £8;  
12 months £15  
Overseas  
(12 months only)  
Europe £17; Air Mail £24  
(Double these rates  
for multi-reader institutions)

Name .....  
Address .....  
Please send me as special offer .....  
I enclose cheque/PO payable to Socialist Action for £ .....  
Send to: Socialist Action Subs, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.