

Socialist Challenge



Help Peter Tatchell in Bermondsey

Canvassers are now needed every day of the week, but especially *Sundays* 11.00am and *Tuesdays* 7.00pm. Each CLP is to be twinned with a Bermondsey ward; contact Labour Party regional office (703 6511) to find out your assembly point; or turn up at Bermondsey Labour Party offices, 133 Lower Road, SE16 (Rotherhithe underground).

Inquiries favour management

David Basnet
chief union negotiator
'I have never before been asked to accept in advance the binding nature of an inquiry. But I have never before rejected the findings of an inquiry.'

Harry Bristow
shop steward Copper Mill, delegate to all-London strike Committee.
'I'm certainly not happy with this inquiry. The terms of reference have not been published as they should have been.'

'We were led to believe that meaningful negotiations have not taken place, therefore negotiations have not been exhausted. Yet they are going straight to arbitration.'

'There must be pressure on the executive ... and more than pressure. Whatever the decision of the court there must be strong deputation to the recall JIC from the rank and file to demand no sell-out.'

Mick Sable
New River Head strike committee, London
'It always smacks of a sell out when they start talking about inquiries. We see it as a cop out. We want money on the table.'

'I think we've got them on the run. The strike's really starting to have an impact this week.'

'We saw how they performed with the mediator. That was a farce. If that's what they mean by mediation then we don't want any of it. This didn't instill us with confidence.'

Ian Drayton
Blackburn Meadows strike committee, Sheffield
'I'm suspicious of the Inquiry. It could be used as the basis of a compromise settlement or sell out.'

'It could be used to bury our comparability demand, unless we get some commitment to comparability, then inquiry would be just the same as the mediators report.'

'I'm not opposed to the leadership being seen to be talking. But they should be building up strike committees and encouraging links between various areas and gathering support.'

NO SELL OUT

TRADE union leaders are once again trying to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. In a week when the solidarity actions were massively extending and when the effects of the strike were coming to the crunch, the union leadership have agreed to an 'Inquiry' into the water workers' dispute. Such inquiries are loaded against the workers — as the steel workers and railworkers have found out.

Meanwhile several developments have re-inforced the strikes.

- Scottish waterworkers decided to join the strike by mid-week if the inquiry was not set up.
- Craft workers in the water industry have decided to join the strike officially from this weekend and not cross picket lines from midnight Tuesday. This move could rapidly bring the system to a halt.
- Representatives of 110,000 chemical workers decided to black delivery of chlorine to water authorities if asked to do so.

These actions added to the decisions of the power workers to give their support and the snowballing solidarity in the labour movement.

The effects of the action were beginning to mount all over England and Wales. In London, for example, the potentially catastrophic effect on water levels of nearly 500 bursts being allowed to run free has forced the authorities to cut off the water in many areas of London. Moreover, the Hampton water works is threatening to become another Saltley Gates. If coal is prevented from entering this

pumping station, London would virtually be cut off.

The union leadership are running scared of the massive solidity of the strike and the possible impact of a decisive victory. Already local government manual workers have asked for a re-opening of their pay talks on the employers offer of a measly 4.5 per cent.

National Union of Public Employees members voted before the water strike to accept. General and Municipal and Transport and General members voting after the strike started decided to reject.

The writing is on the wall for the trade union leaderships. If the water workers win decisively, it will throw into relief their sell-outs in the present pay round. It will massively boost workers confidence to bring the government down.

If the strike continues it threatens to combine not only with the manual workers, but also the more powerful gas and power workers who decide on action next week.

Demands should go up from the strike committees up and down the country:

- * No retreat on the full claim for parity
- * Step up the action
- * Unite the claims.

There should be a big turn out for the lobby of the Joint Industrial Committee which meets after the inquiry declares its findings.

Steel inquiry



Rail inquiry



Water inquiry



Who Were Hitler's Real Appeasers?

IN HER FIRST full speech attacking the movement for disarmament Margaret Thatcher has compared the activists of CND with the appeasers of the 1930s.

Speaking to the Young Conservatives conference in Bournemouth last weekend, she gave the opening broadside of the Tory election campaign.

Invoking Klaus Barbie as a reminder of the horrors of Nazism, Thatcher asked: 'Would it have been morally right to have handed over to Hitler total control of the most terrible weapons which man has ever made?'

Attempting to give weight to Thatcher's arguments the *Daily Mail* has been running a series of articles on appeasement in the 1930s. What hypocrisy!

Appeasement in ruling class circles in the 1930s had nothing to do with pacifism but was based on sympathy with Hitler. Prominent by its absence from the *Daily Mail's* account of appeasement was Lord Harmsworth, the most prominent of all the appeasers and founder of ... the *Daily Mail*.

And who sheltered Barbie after the Second World War paying him sufficient money for a life of luxury — why the United States government!

The comparison between Hitler's Germany and the Soviet Union today is also an odious one.

Whilst Churchill and the other Western leaders were refusing to open a second front against Hitler, nearly twenty million Russian people died as a result of the offensive of the Nazi armies against the USSR.

The arms which the Soviet Union have now are a result and reaction to the proven aggression and 'first strike' policy of the Pentagon war planners — not as a result of Hitlerite expansionist aims.

That aggression was proved by the way in which the US used their nuclear capacity against Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the second world war when Japan would have fallen to conventional warfare in a matter of months.

But for Thatcher this proof of the aggressive aims of US imperialism is turned into a parable proving that Japan was a nuclear free zone and look what happened!

The increasing desperation of the Tories' arguments reveals that the issue of disarmament is their major Achilles heel with the approach of the general election. The majority of the electorate is firmly against the stationing of the missiles in Britain. Even Tory supporters are evenly split on the issue!

Now is the time for the labour movement to press home this advantage by pinning the badge of war-mongers on the Tories, standing firm on the policy of unilateral disarmament and launching a campaign in 1983 that can stop the missiles and stop the re-election of Thatcher.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

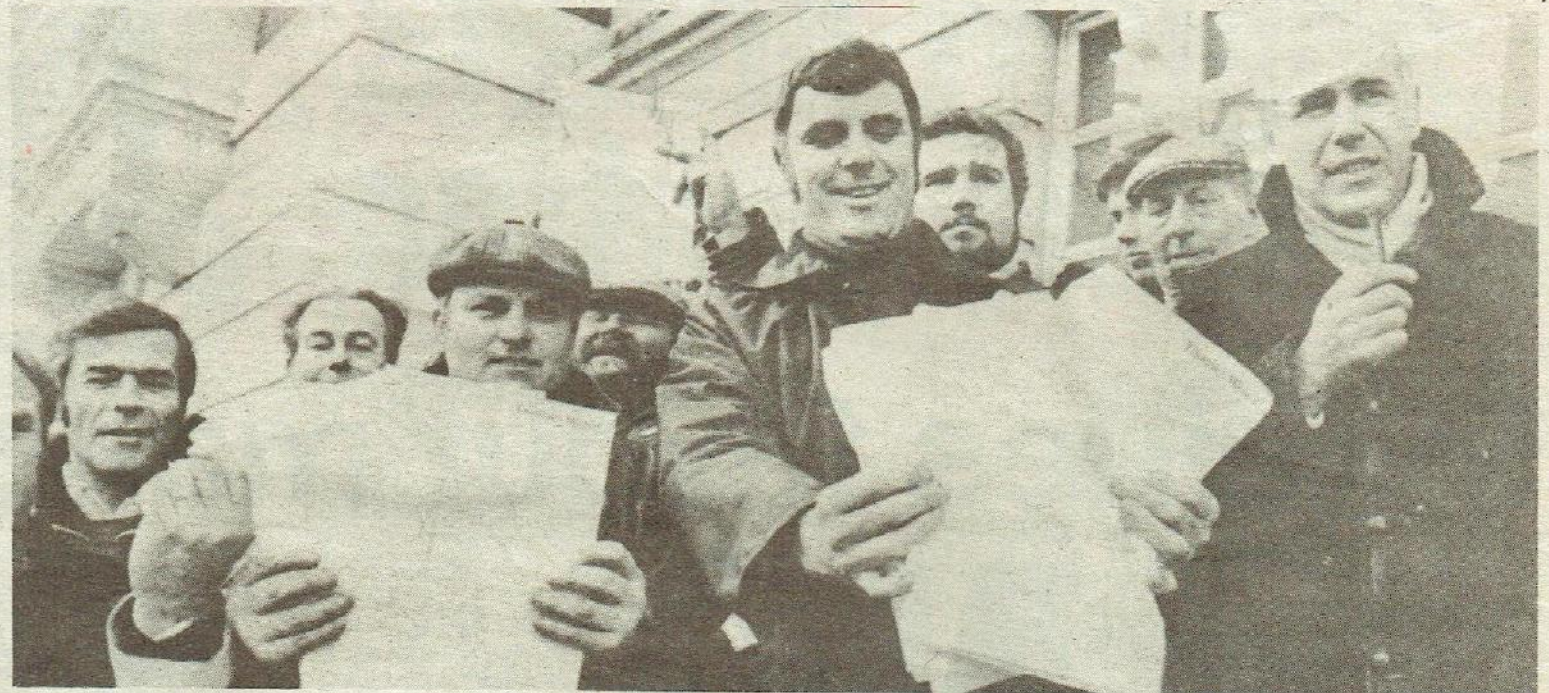
Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

Union/CLP (if any).....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



All London strike committee formed

By D Kelly

IN A MAJOR development in the water strike an all London strike committee was formed last weekend. This will greatly strengthen the strike effort as it will draw together in concerted action the several London strike committees that already exist.

The formation of this committee is a big step towards putting the conduct of the strike in the hands of the ranks. Such a development on a national scale would be a major counterweight to moves to sell out the strike throughout the Committee of Inquiry — backed by the union leaderships.

The focal point of the struggle in London has developed around the pumping station in Hampton which supplies the bulk of London water. Coal supplies which are essential to the continued functioning of the plant are getting through the picket line via scab lorry contractors. Stopping this coal getting through from the coalfield by rail and truck has emerged as the central task of the waterworkers in London. The new strike committee is considering organising a mass picket to stop the next major assignment.

Many water workers are recognising that the success of their struggle will partially depend on their ability to take their strike out to, and gain support from workers in other unions and in the Labour Party. A vast gulf has developed between the rank and file and the national leadership of their unions, since the initiatives in the strike are having to come from the rank and file.

The national leadership seems to be doing very little to build the strike. They are providing no direction, no initiatives, and are making no efforts to gain support from other workers. It is being left to local strike committees to organise the blacking of operations associated with the water industry, financial collections and general support from the other unions.

Scabbing operations have been organised by the

management in the water industry. This is aimed at weakening as far as possible the effects of the strike. Some white collar workers in the water industry in East London are being paid up to £1,300 a week to carry out work that will allow the maintenance of the water and sewage systems.

Management are using blackmail tactics, with suggestions that those who don't cooperate could find themselves made redundant or passed over for promotion.

The real consequences of the strike have been disguised in London by the policy adopted by management, that, at all costs, water will not be turned off. By last week there were 450 burst

mains running freely in London.

To stop a burst main from flowing requires the turning off of all water within a vicinity and the Thames water authority is desperate to maintain a facade that the strike is having no real effect in London. Thus the burst mains are continuing to flow, ruining roads and undermining foundations of houses. The water authorities plea that we should all save water is farcical in the light of this decision to leave mains running.

Sewage is now running into the Thames and the Thames clean up campaign is now a travesty.

After more than three weeks the vast majority of water workers are still solidly behind the strike. More and more, water workers are recognising that their strike is a political one, aimed at smashing the governments wage restrictions.

Demonstrate 17 February

The New River Mead strike committee in Islington London has called for full labour movement support to a solidarity demonstration initiated by the joint trades union committee representing Islington Council workers.

'The healthworkers did it and effectively got their message out' John Hickey of the strike committee told us. 'There is a massive press campaign against us and its essential that we show the real extent of the support that we enjoy.'

Jimmy O'Connor, branch chairperson of the G&MBATU explained how people were continually walking in from the streets with small donations and messages of support. 'They've kept the real effects of the strike out of the press' he explained. 'There's anything up to 500 burst mains being allowed to gush in London. The levels of water in the reservoirs has dropped dangerously as a result.'

'Management is playing dirty. They are trying to call in contractors to repair pumping stations. Yesterday, they tried this on at the Grosvenor Rd station on the embankment. We sent out a flying picket and stopped them crossing the line.'

He explained that they would respond to any call for assistance from Hampton if this was required. 'We are stepping up the action and we are determined to win.'

Step up action

WATERWORKERS occupying the control room of Taff Divisional Headquarters in Nelson South Wales are out to win their claim in full. A NUPE steward David Locke spoke to Socialist Challenge from inside one of the six sites now being occupied in South Wales:

'Support is stronger than it's ever been — the strike is completely solid. We're looking to escalate the actions early next week.'

The young previously moderate workforce here, have been incensed by the 50p offer, inaccurate press reports of high wages and local management tactics in by-passing all important filtration plants to ensure supply.

With 1.7 million people currently affected by the strike in Wales, support is growing. 'We have a strike fund and channels for a joint stewards' committee are open.'

Local craft unions have demanded that their leaderships call supportive strike ac-

tion. Local National Union of Mineworkers' lodges have given assurances that they'll respect the strike when mains break down. NALGO branches in the water industry will not co-operate with troops if they are called in by the government. Supporting resolutions from local government and health branches call on them to respect strikers' picket lines and not to undertake manual workers' duties.

With sewage plants now overflowing and raw waste in all Welsh rivers, they are calling on the Secretary of State for Wales, Nicholas Edwards for some particular direct action of his own 'get a shovel and clean it up yourself — meet the claim in full.'

Unite the claims

By Brian Grogan

GAS WORKERS are threatening to join the water workers in strike action in response to the 4.5 percent offer made by management. Power workers have similarly rejected a 3.6 to 4.6 percent offer.

