

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).



Photo: Graham Cookson

Give back the Missing Millions

Demonstrate for the return of the Rate Support Grant to Southwark Council.

Assemble Saturday 19 February, 11am, London College of Printing, March to Downing Street, Rally at Victoria Gardens, Embankment

Called by Southwark Council. Supported by Bermondsey, Dulwich and Peckham Labour Parties, Southwark NALGO, NUPE, G&MWU, T&GWU, UCATT, Southwark Group Tenants' Association.



Tory environment minister Tom King. He's taken over Michael Heseltine's old job of robbing local councils.

WHEN THE TAPS RUN DRY BLAME THE TORIES!

THE GOVERNMENT is preparing a massive campaign of abuse against the waterworkers. Already the Tory papers are pouring out stories of waterworkers cutting off supplies to hospitals and kidney machines. In fact, the water workers have gone out of their way to prevent hardship among the old and sick.

But if the strike continues there will be hardship; water to homes and industry will be gradually disrupted. For all this the Tories will be to blame — they are standing in the way of a settlement. When the taps start to dry up, when workers are laid off in other industries and homes are without water the Tories will blame the 'heartless' water workers.

But all the water workers are asking is a living wage. Their basic pay is around £85 a week — if they earn more on average its because of massive amounts of overtime. And they earn this paltry wage for doing what are some of the nastiest jobs on offer, dealing with everyone else's muck.

Margaret Thatcher has told the employers not to pay any more than the 7.3 per cent offer already made. The Tories are worried that the water workers are knocking a hole in their public sector pay policy. Good. This pay policy is precisely what other groups like the hospital workers have been fighting against.

The whole resources of the labour movement, the Labour Party as well as the unions, must now swing behind the water workers; the defeat of the hospital workers must not be repeated. In particular the labour movement must prepare for the use of troops to run key installations.

But troops can't do even simple jobs in the water industry if they receive no supplies; trade unionists must black all material destined for the water industry.

The water workers strike can give Thatcher the bloody nose which she so thoroughly deserves — with the support of the whole labour movement.

FOR THE FULL CLAIM! NO TROOPS! LABOUR MUST SUPPORT THE WATER WORKERS!

Editorial

If you want nuclear disarmament — vote Labour!

AS THE general election approaches, the question of what nuclear disarmers should do in the election campaign is increasingly being debated. Simultaneously, the SDP-Liberal alliance is making its bid to get a section of the anti-nuclear vote, by posing as the 'serious multilateralists', stressing their opposition to Trident and the urgent need for the success of international negotiations to 'avoid the necessity' for cruise missiles.

In fact only one of the main parties is committed through conference decision to unilateral nuclear disarmament — the Labour Party. But the anti-nuclear movement is far from united around the need to return a Labour government and force it to carry through its anti-nuclear commitment.

The CND apparatus, as explained in a recent interview by Bruce Kent, will support all parties or candidates who stand for nuclear disarmament. Daniel Plesch and Gus Scott have proposed a 'General Election Peace Campaign' which proposes backing unilateralist candidates of whatever party; the aim would be to encourage disarmers of, for example, the SDP 'even if the rest of the party is lukewarm'.

In addition to this, Helen Johns of the Greenham Common peace camp has announced that they will be standing 'Women for Life' candidates against pro-nuclear weapons candidates of all parties.

Socialist Challenge, thinks all these points of view are in danger of seriously disorientating the anti-nuclear movement.

Among the keenest proponents of the 'support all unilateralist parties' line is of course the Communist Party. This allows the Communist Party to get away with their scandalous diversionary campaign, standing 150 candidates against Labour during the coming election.

The Communist Party is evolving to the right, with many of their members talking about a new broad alliance with the 'centre' — in other words the SDP. They combine this, however, with the most absurd sectarian posturing as an alternative to Labour in the general election.

Only a government — not 'more unilateralist MPs' — will get rid of cruise, Trident, American bases and the 'British deterrent'. The only party which can conceivably be pushed into such a stance is the Labour Party.