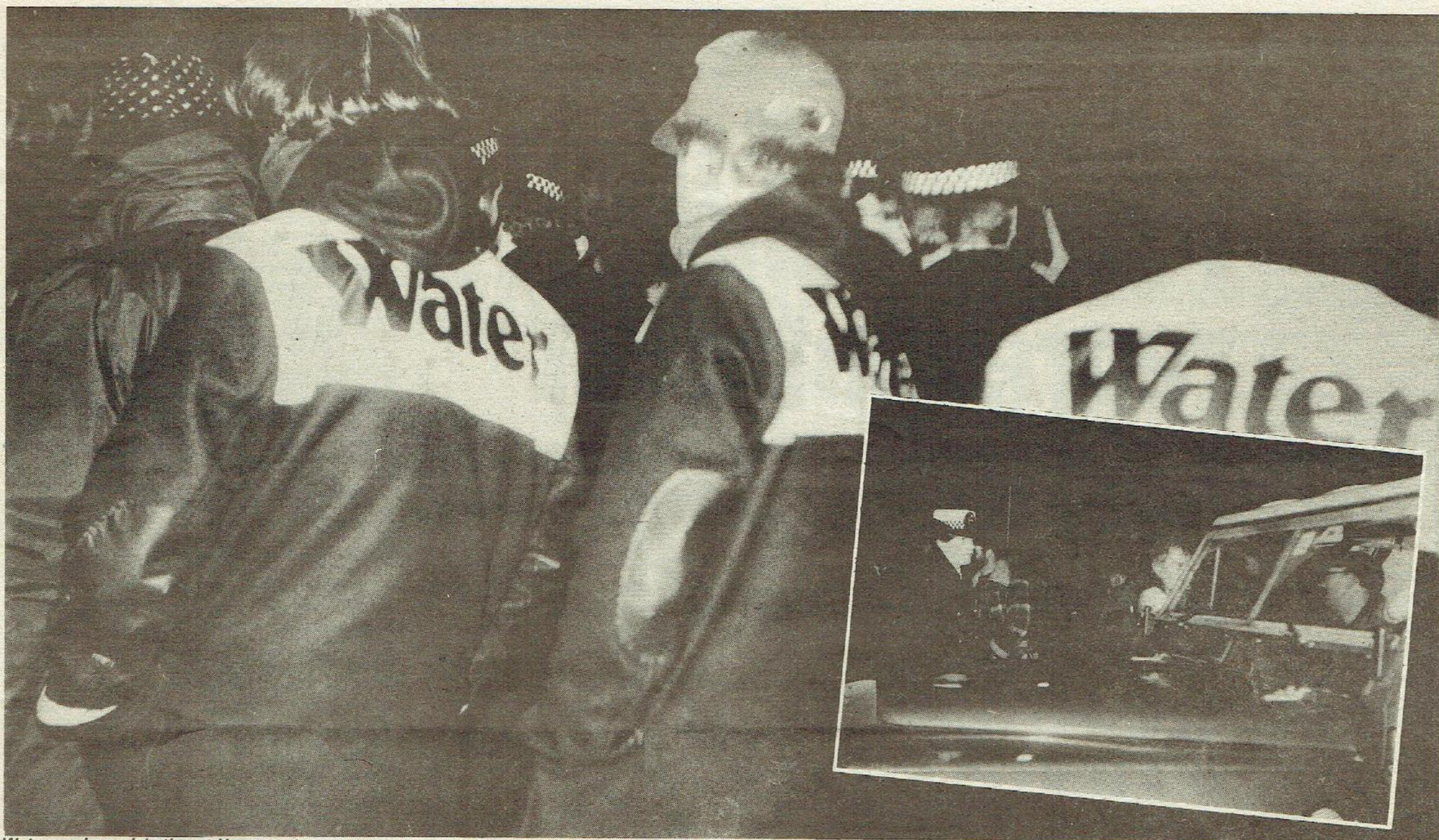
John Edmonds, national energy officer of the General Municipal and Boilermakers warned the government that it was 'backing itself into an argument with the three public utilities'. But despite such talk, it is clear that the union leadership is hoping to come in on the backs of the water workers action instead of throwing the weight of gas and power workers into the fray.

Rank and file pressure is clearly intense, however. At a London meeting of the regional representatives of the four unions in the electricity supply industry last week, plans were announced to prevent the use of alternative water supplies at power stations suffering from the effects of the strike. As a result two power stations are now affected, at Blyth and Shelton Grange in Northumberland.

This strike could be won in a flash if the power of the movement was flexed. Yet the TUC leadership continue their shadowy existence. Their argument — that strikers undermine electoral support for Labour — only has substance because of their failure to chart a full blooded socialist alternative to Thatcher.

With a clear cut alternative to Thatcher's mayhem, the water strike, and other union action, can only boost the confidence of the faint hearts and waiverers in the movement who are ducking because they feel their leadership has no bottle.

A defeat for the waterworkers will more or less set the seal on Labour's electoral chances. A victory for the waterworkers will massively increase workers receptivity to socialist policies. Joint action of all utility workers could bring the government down. The choices are clear.



Water workers picketing at Hampton last week — having to confront police as well as scabs.

HAMPTON MUST CLOSE!

Ernie Roberts, MP

'It is clear from the serious problems which arise as a result of water workers being compelled to take action in defense of their living standards, that their work is vital to the health and well-being of the community. They should be paid the increase in wages that they justly demand.'

Reg Race, MP

'THE WATER workers are a small group of workers who desperately need the practical support of the labour movement. They are waging their first ever national strike, and they are having to learn serious lessons very quickly. We must get on their picket lines and support them.'

'The claim for parity with gas and electricity workers is no more than reasonable. These workers do a messy and demanding job — wading waist-high through raw sewage, picking out dead dogs and bodies from the sewers and reservoirs, and maintaining the filter beds which purify the millions of gallons of water that we all drink each day. Their claim should be met in full.'

HAMPTON WATER WORKS in West London has now become a national symbol for the strikers. This huge works next to the Thames supplies the majority of London with water. If it could be stopped, the dispute would be all but over.

HILARY DRIVER reports on the steps being taken by the unions to close the plant.

One hundred water workers from all over London joined the picket line at Hampton last Friday night and Saturday morning.

They were there in response to a call from the Hampton workers to stop a third consignment of coal from reaching the works.

Four minibuses of police from the Tactical Support Group kept watch, but no coal appeared — probably because of the success of the last-minute mobilisation of the pickets.

Twice before scab lorries have broken through the picket line with the connivance of the police, to keep the pumps going

with a supply of coal. The plant needs around 240 tons a week, or 12 lorry loads to keep working.

The picket line was attacked on the last two occasions by the police, who refused to even let the strikers talk to drivers.

Miners

The strikers are the first to admit that they are inexperienced at picketing. Miners from Kent visited Hampton on Friday and discussed picketing tactics with the water workers, as well as donating some very welcome food, fuel for their braziers and £200 for their hardship fund.

Stopping the coal get-

ting into Hampton has now become the major focus of the trial of strength between the employers and the strikers.

The water workers are now linking up with workers in the NUM and on the rail to discover where the coal is coming from so that it can be boycotted at source. They are now considering widening out their action to make the most use of the support that can be tapped from the rest of the labour movement.

An excellent lead in solidarity has been taken by the local Hounslow Trades Council who have set up a support committee for the water workers.

The committee has produced letters for local trade union and Labour Party branches calling on other workers to throw their weight behind the strikers.

Their aim is to provide a counter to the Tory press lies and distortions of the water workers' claim.

One of the organisers of the support committee is Lewis Emery, a T&GWU convenor. 'It's important to do everything we can to winning workers locally to the side of the strikers', he said.

'This will be especially important if they succeed in closing Hampton down. If this happens masses of workers whose workplaces rely on water supplies will be laid off, and we have to make sure they put the blame where it belongs — with the government.'

The support committee is considering the possibility of organising a tour of major work places in West London and of calling a local demonstration in support of the strikers.

Money is also becoming short for some of the strikers. Many have been refused support or been given the runaround by the DHSS.

All the unions at Hampton are now sponsoring joint hardship-fund collection sheets which will

speed up the much needed donations.

Hampton works can be closed down. We need to step up solidarity actions by other unions and the labour movement in general.

Boycotting the coal will be a vital factor. Mass pickets and demonstrations supporting the strikers will also be very important not only to reinforce their own solid determination, but to win other workers to their side and against the Tories.

Send donations to: GMBATU/NUPE Appeal, c/o Ken Edge, 67 Railway Road, Teddington, Middlesex. Cheques/POs to Hampton Joint Strike Committee.

● The National Council meeting of Labour Against the Witch-Hunt at the weekend passed a motion in support of the water workers' full claim and called on the Labour Party to put its full weight behind the dispute.

Solidarity checklist

The moves to set up a 'committee of inquiry' — under the inspiring neutral chair of Joe Gormley demands a rapid stepping up of the dispute, if a sell-out deal is to be stopped. Socialist Challenge supporters should now be:

- * Establishing strike support committees in every area, based on trades councils, LPs and trade union branches, to organise tours, raise money and win support.
- * Getting delegations to the water workers pickets to help the strikers, and pressing for mass pickets of key local installations as a political focus for the labour movement.
- * Taking the appeal sheets to your branch and shop stewards committee and raising money.
- * Distributing leaflets to put the strikers case and direct the blame where it belongs — at the Tories.
- * Get your MP, local councillor to support the strike, come to the picket lines, and endorse any calls for mass pickets, demos etc.

BAD TASTE CORMAC



Interview with Tariq Ali

Proportional representation and the block vote

THE FUTURE OF BRITISH POLITICS



the vote could be forced to carry out radical, if not anti-capitalist, measures?

PR would force Labour to cease being just an electoral machine and create a mass base. Since the second world war we've had four Labour governments generally on minority votes. I don't think that a Labour government elected with just 38 per cent of the vote would even try to get radical measures like unilateralism through.

This question of a majority of the popular vote is vital for a radical Labour government trying to push through anti-capitalist reforms. This question can't be evaded.

Opposed

As far as the SDP is concerned I'm totally opposed to those people who want a Labour-SDP coalition, and I would even oppose any kind of joint campaign with the SDP-Liberals for PR. All I'm saying is that Labour will have to confront the question of electoral reform and the block vote if it wants to create a mass base.

If Labour doesn't tackle these questions, other forces will. Take the block vote. Both Tebbit and the SDP have planned for ending the block vote, and a system of trade unionists 'opting in' to LP membership. Obviously this should be opposed as a big attack in the unions.

But they could have success unless there is a campaign in the unions by the Labour Party to recruit individual members. The straight-jacket in which the ruling class have put British politics will continue to dominate unless electoral reform and the block vote are dealt with.

Why does creating a mass base for the Labour Party, or indeed democratising the block vote, mean going

for an 'opting in' system of party membership in the unions? To respond to the Tebbit and SDP attacks by ourselves creating an 'opting in' system is unnecessarily defensive.

I don't think it's defensive. The block vote is unprecedented in any other socialist party in the world. It is what ensures the domination of the union bureaucracy in the Labour Party. The unions should of course affiliate nationally to the Labour Party, but they shouldn't have the right to determine policy — that should be the right of the members.

On this issue the left are simply shutting their eyes, but people like David Basnett are very well aware of what the threat of the block vote poses to the right wing's domination.

The point about the block vote is that its use is determined by the bureaucracy not the mass of the members. Democratising the block vote doesn't mean breaking the link with the unions.

I'm totally in favour of union affiliation. Those who are in the Labour Party through their factory branches and so on should elect delegates to conference. We could have a gradual process over the next decade for changing this anomalous position.

In the first place a major union like the NUM should take the lead by letting the NUM conference decide the way the vote was cast on crucial issues.

The present undemocratic system leads to de-politicisation at the base of the unions, and you can see this in what happened in NUPE during the deputy leadership campaign where there was a majority at the base for Healey. The left like *Tribune* and *Labour Briefing* tend to be a bit ostrich-like on these questions.

Should a Labour government elected on say only 40 per cent of the popular vote attempt to carry through radical measures? It seems unlikely that such a government could be elected with a bigger vote than that in the short term?

I don't think that the situation is finished. The next election will see probably a low Labour vote. What I find amazing by people who should know better, like the Communist Party, is that the words 'capitalist crisis' have virtually gone out of fashion.

British capitalism is going through the biggest crisis since the 1920s and sooner or later it will have a massive impact on the working class.

Up till now it hasn't had such a big impact because although unemployment is large, you have not had — contrary to demagoguery — as massive an attack on the living standards of employed workers as people thought was going to happen.

If that had happened at the same time as unemployment I'm convinced you would have had massive explosions in the workers movement. If the Tories are elected again then you will have them trying to de-capitate the unions and tied with that a really fundamental attack on welfare and living standards — which they haven't done in this term of government.

Transform

I'm a Marxist. I refuse to believe the working class will sit idly by and say 'come and drive your steamrollers over us'. There will be a re-politicisation inside the working class, and it will be reflected first in the Labour Party and at the base of the unions — not in the SWP or the CP.

If Labour isn't prepared to transform itself into a campaigning party then we might have problems. If the workers don't find their interests reflected in the Labour Party, then they could go to the right. If they reject the Labour Party then they certainly won't go in-

to Tony Cliff's arms, you might well see some form of British far right movement with support in the working class.

But I'm not pessimistic about the 1980s. I retain a scientific belief in the capacity of the working class to defend itself. You have to keep in mind the capitalist crisis. It's not enough simply to talk about the fact that Thatcher is an effective populist or the ideological impact of the Tories. There is a limit to the effectiveness of ideology when it collides with the material interests of the workers. So there can be a radicalisation which as the 1980s develop the left can link up with. I'm not at all pessimistic.

Sure the Eurocommunists are right to insist that the old traditional sectors of the working class are in decline — they are all over Europe. So what? Is it the case that there is no working class left? No, there is a new type of working class not so much based in heavy industry.

But so long as capitalism exists it relies on wage labour. So instead of saying we have to link up with the SDP or that the decisive sectors of the electorate live in Hampstead, we still have to base ourselves on the radicalisation of the working class to create a mass socialist party.

Could a Labour Party committed to carrying out anti-capitalist reforms come into existence without the right wing splitting off?

It's absolutely inconceivable in my opinion that Labour could be transformed with its present composition. It's out of the question. There is no way that the right wing would accept it. The pro-capitalist wing would at some stage walk out. There would be a settling of accounts.

There is a long tradition of the right going out of the party. In my view the radicalisation of the British working class could bring about a split in the Labour Party. The right will not wish to be a party moving to the left. They'll go over to the SDP or the Tories, as they have done in the past.

DEMONSTRATE
Sunday 27 March
12 noon
Assemble
Jubilee
Gardens
near
Waterloo
Station

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACIST LAWS
 ■ Repeal the Immigration and Nationality Acts
 ■ Stop race checks ■ Stop racist deportations
 ■ Unite the divided families now

Surely proportional representation can only lead to a coalition and a situation in which it's most unlikely that Labour will be elected again.

The argument put forward on the Labour left by people like Peter Hain and Geoff Hodgson is an opportunist argument. It ignores that Labour was originally in favour of PR — when it was a third party. There are two ways of approaching it.

If one's in an ultra-left mood one can say well the only thing that will solve the problems of the working class is the overthrow of capitalism, preferably by an insurrection which leads to soviet power, something which won't happen for some time. However, our approach has to be to ensure the largest possible participation of working people in politics.

From that point of view the present electoral system is a disaster. It serves the needs of the ruling class — two major parties which differed from each other on the pace of change, but not on fundamentals. People who defend PR are told that the SDP want PR, but so what. Maggie Thatcher and Powell defend the present system.

The real point is that a Tory government elected by a minority vote under the present system can get away with it because it is a capitalist government which attacks the workers. If a left Labour government, a Bennite government, was elected on a minority vote and tried to push through anti-capitalist measures, the ruling class resistance would be phenomenal, and the first point that they would make is that it was only a minority government.

System

It's in our long term interests to have an electoral system which reflects what the majority of the population wants. I believe in addition that the Labour Party should argue for more frequent elections.

The second argument is that PR would create coalitions. But what were the Labour governments of '64, '66 and '74? In their practice they were coalitions, between sections of the old Labour left and right wing bourgeois politicians like Healey, Wilson and Callaghan — that whole gang that had nil interest in doing anything to alter the capitalist system.

Careerists have climbed up the ladder in the Labour Party because the 'first past the post system' offered them the rungs of power.

The first past the post system is a peculiarity of the Anglo-Saxon world. I'd say to Peter Hain that the apartheid system was only installed in South Africa after a first past the post system had been introduced.

The proportional representation system creates a situation where you need to go out and fight for mass support, instead of relying as the Labour Right have done on the electoral system to get you into power without

it. That mass support is indispensable if you want to talk about socialist change.

The argument that you would never see Labour in power can only be put forward if people are totally pessimistic about the chance of winning mass support. What sort of system you have is quite crucial. If the Labour Party doesn't put forward its own plan for PR, you are likely to have a very undemocratic system imposed.

Under a PR system you would have a Labour Party compelled to create a mass base. Labour would

be forced to become a political party fighting for a mass membership in the factories and the communities, with for example its own daily newspaper — that's the only way it could get mass support.

Surely it's no accident that the main argument for PR comes from those, like the Eurocommunists who want a coalition with the SDP? Here and now the main thing is to get a Labour government. Even a Labour government with 38 per cent of

BERMONDSEY BY ELECTION

No change by O'Grady

GEORGE NICHOLSON, Vice-chair of the GLC Planning Committee and member for Bermondsey, was on the platform of the public meeting which launched Peter Tatchell's campaign, 'Labour is a party of action,' George began ... and showed how by taking up his favourite theme: the London Docklands Development Corporation.

George has campaigned around the docklands issue for many years now — and clashed swords more than once with former MP and Labour Party member Bob Mellish and his pal John O'Grady, who's standing as 'real Bermondsey Labour' in the by-election.

After the meeting, he got together with his former colleague on Southwark Council, CAROL TURNER, to discuss the Dockland Duo.

Not much has changed since we did battle together as Southwark councillors a few years back — except that now the former Leader of the council is openly opposing Labour, instead of claiming to speak in its name.

That's right. I first met O'Grady as a new GC delegate to Bermondsey in 1974. In those days the party was moribund. That's what he holds up as 'the real Bermondsey Labour' in today's campaign.

There was no contact between the party and local people. That changed when we began campaigning against the proposed development of massive office blocks, luxury hotels and the like in Southwark's docklands. Now, many community groups are actively involved in the party, and lots of local people have joined over the last few years.

Has O'Grady's attitude towards docklands changed since he became a member of the LDDC Board?

Time and again the Bermondsey Labour Party and local groups have come out against his sort of dockland plans — but this never affected the attitude of Mellish or O'Grady. Nowadays, they'll be doing the same thing on a bigger scale — now that O'Grady's a paid member of the LDDC Board, and Mellish is its full-time Vice-chair.

How does Peter Tatchell figure in all this?

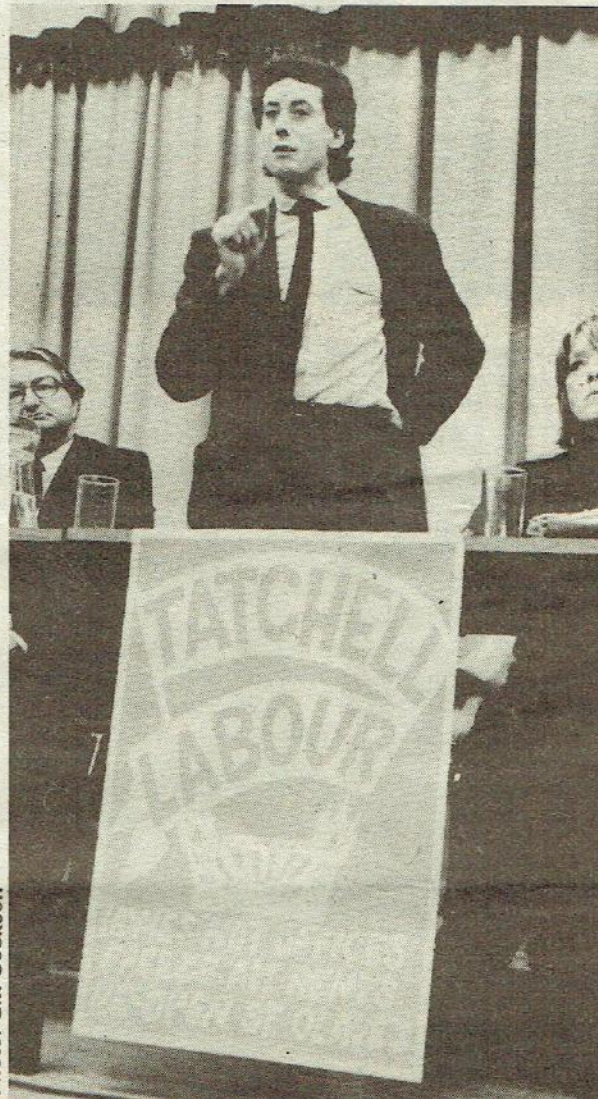
O'Grady's approach to anyone who opposes him is just as vicious now as when we were first on the council in '78.

I was elected on a docklands ticket — a promise to campaign for a development which brought better housing and better leisure facilities to the working people of this area — and one that created jobs for local people to replace the thousands lost in Bermondsey over the years. As soon as I started to do that, he made sure the North Southwark Community Development Group I was working for had its council-sponsored grant removed — so I lost my job.

O'Grady has opposed Tatchell from the start. Peter's run-in with Mellish and O'Grady began when he became party secretary in '79. The Bermondsey party was a complete shambles. Peter did a good job getting Labour's local house in order after years of stagnation and decline under an incompetent party secretary.

Labour began to campaign alongside local people, on issues they were concerned about. The more successful this approach was, the further Mellish and O'Grady moved away from the party. For the first time, party members were asking questions their MP and council leader couldn't answer.

O'Grady became publicly hostile to the party. As you know, he derided its policies again and again in the council chamber. Mellish simply stopped coming to GCs. As a T&G-sponsored MP



Peter Tatchell, Eric Heffer and Bermondsey Party secretary Anne Coltart

he frequently spoke against his union's policies — for example, on the question of pay policy. And during my GLC campaign, he refused to appear on my public platform.

Did Mellish or O'Grady take action when Peter was first selected as Bermondsey's candidate?

Peter was first selected in early '81. Mellish had made it known he wasn't standing again — he knew he hadn't a cat in hell's chance of being reselected. There was no doubt about that.

That was the time when Michael Foot made his over-my-dead-body statement about not endorsing Peter. It's never been proved, but I'm convinced Mellish precipitated the whole episode. It seems likely that Foot's behaviour was because Mellish said he's quit there and then if Peter was endorsed. It would have been a powerful

Party supporters.

'Furthermore a poll taken on the 250,000 June demonstration showed that 65% of those on the march belonged to no political party at all.

'To complete the picture no one who was at Greenham Common on December 12/13 could have any illusion that the labour movement was either the motive force, let alone the initiator, of that magnificent demonstration.

'The reason why so many who agree with CND still withhold electoral support from Labour is the deep feeling that Labour 'will not deliver' on its conference policies.'

As a result the position paper proposes that Labour CND concentrate its efforts on 'The need to

turn the Labour Party to campaigning on the Peace issues, rather than confining itself to resolutions, which is a very limited form of political life.'

In particular it is proposed to campaign for the Manifesto of the Labour Party to include a full commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. In this light proposals from Scottish Labour CND to the AGM are excellent.

They call for Labour CND to launch a national campaign 'along with all relevant trade union and Labour Party organisations' for the full implementation of 1982 Labour Conference decisions.

They propose that if the document which is to form the basis for

Should the CP stand?

Dear Editor,
Yours of 2 February '83: having lived and worked in Southwark borough for very many years (and for twenty years stood for parliament in a constituency which is now largely included in Bermondsey) may I comment!

Our Communist Party Candidate, Bob Gordon, is not standing 'against Peter Tatchell'. He stands because it is vital to oppose the reckless nuclear war preparations and the growing misery of unemployment. That — not a person — is what he stands against.

He stands for the Communist Party's consistent alternative policy for Peace and Jobs. True, on a number of issues we and the left Labour candidates are in agreement. That does not mean we must leave it to them to bring these issues clearly to the forefront — nor indeed that they necessarily will do so.

For example, our candidate will place the issue of Peace at the centre of our campaign, arguing

vigorously against Cruise and Trident.

Peter Tatchell may also favour this policy. Yet in the recent major Tribune article he does not mention peace at all! Again unlike our candidate, Tatchell's article makes no mention at all of incomes policy or wages. And so ignores the link between depressed wages and growing unemployment.

Indeed his article offers no national programme which would lead to growing employment. (His only concrete proposal is the building of new industrial estates. It is not a shortage of buildings to work in but of opportunities to work in the enterprises that Bermondsey lacks!)

Above all our party is for fundamental change to

Redmond O'Neill replies

Joe Bent's letter raises important questions of principle for socialists. Of course we have no objection in principle to socialist candidates standing against the Labour Party. In definite circumstances this can help to explain the kind of alternative policies necessary for a real struggle against capitalism.

But in Bermondsey Socialist Challenge is convinced that for the Communist Party to stand against Peter Tatchell weakens the fight for precisely the policies that Joe advocates.

Today in the Labour Party and trade unions a big fight is opening up around what policies Labour will stand on in a general election.

As a result of campaigns like CND as well as the disastrous experience of the last Labour government, the Labour Party is now committed to such policies as unilateral nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from the EEC and the 35 hour week.

The right-wing of the Party wants nothing to do with these policies because they mean a real fight against the British capitalist class. For this reason they will try to drop them from Labour's manifesto and they are witchhunting their supporters out of the Labour Party.

Even were Labour to be elected these elements from Healey to Golding to Chapple would rather split the Labour Party than see a Labour government mobilise the working class for socialist change. Right

now their witch-hunt weakens the fight for a Labour victory.

Michael Foot is giving these SDPers within the Labour Party cover and in effect aiding their witch-hunt against the Left.

But an important section of the Labour Party is organising against the right. The Communist Party has recently denounced such Labour lefts as ultraleft for fighting to remove right-wing MPs and councillors.

Transport House have done their utmost to sabotage Tatchell's campaign. For the cynical bureaucrats in Transport House the lower his vote the better. They will take a low vote for Tatchell to be a vote against the left-wing candidates and the policies of the Party conference.

For these reasons, whatever the shortcomings of Tatchell's own election material, and there are many, his vote will be taken as a referendum on Labour's most radical policies and those that support them.

It is because Fleet Street understands this that they have run their fifth campaign against Tatchell.

The Communist Party's decision to run against

a socialist society. We see this as being achieved in this country by a combination of a socialist majority in parliament and the mass struggle outside parliament.

In our view it is absurd to argue that such parliamentary majority with such a perspective will not include Communist members — the very part that advances this perspective. And to accept this involves accepting the Communists will fight elections.

For these reasons: and because in this borough we have for decades campaigned for a decisive change in policy to one of Peace and Jobs and Social Advance, we have every right to stand in this by-election.

We shall campaign for the maximum number of votes for Bob Gordon. He and our Party have by our record earned the right to do so.

Yours fraternally,
Joe Bent.

Tatchell will therefore weaken, not strengthen the struggle for the very policies about which Joe waxes so lyrically.

Worse, the Communist Party's own claims to stand with the Left of the labour movement are at least open to question. Joe speaks of a 'socialist majority in parliament' including Communist Party MPs.

But a more authoritative spokesperson for the CP — Executive Committee member Dave Cook — explains, in the February issue of *Marxism Today* that the kind of coalition the CP is campaigning for in 1983 is not Communist/Labour but rather Labour/SDP/Tory wets!

Perhaps Joe can explain to us how that kind of alliance is likely to bring about unilateralism and alone socialism!

This line will, in practice, line the CP up with the most right-wing section of the Labour Party those who advocate dropping socialist policies in order to come back together with the SDP.

The CP combine this right-wing line of coalitionism with rhetoric about socialism and sectarianism to the left-wing of the Labour Party and trade unionists who support it.

For our part we stand with the Labour left against coalitionism and with Peter Tatchell against Fleet Street, John Goldin ... and the CP!

force nuclear disarmament on the British ruling class. But as we have seen in the direct and indirect sabotage of recent industrial struggles, fighting the ruling class is the last thing that these 'leaders' are interested in.