The SDP is a pro-American party absolutely committed to the Atlantic nuclear alliance. The 'serious multilateralist' stance of David Owen is a manoeuvre to capitalise on the anti-nuclear vote. The SDP is 100 percent against unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The space for the SDP's manoeuvres has been created by the failure of Michael Foot and the Labour leadership to unequivocally give a commitment that all nuclear weapons will be abolished by a Labour government. When Foot says that unilateral and multilateral disarmament are 'not counterposed' he creates an opportunity for every 'multilateralist' trickster to argue that he or she is equally serious about disarmament.

A clear commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament in the Labour manifesto would put all the other parties on the spot. Even so, of the major parties only Labour has given a clear commitment against cruise and Trident.

The Labour leadership should take stock of important findings in the opinions polls: 61 percent against cruise missiles, but only 8 percent think nuclear disarmament is a crucial election issue. That needs to be turned around.

If 61 percent thought it was a crucial election issue, it would be a massive blow against the Tories, the one party not committed at all to any pretence of being concerned with disarmament. That's why the struggle inside the Labour Party to ensure a clear unilateralist commitment inside the manifesto is so crucial.

Meanwhile, inside the peace movement the case that only Labour can carry through unilateral nuclear disarmament needs to be rammed home. There is a job to be done here by Labour CND. They should be creating holy murder about reports that unilateralism has been left out of the draft manifesto. A serious fight inside the party creates the best conditions for winning the anti-nuclear movement to support for its natural and most powerful ally — the labour movement.

Trade Unions

Waterworkers Full solidarity

By Pat Hickey

'VICTIM of the water bullies!' screamed the *Daily Express* headlines on the Monday after the water workers had decisively rejected the 7.5 percent offer. In reality of course the offer was spread over 16 months, and was actually worth about 5 percent.

The press claims that the offer means £10 a week on average is rubbish. For most of the workers it would mean between £5.50 and £6 a week.

Undoubtedly this is the opening shot in a media campaign aimed at isolating the strikers and turning working class opinion against them. The Tories and their supporters in Fleet Street see this as an important test of strength in the run-up to the General Election, and will stop at nothing in their efforts to defeat the strike.

Votes

The water workers however are determined. In the Midlands delegates voted 40 to 1 to continue the strike; in the North West they voted 50 to 1. Similar votes were taken throughout the country, giving the lie to Norman Tebbit's claim that the strike was unconstitutional under the unions own rules, and did not have the support of the members.

The question now for water workers, and for the whole labour movement, is how to defeat the Tories. On this point it is clear that the members are more determined than their leaders.

Linked

So far, they have refused to call out the Scottish water workers whose pay is directly linked to the English and Welsh workers. And they have given every indication that they are prepared to ignore the £13.50 parity claim to bring the water workers in line with Gas and Electricity workers, in favour of a percentage increase over 12 months.

In addition, the water workers have Len Murray, who secured such a glorious victory for the British Rail Board against the traindrivers, and for Norman Fowler against the health workers waiting

in the wings to offer help.

To counter this the strikers should now turn out to the rest of the labour movement for support, while stepping up the sanctions against industry. Labour movement support can call the Tory's bluff, and the CBI will not be so keen for a fight when their members profits are being hit.

Army

If industry is hit then the Tories will bring in the army. The most effective way to hit back at this is to get other groups to refuse to cooperate with the troops.