Labour CND can play a decisive role this year in helping to launch the kind of movement at the base of the trade unions and Labour Party that can force the TUC and the NEC into action against Cruise and Trident and ensure Labour fights the election as the party of unilateralism.

Labour CND to launch campaign for Labour to stand by unilateralism

Labour CND holds its annual general meeting on Saturday 19 February. This meeting will have a crucial role to play in organising within the labour movement for the Labour Party and TUC to carry out their 1982 Conference decisions. The position paper to the Labour CND AGM explains why this is vital:

'However Labour supporters — while 77% say 'No to Cruise' — have to remember that Labour's overall voting support now registers

about 34% of the electorate. This shows that we still only have approximately 26% (or less than half) of the 58% who oppose Cruise as Labour

Party supporters.

As yet no information

Labour's general election manifesto does not include full unilateralism then a campaign must be launched for a special Labour Party conference to ensure that conference policy is carried out by the NEC and Parliamentary leadership.

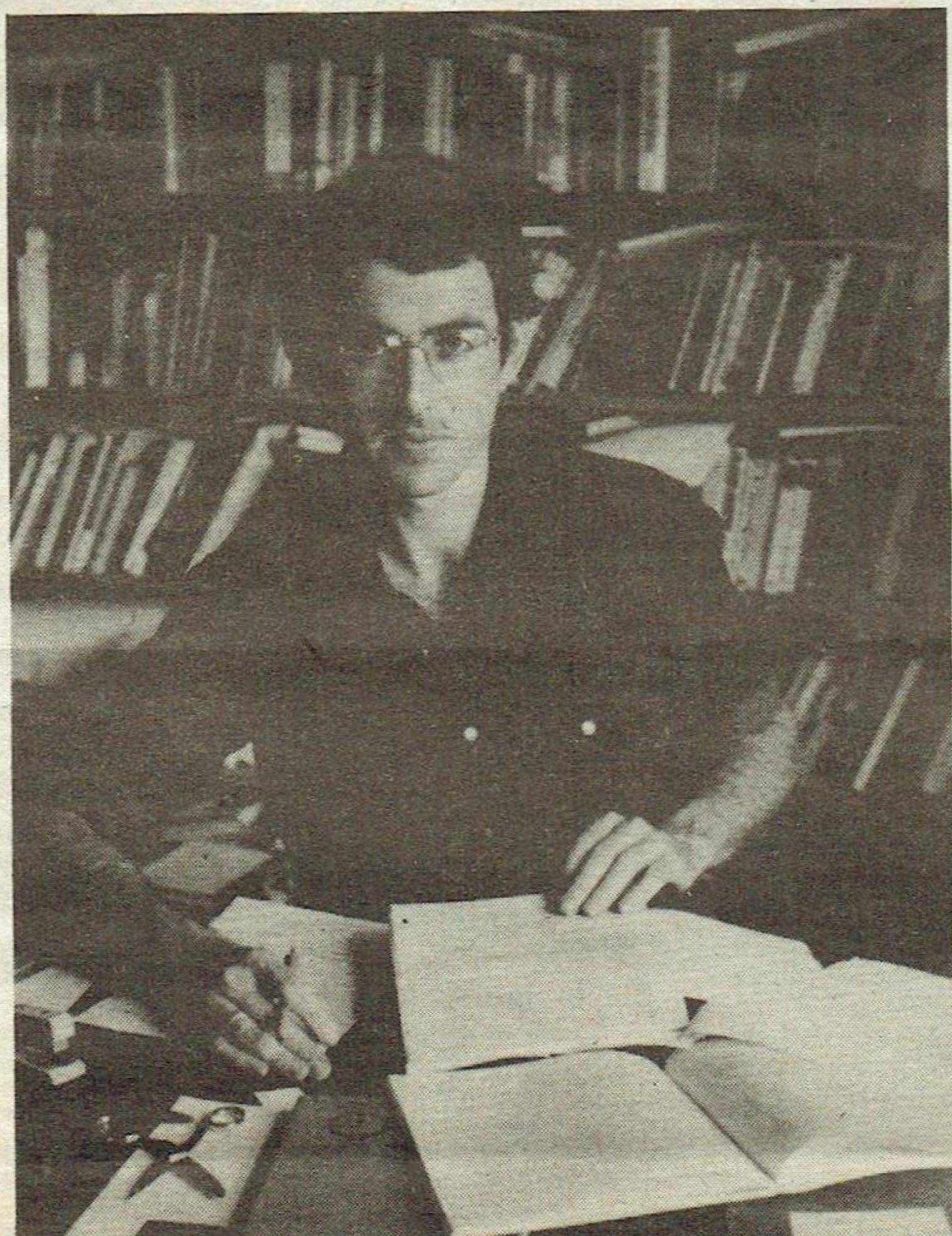
In addition the AGM will discuss how to fight for the labour movement to organise a campaign of action against the missiles. At the centre of this is the decision of the TUC and LP conferences to organise a labour movement day of action in 1983.

whatsoever has been produced by the Labour NEC or the TUC on this. It is more likely than not that the Len Murrays and Denis Healeys regard such proposals as an embarrassment in a probable general election year.

But unless the trade unions and Labour Party mobilise their ranks against Cruise and Trident many supporters of CND will turn to other means of stopping the missiles.

In fact only the millions of organised workers have the power to

FIGHTING THE M THE FIGHT FOR



FRED HALLIDAY, a member of the editorial board of *New Left Review*, is well known as a writer on the Middle East, Africa and Western Asia. He contributed to the symposium *Extermination and Cold War*, and is the author of a soon to be published book, *The Making of the New Cold War*. Phil Hearse spoke to him about current problems in the fight for disarmament.

What was the meaning of the 'zero option' offer by the United States?

There would seem to be two motives behind it. First, it's a negotiating ploy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, and it's a public relations ploy. Zero option relates only to land-based intermediate range missiles. If implemented it would give the West an enormous advantage in intermediate missiles since none of theirs are land-based and all the Soviet Union's are.

The US used to have land based missiles, but they were unsuitable because they were in fixed places, and therefore in the '60s and '70s they moved their intermediate range missiles from the land to the sea — first Polaris and then Poseidon.

NATO's intermediate missile force is extremely strong — 400 warheads from the US Poseidon fleet. In addition there are other intermediate delivery systems, on American aircraft in Britain and aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean as well as the submarine launched missiles of France and Britain. Now indeed France has installed some of its own land-based missiles.

So if the zero option went through it would get rid of all USSR intermediate missiles but retain the intermediate weapons of the USA and NATO. Whether or not the USA seriously expected the Soviet Union to accept this offer is another matter

but the strategy which NATO has followed since the middle 1970s is to establish a new and clear superiority in intermediate warheads.

Politically the purpose of it was to demobilise Western public opinion and give the governments of NATO an argument to say that the United States was serious about negotiation, and to maintain this fiction in the whole public discourse in the West that you're only talking about land-based missiles.

What are the objectives of the USA and the USSR in the Geneva talks?

The first US objective is clearly to demobilise the peace movement and give arguments to allied governments. And also it might be said to demobilise the peace movement in the United States which has become a major factor. The people who proposed the Geneva talks in the US government adhere to the 'tableau vivant' (still life) theory of talks — in other words that you have people sitting there but they don't do or say anything.

Wienberger is one who adheres to this theory, as is Richard Pearle his chief advisor — one of the main saboteurs of the SALT II agreement. But there were others in the US administration who believed they could through these talks force onto the USSR an agreement favourable to it, but which the Soviet Union would

have to accept because of its current economic and military weakness.

Nobody in negotiation on the American side has any doubt that the Soviet Union is the weaker power — it's not equal to the United States in military strength, less so in economic strength — after all the GNP is about 40 percent that. Per capita income in the USSR is only 5000 dollars a year — about that of Spain or Southern Ireland. The total GNP of the Warsaw Pact countries is about a quarter of that of the United States and its major capitalist allies.

So because the Soviet Union is in an inferior position and facing serious problems, they believe that there is the possibility of forcing an unequal set of agreements on the Soviet Union. So there is a division — not between doves and hawks but between two different types of hawks.

In either case it is important to remember what the US intended with the SALT I talks from '69-'72 — that you use the negotiations to buy time to build up new weapons systems, and you use the talks to consolidate an existing superiority. The SALT I agreement gave the US superiority in deliverable warheads and 'lethality' — the accuracy and explosive power of warheads. Even those US negotiators who do want to reach an agreement, for example Nitze probably does want an agreement, it's only to institutionalise US superiority.

There is a third American objective, part of the overall cold war, which is that they think they can force the post-capitalist world onto the defensive, not just momentarily but also strategically — that there is what they call a 'window of strategic opportunity' for rolling back Soviet influence in the 1980's, first in the third world then in Eastern Europe and finally in the Soviet Union itself.

And there are indeed people in the US administration — it sounds like a leftist fantasy but it's true — who not only want to restore capitalism in Cuba, Vietnam and so forth but actually want to push for some sort of break up of the Soviet Union itself, reducing it to its Russian redoubt, getting rid of the Baltic states, the Ukraine, the Muslim states. People who believe this perspective think the arms limitation talks can be used to push the USSR onto the strategic defensive and so precipitate a crisis in the USSR.

The Soviet objectives in the Geneva talks in a sense parallel those of the United States. They know that the US has a big technological lead and the economic costs of trying to match the Americans would be enormous. Therefore the USSR would like to go for a set of agreements which would lessen the military pressure on them, and lessen the pressure on them to increase their expenditure.

The USSR has proposed not the 'zero option' but 'absolute zero' — not just land-based missiles, not just sea based missiles, but those plus aircraft-delivered bombs as well. They have also proposed a nuclear free zone from the mid-Atlantic to the Urals, which would of course encompass American submarine launched missiles as well.

The last CND conference debated whether the demand for withdrawal from NATO should be prioritised. Leading CND theorists like Mary Kaldor and Dan Smith, not to mention politicians like Tony Benn, want Britain to stay in NATO. Is this politically or logical-

ly a sensible perspective?

It's technically possible to stay in NATO without nuclear weapons but it doesn't make military or political sense. If the point of unilateral nuclear disarmament is not to be involved in the use of nuclear weapons nor to be a target, then it makes no sense to stay in NATO.

Even if the United States said it wasn't going to deploy nuclear weapons at its bases in Britain, they would in practice defy such a regulation. They did so in Japan, using Japan for sea and air transport of nuclear weapons when this was specifically banned in an agreement between the two countries, and they've done so in the case of Norway, where they certainly brought some forms of nuclear weapons into Norwegian territorial waters.

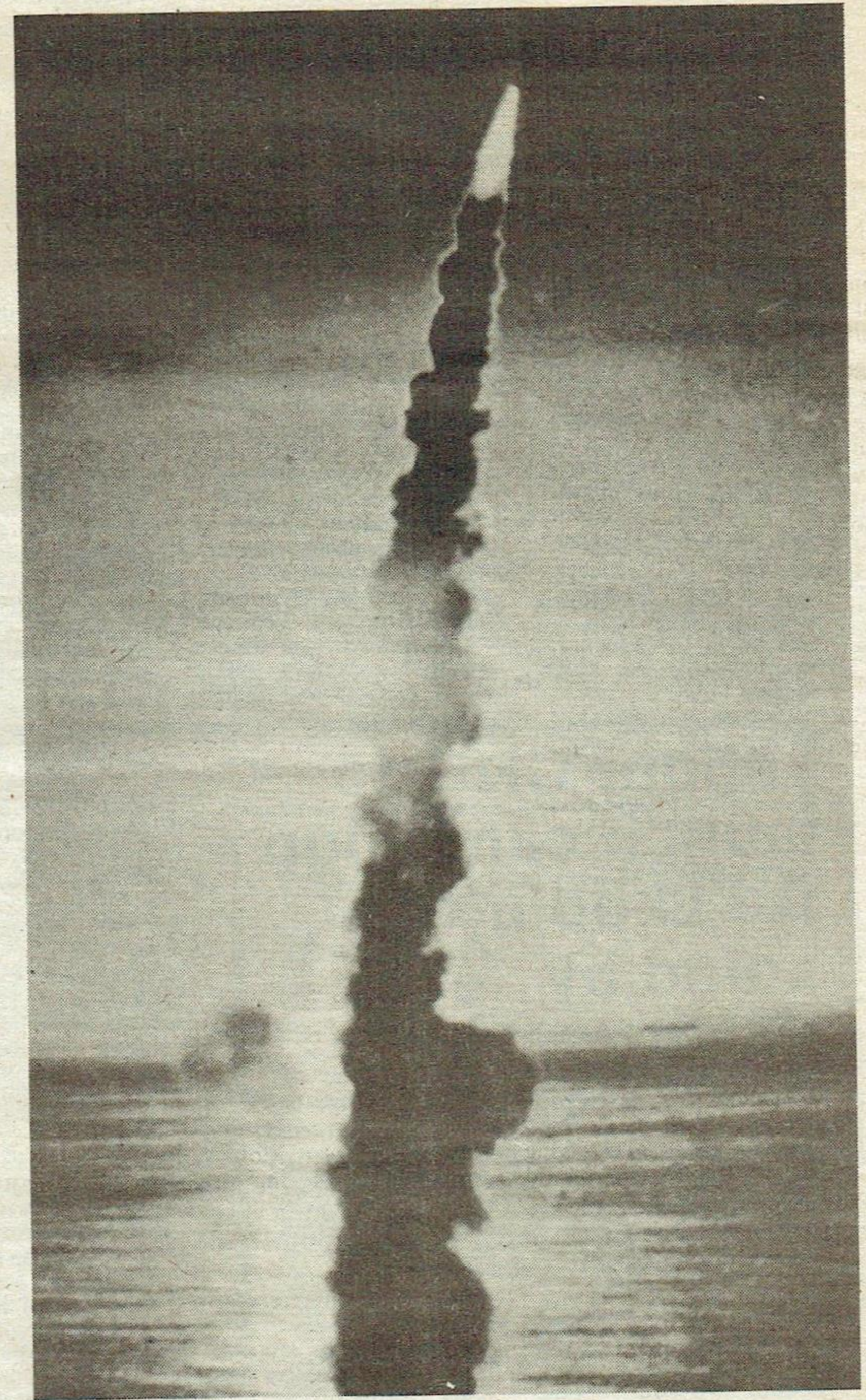
The Americans after all have quasi-sovereign power over their bases in Britain, and they could rely on the co-operation of the British service chiefs.

There are two other factors. Even if you don't have nuclear weapons on your territory, if you have radar stations, signals stations and so forth which are part of a nuclear attack system, there is no doubt that these will be a Soviet target in time of war.

The Soviet Union will certainly bombard all NATO countries with nuclear weapons in wartime — if only because, as one Soviet military expert

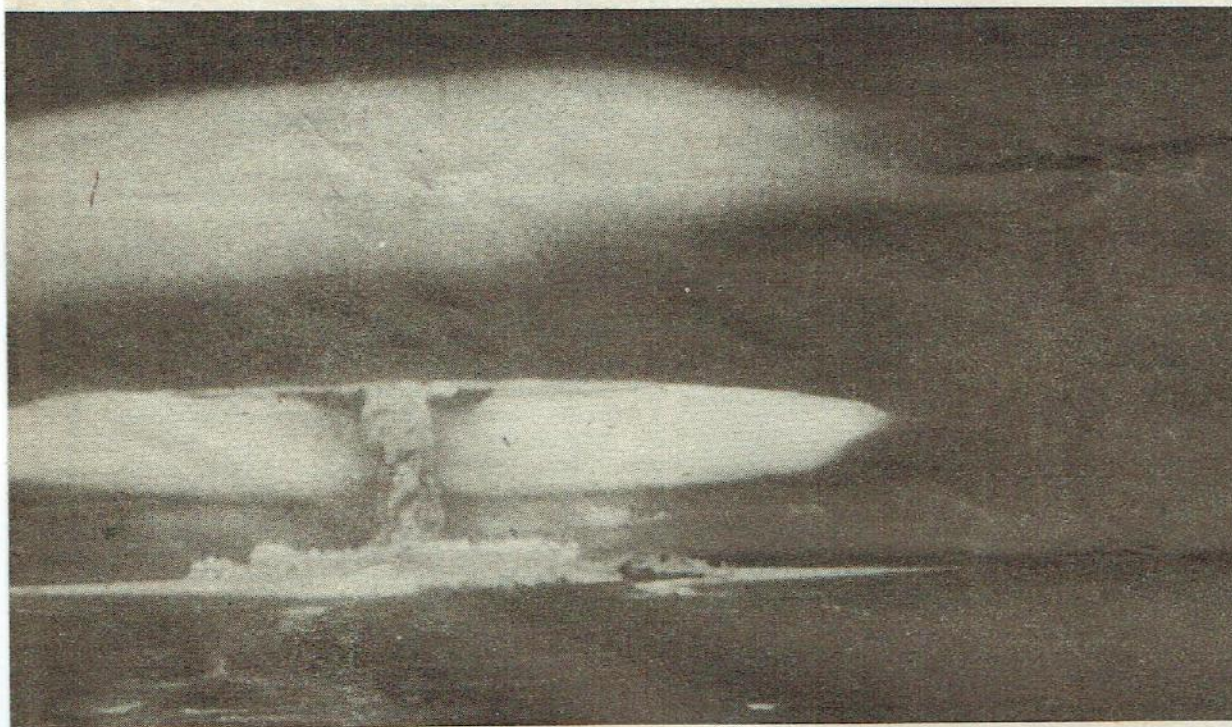


put it to me 'it only takes six minutes for a Pershing missile to get to the Soviet Union and in that time we can't tell where it came from, we'll just flatten the lot of you.' So from the military side it is folly to imagine you can carry out unilateral nuclear disarmament without leaving NATO. From the political side, if the objective of unilateral nuclear disarma-



MISSILES IN 1983

DISARMAMENT



ment is to start to change the world political situation by setting a lead — and there can be no other rationale — then to remain in NATO is fraudulent. The non-nuclear members of NATO like Norway and Canada have no effective independent voice in the policies of that alliance. The French pretend to be outside NATO, but in reality are a very active part of NATO, more effective for their pretence of being outside.

There are those who say that to withdraw from NATO would destabilise the 'balance' between the two sides — this is the position of the Italian Communist Party. This is a complete myth. There is no 'balance', the NATO side has overwhelming superiority. By the logic of this 'balance' argument, one country ought to leave NATO as the alliance recruits more members like Spain.

Let's go on to the demand for a nuclear free zone 'from Poland to Portugal'. What would be the objective effect of the implementation of this demand? Does it not make more sense to link unilateralism with the demand for Britain to leave NATO, than to concentrate on what could be interpreted as a 'multilateralist' slogan?

The objective effect would be very different on the two sides. As far as we know, there are no Soviet nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe. The 39 SS-20 sites are in the Ukraine, Byelorussia or the Urals, as are the SS-4s and SS-5s. NATO believes that there are no Soviet nuclear weapons of any kind in Eastern Europe. Of course, in the event of war they could be rapidly transported there. Western Europe on the other hand is stuffed with nuclear weapons, on land and in the territorial waters.

The European nuclear free zone slogan doesn't seem to me to contradict the demand for leaving NATO. I cannot see how you could implement the nuclear-free Europe slogan while Britain remains part of NATO. You can't have the nuclear free zones as part of a nuclear alliance — it doesn't make sense.

The other point is that you are most unlikely to get a nuclear free zone through a multi-lateral one-off

negotiation, but only through the disruption of the existing alliances, including through unilateral disarmament.

Within END there's a battle going on over the East European peace movements. To what extent should we support them?

There is no point indulging the fantasy that by talking to the official peace committees one is talking to real movements — one isn't. The official peace committees have a role, but they are arms of government and should be treated as such.

On the other hand the real 'unofficial' peace movements are unlikely, given the repressive political systems, to reach the level of strength and mobilisations of their counterparts in Western Europe.

We should support the independent peace movement but we shouldn't have the illusion that they will become mass movements.

Nevertheless, part of any peace movement must be a campaign which defends democracy. First this applies within NATO itself; we have the case of Turkey where the peace movement as well as the workers movement is savagely repressed.

But at the same time it involves the defence of democratic rights inside the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But of course some people are doubtful about whether you should add 'new' issues to the movement, but the issue of democratic rights is a logical extension. Some people have illusions about Eastern Europe, but that can only be overcome through argument and explanation.

We shouldn't forget that it is NATO which is primarily responsible for the cold war and the arms race and the nuclearisation of Europe. The priority of attacking NATO is quite consistent with defending democratic rights in Eastern Europe.

1983 is the year for the installation of the missiles. How can we stop them? What do you think is the

most realistic strategy?

Well, stopping the missiles isn't the only objective, even if we do there will be plenty of battles to fight. Ultimately the question of peace is a question of political power. Mass mobilisation on its own won't stop the missiles if it ignores the existing institutions of power.

Mass mobilisation is one part. But the most realistic strategy is the election of a party, in this case the Labour Party, which will carry out the programme of disarmament. Even if a Labour government is elected we'll need to keep up the pressure through extra-parliamentary and extra-Labour Party mobilisation. But a strong peace movement can even put some pressure on a right wing government.

20 years ago Edward Thompson put forward the view that a government which attempted to unilaterally disarm and withdraw from NATO would be subverted and de-stabilised by the US and their allies in Britain — and that therefore measures of socialist self-defence would have to be taken. To what extent would unilateral disarmament of necessity be part of an overall socialist project?

Thompson's perspective is not an exaggeration. We shouldn't underestimate the determination of the United States. If it formally acquiesced in a decision to unilaterally disarm, behind the scenes it would do everything possible to reverse that decision — in an alliance with reactionary sectors of British society. Such a unilateral decision would not be the end of the battle. One could imagine the economic and political pressures the USA could bring.

Unilateral disarmament could be carried out by a national capitalist government of the Swedish type; but very strong measures would have to be taken economically and politically in conjunction with unilateral disarmament to make it stick. At the moment the only forces in Britain with the clarity and determination to do that are the socialist forces.

CND DIARY

IT'S NICE to know that the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) cares for its workers — but only up to a limit! Last week the head of radiological protection at the National Nuclear Corporation, gave evidence at the Sizewell B inquiry. He carefully explained that design changes had been incorporated in the plans to reduce radiation doses. All well and good. Unfortunately for the CEGB he then blew it by going on to explain that some changes which would have reduced the radiation risk even further had been thrown out as being unreasonably costly!

STILL ON Sizewell, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate has failed to come up with the goods. Concurrently with the public inquiry, the inspectorate was supposed to run a full safety assessment. Needless to say, the assessment has not yet taken place. It would be difficult to know exactly which unpleasant fact is causing the hold up

MEANWHILE, the 'Super Sara' joint European project is on the verge of being abandoned. 'Super Sara' was launched about two years ago. It is a nuclear safety project designed to study accidents like the Three Mile Island near melt-down. The project has failed to come up with ideas about how such accidents can be avoided. It has run massively over budget, and it presumably threatens to reveal embarrassing details about the safety of nuclear reactors.

AS WE GO to press the signatories of the London Dumping Convention (LDC), which controls the dumping of nuclear waste at sea, are meeting in London. They are considering an amendment to the Convention which would ban all radioactive dumping at sea. Last year, under the LDC provisions Britain dumped a total of 2,700 tons of waste in the Atlantic. However, they didn't manage to do it without opposition and the Greenpeace organisation managed to cause some disruption. So much so, in fact, that the dumping consortium — Nirex — has just acquired a new ship so that it can dump wastes through the bottom of the ship without interference from Greenpeace. Watch out for the Greenpeace submarine!

★ **Wed 16 Feb** Scottish Students human chain for 'Books not Bombs' from the Ministry of Defence to the Scottish Education Office in Glasgow. Organised by Strathclyde University CND.

★ **Sat 19 Feb** Labour CND Annual General Meeting. Delegates must be full

national members of the LP and national CND. Credentials from 11 Goodwin St., London N4.

★ **Mon 21 Feb** CND 25th Anniversary Celebration and Benefit 8.00pm at the ICA, The Mall, London. Details from 01-263 0977.

★ **Tues 22 Feb** National lobby of Parliament Against Cruise and Trident.

★ **Fri 25 Feb - Sun 6 Mar** Hounslow Council/Hounslow CND Anti-Nuclear Week. Details from 01-577 3429.

★ **Sat/Sun 26-27 Feb** Conference Against Sizewell 'B', Blackfriars Settlement, Nelson Square, Waterloo, London. Details from 37 Cowley Rd, Oxford.

★ **Sat 26 Feb** Labour CND fringe meeting at Scottish LPYS Conference in Glasgow.

★ **Mon 28 Feb** Showing of John Pilger's anti-nuclear film 'The Truth Game' at 9.00pm on ITV.

★ **Sat 5 March** Scottish TUC CND Conference. 10am AUEW Halls, West Regent St., Glasgow.

★ **Sun 6 March** Women's blockade of Faslane Naval Base. 10am-4pm. Tel: 041 221 1177 on Saturdays for details.

★ **Sat 12 March** Labour CND fringe meeting at Scottish Labour Party Conference. 12.30-2pm at Windsor Restaurant, Perth.

★ **March 7-19** (provisional). Distribution of Strathclyde Regional Council anti-nuclear broadsheet to every home in the region. (This covers half of the population of Scotland!)

★ **Sun 20 March** Faslane Peace Camp Festival

★ **Thur 31 Mar** 12 hour blockade of Greenham Common (women only) and Burghfield Royal Ordnance Factory (mixed).

★ **Fri 1 April** 14 mile human chain from Greenham Common to Burghfield via Aldermaston. Starts 1.30pm, followed by a festival at Aldermaston.

★ **Sat 2 April** Scottish CND March in Glasgow. Starts in George Square and ends at Carnival in Kelvingrove Park.

★ **8-10 April** Nuclear Free North Atlantic Conference Mitchell Theatre, Glasgow.

★ **Sat 30 April** East London Labour Movement Conference Against Cruise and Trident, to be held in Queen Mary College.

★ **Sat 7 May** Youth CND Festival for Peace. Starts at 11am with a demonstration from Embankment marching to Brockwell Park. Bands, speakers and a festival village.

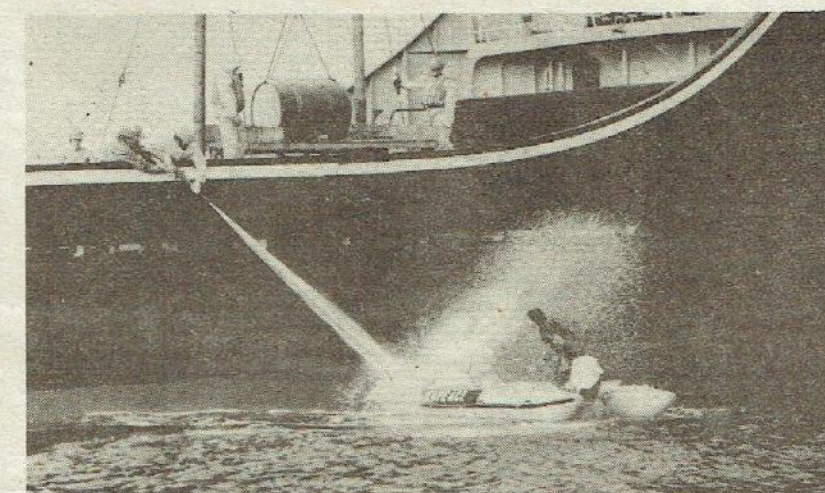
★ **Thur 12 May** Day of Action against Arms production at Thorn-Brymar's Brimsdown site in Enfield. Organised by London Region CND's Trade Union sub-committee. Details from LRCND, 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1.

★ **31 May-3 June** Four day blockade of the US base at Upper Heyford. Details from 43 Peacock Street, London SE17.

★ **Sat 4 June** Anti-Trident Convention, Kelvin Hall Arena, Glasgow. Starts 11am.

★ **6 Aug** Hiroshima Day. Labour Party/TUC Day of Action against the missiles. Also marches from all over Britain to Greenham Common.

★ **22 October** Projected date for CND national demonstration in London.