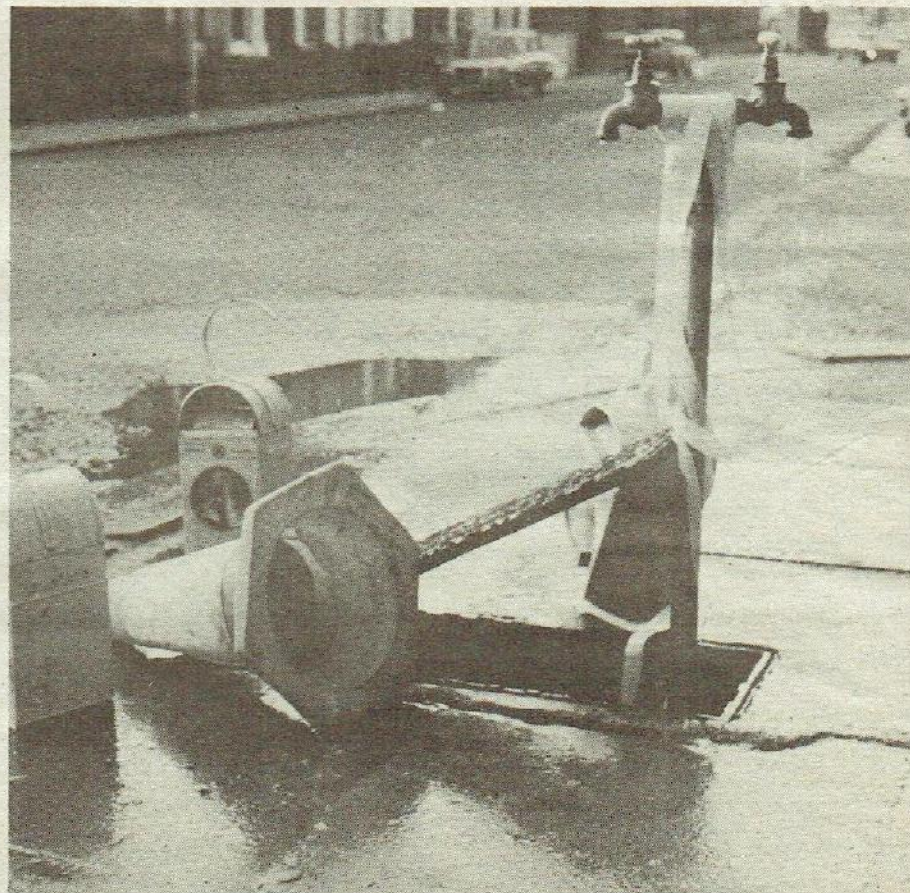
This will apply particularly to power workers, who are also pursuing their wage claim, and are likely to get the same response as the water workers. If the water workers succeed the situation for power and other groups will look very different.

Boost

All sections of the labour movement have a stake in winning this dispute, and not least the Labour Party. A big defeat for the Tories will knock a hole through Thatcher's 'Iron Lady' image, and weaken the Tories standing in the polls. For Labour it would be a major boost.

We should step up the demand that the Labour leaders stop witch hunting their own members — and insist they fight the witch hunt against the water workers. Every Labour Party should ensure that its MPs and Councillors are down at the picket lines offering support. And the Labour Party should be the first to help the strikers by organising tours to raise money and get the case against the Tories across.

Now is the time for joint LP/TU action against the Tories.



NATIONAL BOOK

SALE

15 January - 5 February
at

The Other Bookshop

328 Upper St London N1
Hours - Mon, Tues, Sat 10-6; Wed 12-7; Thurs, Fri 11-7

and

Birmingham's Other Bookshop

137 Digbeth Birmingham B5
Hours - Mon-Sat 10-6 Closed Wed

CND Diary



7-13 February

YCND week of action against Trident and unemployment. Local actions around jobs centres and YOPS schemes.

Friday 1 April

14 mile human chain from Greenham Common to Aldermaston via Burfield. Starts 1.30pm followed by festival at Aldermaston.

Saturday 12 February

Student CND National demonstration and human chain from the Ministry of Defence to the Department of Education and Science. Starts Jubilee Gardens, County Hall.

Saturday 2 April

Scottish CND demonstration in Glasgow.

Saturday 7 May

Youth CND Festival for Peace. Starts at 11am with demonstration from the Embankment, London to Brockwell Park. Bands, speakers and festival village.

Tuesday 15 February

Picket of Newbury Crown Court where the trial of women arrested at Greenham Common starts.

Saturday 6 August

Hiroshima Day Date agreed for Labour Party/TUC day of action against the missiles. Also marches from all over Britain to Greenham Common.

Thursday 31 March

12 hour blockade of Greenham Common (women only) and Burfield Royal Ordnance Factory (mixed).

WATERWORKERS SPEAK OUT

A London water worker on the claim

TERRY EANES works as an assistant turncock for the Thames Water Authority in Clerkenwell. Socialist Challenge spoke to him on Saturday while his union leaders were discussing what further action should be taken to pursue their claim.

'The water workers in London are very solidly behind their unions stand in rejecting the so-called 7.3 percent offer. London threw out the offer by a ratio of six to one. The impression gained from this strike at Headquarters was that feelings had got stronger over the week. The Western 5 GMBU branch had thrown out the claim by 118 votes to two. Coppermills have voted 87 to nine and another meeting at Bruce Grove had voted 51 to 1 to reject the offer.'