Greenpeace inflatable boat.

Needed - a Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

Last week Margaret Thatcher and Michael Heseltine opened the Tories' election campaign. Their attack centred on nuclear disarmament, accusing the Labour Party and CND of acting as 'appeasers' and dupes of the Soviet Union.

Why has there been no effective counterblast from Labour?

First of all Labour's leadership thinks smashing up Labour's left-wing is the way to win the election. So they cancel Peter Tatchell's first press conference, pulp his leaflets and plan to expel the Militant Tendency the day before voting in Bermondsey. The result will be seen in a reduced Labour vote.

Secondly, the same right-wing trade union leaders who are organising the witch-hunt in the Labour Party have sabotaged the industrial struggles against the Tories.

Fudge

Thirdly, Labour's right-wing is organising a retreat all along the line on policy. They are likely to fudge the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament in order to maintain an unholy alliance of Foot and Healy.

Peter Shore's economic plan explicitly calls for a Labour government to impose an Incomes policy. Its proposals for tackling unemployment do not include the fight for a 35 hour week.

What is being prepared is a Labour government even more right wing than the last one. The policies that broke the links between Labour and the trade unions and resulted in a massive trade union revolt against Wilson and Callaghan are being re-introduced.

These are the policies of the SDP!

Approval

For Labour's right-wing leaders the only possible Labour government is one that gets the stamp of approval from the City of London and the CBI. In fact for Healy and Golding even a coalition with the SDP would be preferable to a Labour government that actually carries out Labour's conference policies.

These Conference policies are totally unacceptable to the British ruling class and their NATO and EEC allies. The only kind of government that could carry them out would be one prepared to massively mobilise its working class supporters to crush the resistance of the capitalist class.

The methods of the



John Golding and Dennis Healy 'even a coalition with the SDP would be preferable to a Labour government that actually carries out Labour's policies.'

Labour leadership are an electoral disaster. They will divide Labour's ranks by attempting to drive out supporters of socialist policies.

They give credibility to the SDP/Liberal Alliance by making Labour's policies indistinguishable from theirs. It means that instead of uniting with the water workers and CND to fight the Tories, Labour's resources are turned against its own membership.

If the right-wing succeeds they will isolate Labour from the hundreds of thousands of supporters of CND and Greenham Common and from the industrial militants who want to fight unemployment and low pay.

Abstention

This would mean a massive abstention by working class voters.

How has the left-wing of the labour movement responded to this offensive?

Tony Benn's campaign for Deputy leadership of the LP demonstrated the potentially massive support for the left.

But Golding and Healy, with Foot acting as their apologist, have succeeded in dividing the left. This was shown at the Campaign for Labour

Party Democracy Annual general meeting.

As Vladimir Derer explained in these pages last week, round about half of those in attendance refused to campaign against the register or expulsions except by 'constitutional means'.

So whilst the right-wing trample over conference policy, a section of the left, in practice, refuses to fight them.

Coalition

The Communist Party makes a lot of noise about unilateralism and plans to stand over 100 candidates in the general election. Yet according to EC member Dave Cook, their policy is for a coalition between Labour, Liberals, SDP and Tory 'wets'.

Anyone who thinks that kind of government would be unilateralist is mad. In fact it would be a more right-wing coalition led by Heath and Callaghan with Incomes policy and control of the unions at the centre of its programme.

Whatever the outcome of a general election the left-wing of the trade unions and Labour Party need to be organised. In preparing for the election those who are prepared to block the witch-hunt, support workers' struggles

and fight for conference policies are in the best position to unite the labour movement against the Tories.

What is necessary is a socialist campaign for a labour victory.

That is a campaign by at least a section of the Labour Party and trade unions that links up with the mass movements and struggles outside the Labour Party as such in order to present a socialist alternative to the Tories.

Mistake

It would be a mistake in today's conditions for socialists to put their energies into supporting non-Labour Party candidates. Because the fight about what policies can deal with nuclear weapons, mass unemployment, racism, sexual discrimination and low pay is today taking place inside of the Labour Party and trade unions.

The National Labour Briefing Conference has called an initial meeting in the House of Commons on Monday 7 May to begin the discussion of 'How we campaign for a Labour victory'. Constituencies, campaigns and trade unions should make sure they are represented at it.

NUM - Victory for left in Nottinghamshire elections

There was good news for miners in the Notts coalfield and throughout the country last week, when the left-winger, HENRY RICHARDSON, became General Secretary of the Nottingham Area, writes GRAHAM NAYLOR, from Bilsthorpe Colliery, a member of Richardson's election committee.

Henry Richardson won the ballot for full-time official in December. He defeated the challenge from right-winger David Prendergast, who had become a darling of the media's anti-Scargill campaign during the pay ballot.

Richardson had supported the NEC in the campaign, and made his position clear in his election address: 'If you want someone to support the NCB propaganda as some union officials have done, then don't vote for me!'

Henry is chair of Denis Skinner's constituency Labour Party, and a supporter of CND. He has never made any secret of his left-wing views, much to the annoyance of right-wing union officials.

Henry also made history in becoming the first rank and file member to be elected to the NEC. He is virtually certain to be re-elected next June.

Henry Richardson is a big plus for the Notts miners. I wish him well.

Common action to fight witch-hunt

OVER 50 PEOPLE attended the second National Council meeting of Labour Against the Witch-Hunt, held at GLC County Hall last weekend.

They heard *Militant* supporter, Bob Labi, give up-to-date news on the proposed expulsion of five *Militant* editorial board members, scheduled to take place at the 23 February NEC meeting — on the eve of the Bermondsey poll.

The meeting agreed to call a meeting to establish common action between LAW, the *Militant*-dominated Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-Hunt, and the three constituency Labour Parties concerned — Norwood, Islington Central and Hammersmith North, all of whom have refused to expel party members.

LAW delegates unanimously condemned the decision of Labour Party member John O'Grady to stand against the official candidate Peter Thatchell, in the

Bermondsey election, and instructed secretary Keith Litchman to write to Michael Foot asking why no action has been taken against the 'real Bermondsey Labour' candidate.

The meeting also planned the production of LAW's third newsletter, timed to coincide with regional Labour Party conferences. Local meetings were discussed, also timed around these conferences. So too, building the campaign inside the unions, through union involvement in local LAW meetings, and through a series of fringe meetings at this year's union conferences.

The final business of the meeting came as no surprise to anyone present. The National Council unanimously decided to reject the NEC's invitation to register the campaign!

Fight for Labour Victory

Last Saturday, Labour Against the Witch-hunt endorsed the call by Briefing groups, for a meeting on March 7 at the House of Commons, to discuss how to fight for a Labour victory.

Such a discussion — between CLPs, unions and campaigning groups — is considered necessary in view of the threats posed by growing speculation that unilateralism won't be included in Labour's manifesto, and the NEC's continued attempts to expel party members.

LAW will be sending four representatives, including secretary Keith Litchman, to the March meeting.

Seafarers fight for jobs and union democracy

SOUTH WALES seafarers, sacked by their employer the National Environment Research Council (NERC) from the research vessel *Discovery* last October, are still fighting for unconditional reinstatement. Seventeen seafarers were sacked after giving the tremendous solidarity to the healthworkers dispute of a 5-day strike, and then defending themselves against anti-trade union harassment by the master and officers on board ship.

Fighting for their jobs has involved the seafarers in a battle against their own union leadership as well as their employer. MUSA NOGAN, their elected convenor, says:

'ONE of the main lessons of this dispute is that before we can solve the problems of the industry, we have to solve the problems of our own union, the National Union of Seamen (NUS). We have to fight to democratise this union, so that it's the members views which count and which get carried out.

We need the regular election of all national and local officials to make them accountable. The present inept leadership has totally failed to solve the problems of the industry, from wages and demanning through to the difficulties facing ethnic minorities, and has even failed to uphold its own policies. They are more interested in an unholy alliance with the employers than with fighting for the membership.

Our fight is for unconditional reinstatement on our previous terms of employment — a return to the status quo. The NUS leadership has hindered rather than helped this fight.

We won support from the seafarers on the *Challenger*, another

NERC ship, which they halted at Ardrrossan in Scotland. But our general secretary Jim Slater, and assistant national secretary John Nelson, gave the ship authority to sail to dry dock for planned repairs.

This was a blatant act of strike breaking which considerably undermined our bargaining position with NERC.

Then in December the national leadership took the dispute out of our hands altogether, saying they could win a quicker and better settlement than we could locally. But in reality, they were cooking up a deal with NERC. Once again the union leadership was fulfilling its historical role of gendarme for the shipowners.

Deal

In January John Nelson came to Cardiff to try to sell us the deal. It was not unconditional reinstatement and contained many unacceptable clauses. First, our previous permanent employment would be replaced by temporary work. This meant that NERC could get rid of

us right after the next voyage. It also overturned union policy which supports permanent contracts of employment.

Second, we were to be dispersed to different NERC ships, breaking up our union organisation, with the most active unionists going to the *Shackleton* which goes out of service in July anyway.

Third, the deal involved accepting both a reprimand and a final warning from NERC for our trade union activities on the *Discovery*. These are serious disciplinary measures, but no disciplinary hearing has ever been held against us! Nelson said the deal was not negotiable. We told him no way. This is democracy NUS-style — I mean imposed on you.

Nelson got on the phone and got the final warning removed, but not the other clauses. So we told him it was unacceptable and we were still fighting for unconditional reinstatement.

Fight

Since then we've had two meetings with national leaders at the London office. At the first meeting, which lasted 7½ hours, we told them that not one member accepted the deal. And then we discovered that NERC has already unilaterally broken the deal! So we said to Slater and Nelson, the deal is dead anyway, so let's fight for unconditional reinstatement. Unbelievably they still said no.

At the second meeting we were there from 11am to 10pm. We occupied the office and told Nelson that we wouldn't leave until we got justice. He could see we meant business because we made ourselves comfortable with a colour TV and had fish and chips sent in!



Frank Rowberry GMWU official handing over donation from hospital workers to Musa Morgan and other seafarers.

So eventually at 8.30pm he brought in Sam McCluskie, assistant general secretary. McCluskie could see the situation and was more receptive to us, so we were able to come to an agreement with him.

Firstly, we get to be involved in the negotiations with NERC. Second, we fight for a return to the status quo including unconditional reinstatement on a permanent basis. Third, if NERC says no, the NUS will use its industrial muscle to win the demands.

A start has now been made. The NUS has told branches not to provide crews to NERC ships until we are taken back.

So now we'll be watching to make sure the NUS leadership carries out the agreement which McCluskie made with us. If not, we'll carry on the fight.

During our solidarity with the healthworkers, and our fight against NERC and our union leaders to get our jobs back, all of our actions have been based on the policies of our union and the TUC.

The trouble is that the fine words uttered at con-

ferences by union leaders often turn out to be empty rhetoric. It's taken us months to force our own union leadership to fight for what we want.

It is now NUS policy to organise branches on board ship. But this requires participation and active trade unionists. The NUS leadership is sabotaging union policy if it doesn't give full backing to the kind of trade union solidarity action we pursued on the *Discovery*.

We've got to make our unions fight for us, and to do that we've got to democratise them and make the leaders accountable.

Finally, our fight has won tremendous support from other workers in South Wales, especially miners and healthworkers. This has built up big pressures on NERC and the NUS leaders.

With these other workers we have picketed and also occupied the NERC office in Barry Docks.

With this kind of trade union solidarity, which was what sparked off our dispute with NERC in the first place, workers can win their battles in pursuit of their interests.

The Broad Lefts and union democracy

JOHN AITKIN, a Fleet Street electrician with considerable experience in the union and in the Labour Party, recently stood as Broad Left candidate in the EPTU election to replace General Secretary Frank Chapple.

His platform included re-establishing full accountability to the union membership, and an all-out struggle to defeat the Tories and elect a Labour government on a socialist mandate.

Not surprisingly, John wasn't elected. Despite this he believes the Broad Left campaign was a big success. He explained why to Socialist Challenge reporter, CAROL TURNER and considered the future for Broad Lefts and union democracy.

What happened in the recent ballot?

At the July NEC, Chapple announced he was going. At first the right fielded four candidates, but this was eventually reduced to two. I stood as the Broad Left candidate.

At first there were a variety of challenges from the left — but it was eventually agreed that I would be the only left candidate. We ran a campaign that broke new ground.

In what way was that so?

Under our rules, candidates can't electioneer — all they can do is attend branch meetings. This is hopeless. In the official period of the election — between 20 October and 15 November — I had 794 branches to visit! Obviously, such conditions make it impossible for candidates to run any sort of campaign.

I did whistle-stop tours to take in as many branches as possible. A typical day was: 10.30 am in Port Talbot, South Wales — then a shop stewards meeting in Manchester later — and on to an evening meeting at our Leeds branch.

Task

This was one side of what was different about our campaign.

Also, the Broad Left decided to run an open campaign. Our argument was that candidates must be able to publicly present their positions for the members to accept or reject.

This challenged our Code of Conduct which lays down things like candidates can't appear on TV or radio, can't produce leaflets etc. In other words, they can't campaign! During the election *Flashlight* (the Broad Left journal) produced an election supplement.

Our campaign was a big success. First, we ran only one candidate, supported by the whole of the left. Second, our openly political approach helped overcome the limitations of time. And the vote we achieved was a real victory.

What did the vote represent?

In rough figures, Chapple's man, Eric Hammond, got 73,000 votes. I got 32,000 and Sanderson 26,000. If all four of the other candidates had stood, I'd have topped the ballot first time round.

Sanderson appealed to what you might call the 'soft lefts'. He's an able and experienced man. He's a bit anti-left, but his approach was one of bringing the union back to the centre of TUC-Labour Party policies. His vote was by no means a Chapple vote.

Did this election campaign mark any sort of change in the Broad Left itself?

It most certainly did. The BL has been accused in the past of being a narrow caucus inside the union. We've been campaigning to change that — to bring in all the forces on the left inside the union. My selection as the one Broad Left candidate signals some success on this score.

In the last two NEC elections, the BL candidates had come last. My vote turns round this trend. Our candidates are seen as credible candidates for national office.