'The water workers seemed very confident that their skills and industrial muscle would force the offer up without troops being able to be brought in to do the job that they did normally.'

'Their only worry was the union might be forced to go to arbitration, a prospect they were against as they thought it would lead to a sell out.'

'No post is being delivered here, no food, no milk. The people working inside, members of the staff association are on 24 hour call however. They are opening the security gates and car parks, doing stand-by shifts that we normally do. They must be earning much more than they usually earn.'

The offer of 7.3 percent isn't really that amount. That includes a day's holiday and extra money for shift working. We've said it's got to be an improved offer over the 12 months not the 16 months that they're proposing. We told the union to forget about any 16 month deal.

Broken

'We are expecting to step up the pressure next week. Camden Council has suggested emergency cover may be necessary to move water but Camden NUPE has voted to give us full backing and back all work relating to the strike. The FBU has also promised not to carry water out. Our emergency cover at the moment is to deal with any broken mains covering hospitals, clinics and fires but if they bring in the troops we'll withdraw all that.'

When asked about the betrayals of the TUC in relation to the ASLEF strike and the NHS dispute Terry said militants were drawing lessons from the right-wing trade union leaders' role. 'We've voted not to have Len Murray to do anything about our dispute. He hasn't done any good in any other industry. If our union leaders follow the advice of their members then we'll get the claim we want.'

I'm confident that we're going to stay out until we get a better offer.'

'We'll stay out as long as it takes'

SOUTH WALES water workers have shown themselves to be amongst the most militant in the whole of Britain. Nationally, the decision for strike action was four to one in favour. In South Wales it was eight to one.

This week they have decided to try to stop chlorination throughout Wales by picketing chlorine supplies to the

waterworks. In the Gower and Dysed divisions all emergency cover has been removed, and this is expected to be extended to

the whole of South Wales during this week.

JIM WALSH is at the Cwmtawe water depot. Here, the pickets have gone even further by turning back spare parts. The craft workers are crossing the line.

A rota has been drawn

up and pickets set up at the nearby Trebanca sewage works as well as the Birch Grove pump house. Jim explained the mood of the strikers:

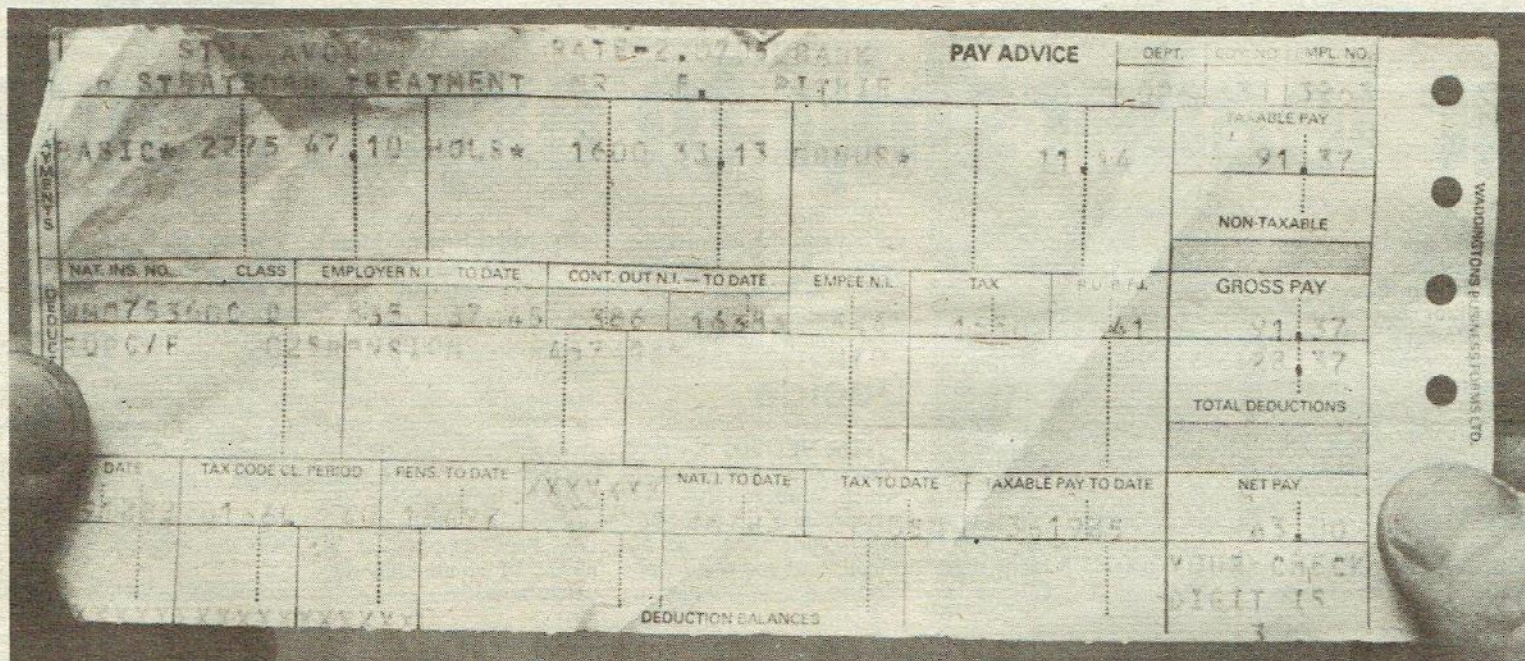
'Our members have all rejected the deal. We have got to get comparability with the gas and electricity industry. Tebbit's state-

ment shows how strong that man is. Ours is a democratic union. I'm everything back to members. But it does make any difference we'll stay out as long as it takes. As long as we're sold down the river by union negotiators.'

Jim told us how the press was playing down effects of the strike. 'Sewage has been flowing into the river Tawe from Ystrabynlais from start of the strike.'

He was convinced of the strength of the water workers. 'We're the most powerful workers in the world — if we are divided. We've given too many concessions already. The managers have been up to tricks they can do all their emergencies now.'

Jim was sceptical about the use of troops. 'They could send a whole Yankee army in it would make no difference. They can march to parade up and down, but they would know what to do in a sewage tunnel.'



Water workers pay slip showing net pay £63. So much for Tory press claims!

Basnet answers Tebbit

YOUR LETTER confirming the allegation you made in the House that my union is in breach of rule in calling our members in the water industry out on strike, shows considerable ignorance both as to the content of the union rule book and the legal requirements governing the methods unions adopt in consulting its membership.

The straight facts are these. Over 82% of our members nationwide voted in the ballot on strike action, with more than three-to-one voting in favour. The overwhelming majority were therefore in favour of the strike.

The rule to which you refer relates to strike action initiated at local and branch levels, which then is subject to executive endorsement and direction. In our rule book the executive council itself has the power to call a national dispute.

The rule book does not require our executive council to ballot our members when calling on them to participate in national action. Hence, in deciding to hold a ballot of individual members the executive council went well

beyond the obligation in the rule book.

Because they were concerned to take all steps possible to ascertain our members' feelings. Your allegation that the union has not complied with rule book democracy could not be further from the truth. I can assure you that my union, at all levels, is more than aware of its responsibilities towards its members and the community at large.

I hope that you now recognise that the executive council both used the rule book and went beyond the rule book requirements in order to ensure a fully democratic decision.

Your letter continues with a string of questions on the details of how the ballot was conducted. Were you able to assure me that the Conser-

vative Government whose restrictive pay policies have prompted this strike, or the employers side who have refused since my members presented the claim to enter into normal fruitful negotiations, had equally democratic consultation machinery among their constituents I could take your accusations and inquiries a little more seriously.

As it is I can only assume such enquiries and encouragement to individual union members to appeal to the courts to be part of a mischievous attack on the union. I would also point out that your enquiries appear to

be made under the misapprehension that Norman Tebbit's proposals for state regulation of union elections is already on the statute book. I am glad to inform you that to date unions continue to operate their own democratic machinery under rules decided by their own members.

May I suggest that the public would be much better served if you turned your attention to persuading the employers to negotiate with the unions — something they have not in reality done since November — and allow them to make an improved offer which met my members aspirations.

THE TORIES came into office pledged that they wouldn't interfere in negotiations and that they wouldn't impose an incomes policy. As soon as they took office, they have done nothing else but interfere. Now they are trying to impose an incomes policy on us. They want to maintain the four percent limit. Its politics they are playing at.'