Control

We're building the BL as a broad-based group now, especially around the Labour Party and the Labour Left. We've argued this policy out in *Flashlight*. We want to present our case on public platforms with other Broad Lefts and on Labour Party platforms.

In view of what you've just said, I assume you'll be involved in the BLOC conference coming up?

Unfortunately, I've been too busy with my branch and with our campaign to be personally involved up to now. But it certainly has my support. Our BL Plumbers' candidate, Ian Brown, has been more involved than me.

Timex workers fight the sack

By Graham Sullivan

ON 10 JANUARY Timex, one of Dundee's biggest employers announced that it wanted redundancies at its Milton of Craigie plant, thereby adding 1900 more to the 20,000 people already on the dole in Dundee. The Timex Company, owned by multi-millionaire Fred Olsen, want to shift watch production to France. The Nimslo 3-D camera which was promised to Dundee is now being produced in Japan.

Around 1000 workers have applied for voluntary redundancy, and this figure may reach 1250, leaving Timex to find 650 compulsory redundancies. The shop stewards have met with Dundee district council, Tayside regional council, union officials from Olsen's plant in France, Michael Foot and also Fred Olsen himself, George Younger, the Scottish Secretary and Thatcher.

In Dundee a conference of 500 shop stewards and convenors from every major plant in the town was held and pledged its support for the Timex workers.

The workers are now waiting for a reply to their alternative plan for the

continuation of watch manufacturing at the Milton of Craigie site. The shop stewards committee have said that they will remove the threat of strike action if management remove the threat of compulsory redundancies.

Confident

Fergie Alexander, a member of the shop stewards committee, said: 'We're very confident of winning this dispute. There will be no forced redundancies at this factory.'

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: S. Walker, 9 Buttars Place, Dundee.

The George Box Memorial Collection

George Box was a familiar and widely respected figure, particularly in the socialist and trade union movement. He was well-known not only in Nottingham, but also in many other parts of the country. His death, in November 1982, was a tragic and shocking loss.

Those who knew George will also remember him as a collector of leaflets, documents, journals, books and papers. He assembled an impressive collection spanning the period from the late 1950's through to the present day. Many of the journals in particular, are now comparatively rare.

We wish to make the collection available for study, and to establish a permanent tribute to George's memory. Negotiations are taking place so that a suitable home for the collection can be found that will offer both security and access. We believe that, once established, the collection will become a valuable resource for those interested in socialist politics, supplementing the private collections already held in the East Midlands. In the longer term, it could be the nucleus for further additions and donations.

All this, of course, requires money. Binding, cataloguing, purchasing to fill gaps, and erecting an appropriate plaque will prove costly. We are therefore appealing to those who remember George, and to the wider labour movement, for contributions to aid this important project.



An Appeal

Cheques should be made payable to the 'George Box Memorial Fund' and sent to: 13 Balmoral Road, Nottingham, NG1 4HX.

West German peace movement

Stopping the missile madness

ANGELA KLEIN last week described the growth and political importance of the peace movement in West Germany.

Below Angela looks at the attitude of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the relationship between the peace movement and the trade unions.

The defeat of the Social Democratic Government organised by the Christian Democrats and the liberals last October has led to the political situation becoming much more fluid.

Now many Social Democrats and trade unionists find it easier to align themselves with the peace movement.

The positions of the Social Democrats have been forced to shift. When Helmut Schmidt headed the SPD Government he interpreted the NATO decisions on intermediate range nuclear weapons as meaning 'deployment of the missiles as a means of pressure in negotiations'.

The SPD leaders have now come out with the position of 'negotiations

so that deployment will not be necessary'.

Egon Bahr, one of the architects of the SPD's policy towards Eastern Europe, has accepted the position that Schmidt rejected when he was chancellor.

Bahr agrees that French and British nuclear weapons should be balanced against Soviet missiles. This corresponds with the substance of the Andropov proposal.

These factors will add to the strength and importance of the West German peace movement. But it still suffers from the ups and downs of the working class fightback in Germany.

Until now the peace movement has been coordinated nationally by an

Action Conference supported by about 800 different groups. It does not include any national union support, only individual trade unionists.

With few exceptions the first response of the unions to the peace movement was very hostile. They denounced it as being manipulated by Communists.

Fiasco

In response to the 'Krefeld Appeal', which two and a half million people signed, the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) launched its own petition to split the campaign. The move ended in fiasco, as the DGB itself admitted.

The DGB's youth

organisation was forbidden to take part in last year's anti-missiles demonstration in Bonn. An avalanche of counter resolutions and demands set off an extensive discussion in the DGB.

This led to increased participation by local union organisations in peace activities and to the DGB 'basically' supporting the massive anti-Reagan demonstration.

The West German ruling class is not prepared to give an inch on the missiles unless the US does first. If the Christian Democrats hold onto power in the 6 March elections, the NATO plans for installing cruise and Trident missiles will go ahead.

More than ever, the support of the workers

movement is vital to stop the missile madness. The missiles are planned to be installed by the end of this year.

Mass demonstrations on their own won't be sufficient to stop them. Trade union and factory actions will be crucial.

Aim

Individual trade union bodies have already adopted resolutions calling for strike actions. But these would be political strikes, which are illegal in West Germany. To carry out this sort of action would require considerable militancy and guts to confront the whole political situation here.

The Gruppen Interna-

tionalen Marxisten (West German section of the Fourth International) is proposing a campaign in the factories and unions for a five minute 'warning' strike at the end of the year, and for a massive demonstration in the autumn.

We will also push for the creation of a democratic and permanent national coordinating committee of the anti-missiles movement.

For almost thirty years West Germany was a pillar of stability in capitalist Europe. It was the chief European ally of the United States.

This role has now been challenged by the cumulative effects of the worsening economic crisis;

the growing fight against the bosses economic offensive and the mass movement against the war drive and the missiles.

On the party political front we have seen the collapse of the Social Democratic and liberal coalition after 13 years of government. There has been a dramatic rise in support for the Greens and developments of mass movements which represent a turn away from the Social Democrats and towards the left.

These all add up to the beginnings of political instability.

The West German anti-missiles movement shows up starkly the growing political contradictions inside the West's 'Atlantic Alliance.'

1.5 million Ghanaians deported from Nigeria

THE EXPULSION of up to one and a half million Ghanaians from Nigeria has once more focused media attention on developments in Ghana.

K. MENSAH, who has recently returned from Ghana, assesses the problems facing the Ghanaian revolution and the impact of the sudden influx of deportees.

Only twelve months after Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings' coup in Ghana, the expulsions from Nigeria have added a huge burden to the increasing hardships already facing the revolution.

This human tragedy, virtually unprecedented in recent times, was a callous and calculated move by Nigeria's President Shagari and his corrupt bourgeois government to win votes in an election year. It was also aimed at diverting attention from his collapsing, neo-colonial oil-dependent economy.

Having first given an absurd two week deadline for the expulsion of all so called illegal aliens, the Nigerian government opportunistically extended the deadline for professional and skilled workers upon whom the Nigerian oil boom is so dependent.

Threats

The timing of this action coincides with further threats of invasion by mercenaries, funded by exiles in western countries, and attempts to frame the Ghanaian government with the murder of three judges last June.

Whilst these invasion threats and destabilising acts are resisted ruthlessly by the Ghanaian masses, they have represented a debilitating obstacle to mass mobilisations and the reorganisation of the economy, two important essentials in placing Ghana on a socialist path.

The Rawlings coup in December 1981 was from within the army. But the progressive nature of the ruling Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) has sharpened class contradictions between the urban workers and those within the capitalist class most closely tied to imperialism and the higher ranks of the petit bourgeoisie. It has also initiated the retreat of the bourgeois state apparatus.

Corrupt

Examples of this are the breakdown of the normal command structure in the army, the removal of the corrupt TUC leadership and the take over of a textile printing factory.

The PNDC includes some bourgeois elements, but its support rests mainly with ordinary workers and it is championed by a growing but divided left.

There are essentially five separate left-wing organisations in Ghana, the two most prominent being the June Fourth Movement (JFM) and the New Democratic Movement (NDM).

The JFM was Jerry Rawling's original political base and it has greater support nationally and at a grass roots level than the NDM. The NDM has its origins in the radical intellectuals of the universities.

The difficulties and contradictions that face the PNDC and the Ghanaian revolution have



Ghanaians attacked on the border between Benin and Togo

their roots in the struggle for power between the bureaucracy of the neo-colonial state and the radical Peoples' and Worker's Defence Committees and left-wing organisations.

One clear example is the struggle of the Workers' Defence Committees (WDC) in the civil service against top officials. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the WDC put forward a plan to recall the top brass of the diplomatic service and to reorganise this service on a political basis.

This was successfully resisted by the upper crust of the bureaucracy. Such struggles can also be observed within the armed forces, police and other institutions of the state.

The tactics of imperialist forces appears to be one of wait and see. Where possible they apply discreet pressure on the PNDC to divert the progressive struggle into reforming the neo-colonial state.

This enables international capital to continue its more profitable role of

dependence on foreign exchange.

However the agrarian question has not yet been tackled and the traditional chiefs who have tyrannically controlled the land continue to do so. Taking this problem up has not been helped by the recent appointment of one such chief to the PNDC.

The influx of over one million deportees will force choices on the PNDC. The prospects for a socialist transformation will depend on a united left and the struggle for a more structured government in which the defence committees assume paramount importance.

Imperialism will however use this situation to put more pressure on the PNDC, attempting to squeeze out political concessions in return for aid.

Socialists in Britain must demand that the British government immediately and unconditionally sends a large amount of aid. This is both for immediate needs and for the long term reconstruction of the economy. We must also expose all attempts to use aid for political manipulation.

International

Bi-monthly theoretical and discussion journal published by supporters of the Fourth International in Britain.

Latest issue includes Ernest Mandel on the world monetary situation, John Ross on the legends of King Arthur, Oliver MacDonal on Poland, Ron Brown MP on building a mass Labour Party, Harry Wicks on the birth of British Trotskyism and an interview with Britain's best political cartoonist Steve Bell.

Subscriptions £5.50p per annum (Britain) or £6.50 (surface) / £12 airmail abroad. International PO Box 50 London N1 2XP.

A Human River against austerity

By our Italian correspondent

'A HUMAN RIVER, close to three miles long ... was how *Corriere della Sera*, a prestigious capitalist newspaper, described the great demonstration in Milan against the latest austerity measures in Italy.

The Milan demonstration was just one of a series of strikes and demonstrations that have swept Italy in the past weeks.

Last December the Christian Democrat government adopted a number of measures including tax increases and price rises for electricity and transport. This led to a big cut in workers' living standards.

Protest

In January there was a price increase of between five and 20 per cent in the initial payment for medicines and on consultation with specialists.

At the Ansaldo plant in Campi, workers downed tools in protest to be joined by thousands of other workers and barricades were set up in the streets. The next day, 5 January, workers occupied the Genoa airport and in Palermo, Sicily, shipyard workers blockaded the railway station.

In Tuscany the Piombino steel workers staged a demonstration and in Bari in the south people demonstrated and set up street barricades. Dockers in Venice threatened with job loss, blockaded the bridge connecting the city to the mainland and the airport was paralysed by a strike.

Stoppage

Milan also began to mobilise. About 50,000 workers took to the street. *Corriere della Sera* wrote 'No one called it. A work stoppage had been announced only by the engineering and chemical workers, but other workers also struck in the industrial sector, government offices and the services.'

The Naples press com-

menting on the massive demonstration there that led to hours of traffic jams and barricaded streets, said 'nothing has been seen like this since 1962.'

Crucial

After the police had attacked a meeting in Rome of 500 factory delegates the engineering union called a protest strike. The engineering union in Florence launched a three hour strike which got support from other industrial workers.

Joined

15 January 80,000 workers joined a mass demonstration in Genoa, 20,000 marched in Bologna, in Florence 15,000 marched and there was a two hour general strike in Taranto. The UIL (Italian Workers Union) and the Italian Confederation of Labour (the CGIL) which are led by currents linked to the government, reacted against these militant actions. The Socialist Party dominated UIL tried to stop the movement claiming it was inspired by the Communist Party and the far left. Carniti the CISL leader, gave a green light to the police intervention when talking about airport occupations he said, 'that's a matter for Rognoni' who is Minister for the Interior!

Showdown

Italy could be moving towards a big showdown. The bosses want to get rid of the 1975 wage agreement on the sliding scale and ram through even more austerity measures.

The workers have given a clear signal that they are prepared to fight back. The 64,000 dollar question is will the unions give the lead?

Police harassment and intimidation

K. ACE KELLY got arrested on the first Colin Roach demonstration. He tells Socialist Challenge about what has happened to him since. Since being arrested on the 22 January demonstration that demanded an enquiry into the death of Colin Roach in Stoke Newington police station, I have suffered harassment and intimidation. When I was taken to Stoke Newington police station that Saturday I was threatened by a policeman who was bleeding; I got special attention because I advised others arrested about their rights.

The following Wednesday (26 Jan) in Camberwell where I often stay with a friend, 'someone' white in a brown mini attempted to run me down three times. The next night (Thurs 27 Jan) at 2.00am I noticed a police Rover on the spot where I had stopped my would-be assailant by throwing my bicycle at his car.

Monday 31 Jan, walking up Denmark Hill, Camberwell, I am stopped by two Brixton policemen — L171 and L647 — who are, by no stretch of the imagination, 'young coppers'. After refusing to be intimidated by these gentlemen, I'm arrested for 'suspicion of theft'. I have with me my reel to reel tape recorder, nearly twenty years old, which I've just collected from a friend's flat.

My two friends tell me that the 'reasonable grounds' for my arrest is that I am 'out too late' (11.45pm) in this area. At Brixton police station I am denied my right to make a phone call simply because I have not earned that 'privilege' by co-operating, according to sergeant L2.

At 3.00am I'm taken to see a woman inspector, who refuses to give her name to me. When I demand to be charged or released and state that the only grounds for my arrest is my colour, she tells me that 'I'm not a racist, I'm married to a Nigerian man.'

'There's millions of decent blacks in this country, and if you don't like it you should get out and go and make your revolution somewhere else.' Referring to my political persuasions — how did she know?!!

This inspector went on to tell me (after being locked away for three hours) that I would be released without charge and also without my tape machine which they admitted they knew was not stolen. 26 and 27 January, coincidence? Maybe! but ... There can be no doubts that this is another clear case of harassment. When taken to Brixton station I also had in my possession a pair of fairly new headphones: these were not mentioned once. Indeed they were returned with my property when I left the station that night.

The tape was merely used as the focus for my harassment, arrest and detention. I am told by the police if I want it returned I must go through the courts. I intend at the very least to lodge a formal complaint and I hope to be able to prosecute the police for illegal detention and wrongful arrest.

I ask that you write to the Brixton police condemning their actions and demanding the return of my property.



Supporters of an inquiry into the death of Colin Roach

Boundary changes alert

FOLLOWING THE House of Lord's ruling against Labour in the recent boundaries appeal, CLP activists should be on the alert for the following points.

Labour Party headquarters have recently sent a memo to constituency secretaries warning them of the implications of the boundary changes. Once

the new party has held its inaugural meeting, new GCs will be frozen and a time-table set for selection of MPs. This means that anyone not on the GC at that meeting won't be able to vote in the re-selection.

Parties should begin now to hold informal discussions to clear up the many discrepancies which will arise. For example, not all parties have the same formula for ward delegations — is yours one delegate per 50 members, or one per 25? Also arrangements should be made now for constituency-wide bodies like Women's Sections and YS branches to ensure that the delegations represent the whole of the new area.

Trade union branches may face particular problems. They must ensure that they reallocate their LP affiliation to the new constituencies, and that the delegates they send do remain living within the new boundary.

You should act now. Make sure that your ward or affiliated organisation is aware of these forthcoming changes. Contact your constituency secretary and make sure s/he is doing something about this now. Once the boundaries come into effect, there will be little time left to sort these things out.

Evening of Kurdish Revolutionary songs

Come to hear Kurdistan's most famous singer — SIVAN. An evening of Kurdish music, revolutionary songs and dance. Also Culistan and other performers. Saturday 19 February 6.00pm. Camden Centre, Bidborough Street. Opposite Kings Cross Station. Entrance £2.50. £1 unwaged. p&p Kurdistan Solidarity PO Box 30, 29 Islington Park St. London N1.

Trades unionists support Greenham

By Brian Grogan

GREENHAM women's camp spokesperson Rebecca Johnson appealed to trade unionists to win backing for 'Women's day of action for peace' on 24 May. She was speaking to over 120 London trades unionists who had made their way to Greenham Common last Saturday to pledge their support for the campaign of the Greenham women's peace camp against the stationing of cruise missiles in Britain. The 24 May action aims to involve women in Britain and Europe.

She explained that there was a clear connection between the fight against cruise and spending on nuclear weapons and the fight against cuts and unemployment.

The delegation, organised by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils and the South East Region of the TUC, took with them a variety of gifts including sleeping bags, food and drink, and two out of use ambulances. They handed over nearly £1,000 in cash.

A £32 collection for the waterworkers was taken on one of the three coaches.



Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

Scotland

ABERDEEN: SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.
EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.
GLASGOW: SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barretts, Byres Rd; Clyde Books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop Collective, Cresswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.
HAMILTON: SC sale every Sat 1-5pm outside Safeway, shopping centre. For more info contact John Ford, 53 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton or Paul Youngson, 18 Forrest Crescent, Hamilton.

Wales

BANGOR: Sat 10-12 town centre.
CARDIFF: every Sat in Bute Town 10.30-12. Also available 1-0-8 Books, Salisbury Road.
NEWPORT: every Sat in town centre 11-12.30.
PONTYPRIDD: SC sales every Sat outside Open Market 11-1pm.
PORT TALBOT: Sat 11am-1pm town centre.
SWANSEA: SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.

England

BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.
BIRKENHEAD: SC on sale at Labour Club, Cleveland St, Thur nights; in precinct outside Littlewoods, Sat 11-12.
BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-5904.
BOLSOVER: Cross Keys, every Fri 8-9pm, Bluebell 9-10.
BRADFORD: SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpelier, Bristol 6.
BURNLEY: SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop.
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: SC sales in Time Square, Sat 10.30-1.30pm.
HUDDERSFIELD: SC sold Sat 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
LEEDS: Sat 11-1 at Lands Lane Pedestrian Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Headingley Armale Centre. Corner Bookshop, Woodhouse Lane.
LIVERPOOL/BIRKENHEAD: SC sold in Birkenhead Precinct, outside Littlewoods, Sat 11-12am and Liverpool, Church St, outside Top Shop, Sat 12-1pm.
MANCHESTER: SC sold 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER at Gorton and Droylesden markets 11am-12.30pm and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.
MANSFIELD: Fri 3-4pm, Stockwell Gate, Sat 10.30-12 Westgate. Four Seasons Shopping Centre Sat 10.30-12.
NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. Every Friday outside Newcastle University between 1-2 and outside Newcastle Polytechnic between 12-1 every Monday.
NOTTINGHAM: SC sold every Sat 12-1pm Slab Square. For info phone 863916.
OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.
SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.
SOUTHAMPTON: SC on sale Sat 10am-12 noon at Above Bar Post Office (Shopping Precinct).
STAFFORD: SC on Sale Market Sq Sat lunch-time.
STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly; phone 483 8909 (evening). 236 4905 (day).

London

BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.
EALING: SC sold Thur, Ealing Broadway tube, 5-6pm.
ENFIELD: SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.
HACKNEY: SC on sale on estates throughout Hackney, at public meetings, and local factories. Contact us c/o PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High St, London, E8 2NF or phone Megan or John at 359 8288.
HILLINGDON: SC sold Fri, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; Sat 11.30-12.30 in shopping precinct, Uxbridge.
HOUNSLOW: SC sold outside Hounslow East tube, every Wed 5.15-6.15pm.
ISLINGTON: Every Fri, 8.15-9am at Holloway Road tube and Highbury tube.
KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.
LAMBETH: SC sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
NEWHAM: SC sold Sat 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Mkt, Upton Park.
PADDINGTON: SC sold at Portobello Rd market Sat at noon.
WEMBLEY: SC sales Fri 6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

Bookshops

BANGOR: Rainbows, Holyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.
BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.
BRIGHTON: The Public House, Little Preston St.
BRISTOL: Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.
BIRMINGHAM: Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.
DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.
ILFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.
MILTON KEYNES: Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.
OXFORD: EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.
LEICESTER: Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Leicester, and V Karia, 53A London Rd, Leicester.
LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1.
LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Colletts, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn High Road, NW6; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centreprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC; Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's; Village Books, Streatham; Tethric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk; Shakti Books, 46 High St, Southall.
PORT TALBOT: McConville's Newsagent, Station Road.
NOTTINGHAM: Mushroom Books, Heathcote St, Hockley.
SOUTHAMPTON: October Books, Onslow Road.
SUNDERLAND: The Ceolfrith Art Gallery Bookshop, Grange Terrace.
YORK: Community books, Walmgate.

Whats left

STUDY conference on the struggle against imperialism in Africa and the Caribbean. Sat 5 Feb 10.30-5 at County Hall, London SE1. Organised jointly by Liberation and the Britain-Cuba Resource Cen-

tre. Speakers include Ken Gill, the High Commissioner for Grenada, representatives of the Cuban and Ethiopian embassies. Details from: Secretary, Liberation, 313 Caledonian Rd, N1.

Women for life

FOR THE last week the Cardiff women for life on earth have held a 24 hour vigil outside the Royal Ordnance factory, Llamishen Cardiff. This factory produces components for nuclear weapons. South Glamorgan county council have for months tried to get into the factory to monitor waste both gaseous and sewerage.

The local residents, the council and local peace groups all believe that this waste contains beryllium — a cancer inducing metal. Also radio active Uranium 238.

The vigil wants to get known what is going on in the factory and by surveillance there find out what components enter and leave. The presence of

this Royal Ordnance Factory makes a nonsense of a policy of a nuclear free Wales as their materials travel on the roads throughout South Wales.

This was admitted last week in a reply to a parliamentary question.

Cardiff CND are organising a protest march to the factory on 5 March.

Socialist Challenge

BAN PLASTIC BULLETS!

A LABOUR MOVEMENT DELEGATE CONFERENCE

With well known speakers from Ireland and Britain, this conference is open to delegates from labour and trade union bodies.

Refreshments Bar Crèche facilities Stalls Post-conference social

Saturday 26 February 1983, 11.00am

UMIST, Barnes Wallis Building, Sackville Street, Manchester 1



KILLED

The Plastic Bullets Conference organisers are justifiably pleased with their success in the unions.

Support extends beyond union members committed to a policy of troop withdrawal for a United Ireland. South Wales miners are sending delegations, and so are NUPE. Many prominent Broad Left supporters have also associated themselves with building the conference.

This conference is just a start. A big battle with the right wing is needed to make opposition to plastic bullets a permanent part of union policy.

It won't be enough to show how plastic bullets will be used against strikers.

Support

The right wing bureaucracy of the British unions has its strongest political support from the Loyalist-dominated unions in the North of Ireland. That's why they back the Labour Party filling Irish ministerial posts with reactionaries like Roy Mason and Don Concanon.

The right wing claim, that the unions of the North are non-sectarian, is a dangerous myth. This has been shown time and again, during the civil rights struggles. Whilst the trade union movement continues to recognise the Northern state as legitimate, it will be forced to withdraw from any civil rights or anti-repression struggle which begins to be effective.

Being effective means challenging the Northern state. It is the nationalist population who are the victims of state repression, and it is they who protest most strongly about civil rights, political status, or plastic bullets. This gives the union leaders an excuse to step aside.

They declare such issues only affect Catholics, not workers as a whole. Hence, to support such campaigns is regarded as 'sectarian'.

Here the union leadership tells us to 'follow the example of Northern Ireland unions'. Union conferences shouldn't discuss Ireland, we're told,

because the Northern Ireland membership would object. British unions shouldn't back troops withdrawal because the Northern Irish membership would walk out if we did.

Involved

The left has to get right what's involved. The unions in the North are riddled with Loyalist sectarianism. The union bureaucracy always gives into this. Union headquarters in London don't hold back their Northern Ireland members from excesses — they support the Loyalists by supporting a British military presence which upholds the sectarian state.

If we are told to build on the gains of the Plastic Bullets conference, our campaign in the unions must take account of these wider issues. Giving into the blackmail and walk-out threats used by the union bureaucracy prevents British trade unionists giving support to the victims of state repression in the North, and to the Irish workers as a whole.



KILLED

ISRAEL

Sharon resigns, nothing changes

By Hilary Driver

'RESIGN' cried the mass media, 'Sharon must go'. And so another link in the chain of hypocrisy surrounding Israel's war against the Palestinians was forged.

The Kahan report on Israel's part in the bloody massacre of Palestinian refugees last year produced the desired effect of satisfying liberal consciences the world over.

The Israeli Cabinet, after a lengthy period of soul-searching, agreed to basically implement the findings of the report. This amounted to scapegoating one of their number, Ariel Sharon, and dishing out the terrible punishment of demoting him from the post of Defence Minister to minister without portfolio.

Moshe Arens is to replace Sharon — a signal that there will be no change in government defence policy.

Massacres

The massacres of hundreds of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Chatilla camps followed the brutal war launched against the Lebanon by the Israelis. It soon became clear that the war, far from being a defensive action as the Begin government claimed, was designed to smash the Palestine Liberation Organisation once and for all.

Once having smashed the main organised opposition to the Zionist state, they could then speed up the process of Israeli colonisation of the West Bank.

The PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, said that



The Israeli dinosaur makes itself at home in Lebanon.

the report was inadequate because it 'did not include a decisive condemnation of Menachim Begin and members of his government who are involved, with American support, in the shameful massacre'.

He proposed that an international court should try the Israelis and Americans.

Survivors of the massacre in Beirut dismissed the report as a farce,

and some called for the execution of Sharon.

History

The Kahan Commission findings serve only to whitewash the involvement of both the US and Israeli imperialism in the Lebanon and the whole region.

In all the weeping and wailing over the tragedy, we will hear not a whisper about what is really at the

root of the conflict — the combined military aggression of the US and their expansionist lap-dog, Israel.

While the international 'peace-keeping' force watches, Palestinians and Lebanese are still being murdered in the Lebanon.

Until Israel is forced to withdraw from surrounding territories, and the rights of the Palestinians to their own land are recognised, the bloodbath will continue.

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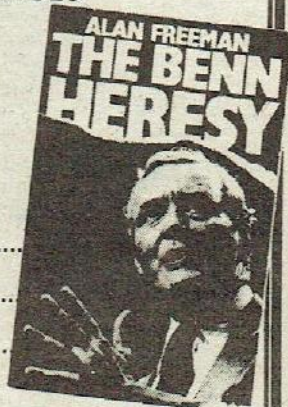
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Socialist Challenge FUND DRIVE '83

LAST WEEK Vladimir Derer, who obviously is a mature and statesperson-like chap, gave the thumbs down to 'Ben-nites, infantile leftists and infantile feminists'.

Anyhow this morning we got a letter in the post addressed to the 'Dear infantile Trots'. Good christ I thought, comrade Derer has started a nomenclature craze, down with ultra leftism, long live infantileism — which even Lenin said was a bit of a disorder.

However this letter came from a comrade called Kathleen Jones who lives in Shrewsbury and she tells us that she is: 'An eighty year old, lifelong infantile feminist'. Being a bit personal I think that is a more honourable way to spend eighty years of your life than helping the right wing with its register plans. But then every one to their own choice I suppose.

Kathleen told us, 'I like your paper, but I also want to support the *Militant*, and find it rather expensive to subscribe to two papers having the same views but different tactics.'

Kathleen then says, 'I am in receipt of a supplementary pension which saves me from destitution, so I am sending you £7.'

As she points out '.... even a campaign for "democracy" within the party turns round and supports the dictatorship' Kathleen Jones the 'eighty year old, lifelong infantile feminist' unlike Vladimir Derer, gets it right on democracy and on putting her money behind a paper that fights for what she believes in.

With an example like that, dear readers — do I have to say any more?

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DRAWING BY STEVE MENDELSON, WASHINGTON POST