Derek Patterson shop steward at Audenshaw waterworks.

Big support in Sheffield

IAN DRAYTON, shop steward at the Black Meadows sewerage works addressed a mass rally of 2000 demonstrators protesting the 1700 South Yorkshire steel redundancies last Saturday.

Martin Flannery, MP, in his speech to the rally praised the determination of the water workers who described themselves as 'green as grass'. He put the blame for the previous defeats of health workers and railworkers in the hands of the leadership 'at the very top level'.

Half of the cash collection made at the rally was donated to the water workers and numerous promises of support were given by convenors afterwards.

The top priority for the newly formed Sheffield water workers strike committee — set up on the initiative of the General and Municipal water and pollution control branch of South Yorkshire — is to produce a strike bulletin and to keep the membership fully involved and informed. They are also to organise teams of strikers to win labour movement solidarity. They intend to win support from power workers and a commitment not to collaborate with troops should they be used to main-

tain a water supply to power stations.

Healey CLP passed following emergency resolution

Healey constituency Labour Party calls upon the government to pay the water workers claim in full, and deplore danger and inconvenience to the public caused by government in its attempt to impose an incomes policy which cuts real wages to public sector.

We resolve to:

1. make our support to water workers known to the press
2. encourage our members to campaign in their support by distributing GMBATU leaflets and petitions of support.
3. contact affiliated unions and request that they consider similar action if they have already done so

James Neils shop steward committee passed a resolution supporting the water workers. It decided to collect money utilising the G&M petition.

Emergency cover withdrawn in Notts

THE WATER workers dispute escalated here last Tuesday 27 January with the withdrawal of all emergency cover in Mansfield.

Management cleared screens at the Bath Lane breaking a previous agreement. The response of the C and NUPE members was immediate — 'this means emergency cover was withdrawn.'

The following day, water workers in the rest of Nottinghamshire (with the exception of the city of Nottingham), followed this Mansfield lead.

The confident mood of the pickets at the Great Central Rd site was strengthened by the decision of the government union staff members to stage a one hour strike in support of the manual workers.

Socialist Challenge supporters have been active to raise support in the main local industries — coal, garment. This will be vital as layoffs could soon be made in these industries. Calls for support are also being made in the local Labour Parties.



Pickets in Warwickshire

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Labour's manifesto must be unilateralist

FOLLOWING rumours that Labour's unilateralist commitment is to be 'watered down', the Labour Disarmament Liaison Committee has appealed to Michael Foot to ensure the Party's policy is adhered to, and has called on all constituency Labour

Parties, trade unions and other affiliated organisations to make representation to the party leader and the NEC to this effect.

The draft manifesto, or campaign document as it is called, is being prepared by the campaign committee, a working party headed by Michael

Foot. The rumours appeared last week on Channel Four and have been neither confirmed nor denied. The working party discussions are confidential and even other NEC members are not privy to its proceedings. The disarmament committee wants the rumours to be quashed and the uncertainty removed.

Its letter to the party

leader has been signed by Labour CND, Trade Union CND, Labour Action for Peace, European Nuclear Disarmament, the Bertrand Russel Peace Foundation, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and the Royal Arsenal Co-operative society.

It emphasises that the general election manifesto should fully respect the position on nuclear disar-

mament taken by the recent conference and contained in composite 51, which was passed by a two thirds majority and Labour's Programme '82, which was passed unanimously.

Labour Party and trade union policy is for the removal of all nuclear bases from British soil or British waters.

● Saturday's AGM of the campaign for Labour Party Democracy overwhelmingly endorsed an emergency resolution from Walter Wolfgang calling on unions and constituency parties to 'put maximum pressure on the NEC so that Labour's full commitment on Nuclear Disarmament and all other political commitments should be included in the campaigns document.'

The motion expresses alarm that the NEC of 26 January turned down a request for NEC members to be allowed to see drafts of the document which have already been leaked to the press.

● Labour Against the Witch-hunt has also called on its supporters to protest at the NEC's rejection of motions to include further NEC members on the campaigns committee, which is drawing up the campaigns document. It calls for an open discussion in the party around Labour's election policies to ensure that conference decisions are included in it.

● We urge all our supporters to take up this important campaign

Labour leadership to expel socialists

LABOUR'S NEC has passed a resolution declaring it 'obliged to expel all Militant Tendency members.'

The resolution passed on 26 January ratifies advice from the Labour Party's lawyers that:

● Although Militant will challenge it in the courts, the NEC should expel the editorial board in March and then consider further cases

● To satisfy the requirements of 'natural justice' it must expel all Militant supporters

● However, the obligation to expel is 'in practice limited to all those who can be proved to be members of the Militant Tendency'

Role

● Evidence of membership will be taken as

'financial support for, or in the organisation of, or in the activities of, the Militant Tendency'; the resolution explicitly states that the 'narrower definition of membership linking it to a 'leadership' or 'organisational role' appears to be too restrictive.'

● Each individual against whom an allegation of membership is made must be given the evidence in-

involved and the opportunity to be heard before the NEC, and to give an undertaking to renounce their support for Militant.

Decide

The NEC may however 'determine the sequence in which allegations of membership of the Militant Tendency are to be made,' and has the discretion to decide whether or

not it has sufficient information to justify proceeding in each case.

The basis of the NEC's action is to be the Hayward-Hughes report to the last Labour conference, and the NEC's decision to declare the Militant ineligible for affiliation. The Register has thus been dropped as a means of conducting the witch-hunt.

In its place, however, the NEC has now embroiled itself in a wide-ranging obligation to expel anyone connected with Militant. Unless they are stopped before the March NEC, the NEC is thus launching the party willy-nilly into a full-scale witch-hunt in the middle of an election.

Labour Against the

Witch-hunt has called for constituencies to send motions to the NEC demanding that its full time officials spend their time winning the election instead of persecuting Militant — and that all actions be dropped so that Labour can be mobilised all out for victory. LAW has reproduced the entire text of the NEC resolution, which are available to affiliates.

Communist Party sabotage in Bermondsey

THE OVERWHELMING majority of the left-wing of the labour movement in London will be united in campaigning behind Peter Tatchell in the Bermondsey by-election. There will, however, be one peculiar exception — the Communist Party of Great Britain.

The CP will, in the words of its General Secretary Gordon McLennan: be making its own 'distinctive contribution to both the immediate and long-term struggle against Thatcher and the right-wing Labour in Bermondsey.' What is this 'distinctive contribution' to be?

The Communist Party will be standing its own candidate against Peter Tatchell.

This sectarianism by the Communist Party is all the more incomprehensible in the light of the CP's professions of support for the struggle of the left-wing of the Labour Party.

In McLennan's words: 'We welcome the advance of the left in the Labour Party, of which the election of left MPs and the adoption of left candidates has been one expression.'

Yet the adoption of Peter Tatchell by Bermondsey Constituency Labour Party was the outcome of a bitter struggle against the right-wing of the Labour Party. Every vote diverted from Tatchell in this by-election will strengthen the right's case against socialist policies and candidates pledged to carry them out.

McLennan justifies the CP's 'distinctive contribution' in the following way: 'All of us, however must face up to the problems that affect the left — especially its continuing and even extending divisions: the absence of agreement on the Labour Left on important political questions and the lack of a realistic strategy about how political power is to be won in Britain by the working class and its allies.'

But in Bermondsey McLennan's party is precisely spearheading the division of the left. What is more the debate on strategy runs right through the Communist Party itself with a substantial section of CP intellectuals openly calling for a Labour/CP liberal

coalition in recent issues of its theoretical journal.

No left-wing political organisation can be built by counterposing its own narrow 'party building' interests to the actual struggles of the working class to transform the labour movement.

Perhaps that is why the Communist Party is experiencing such a sharp decline in membership and influence. Sectarian stunts like standing against Tatchell will accelerate this decline.

Communist Party militants should call their leadership to order and demand they end this type of divisive action and throw themselves into the actual political struggles within the labour movement. Part of that battle is against the pro-coalition wing of the CP itself.

LDDC STEAL OUR LAND & JOBS

Last November, Bob Mellish resigned as MP to take up a highly-paid job on the TORY London Dockland Development Corporation (LDDC) at the invitation of Mrs Thatcher and Michael Heseltine.

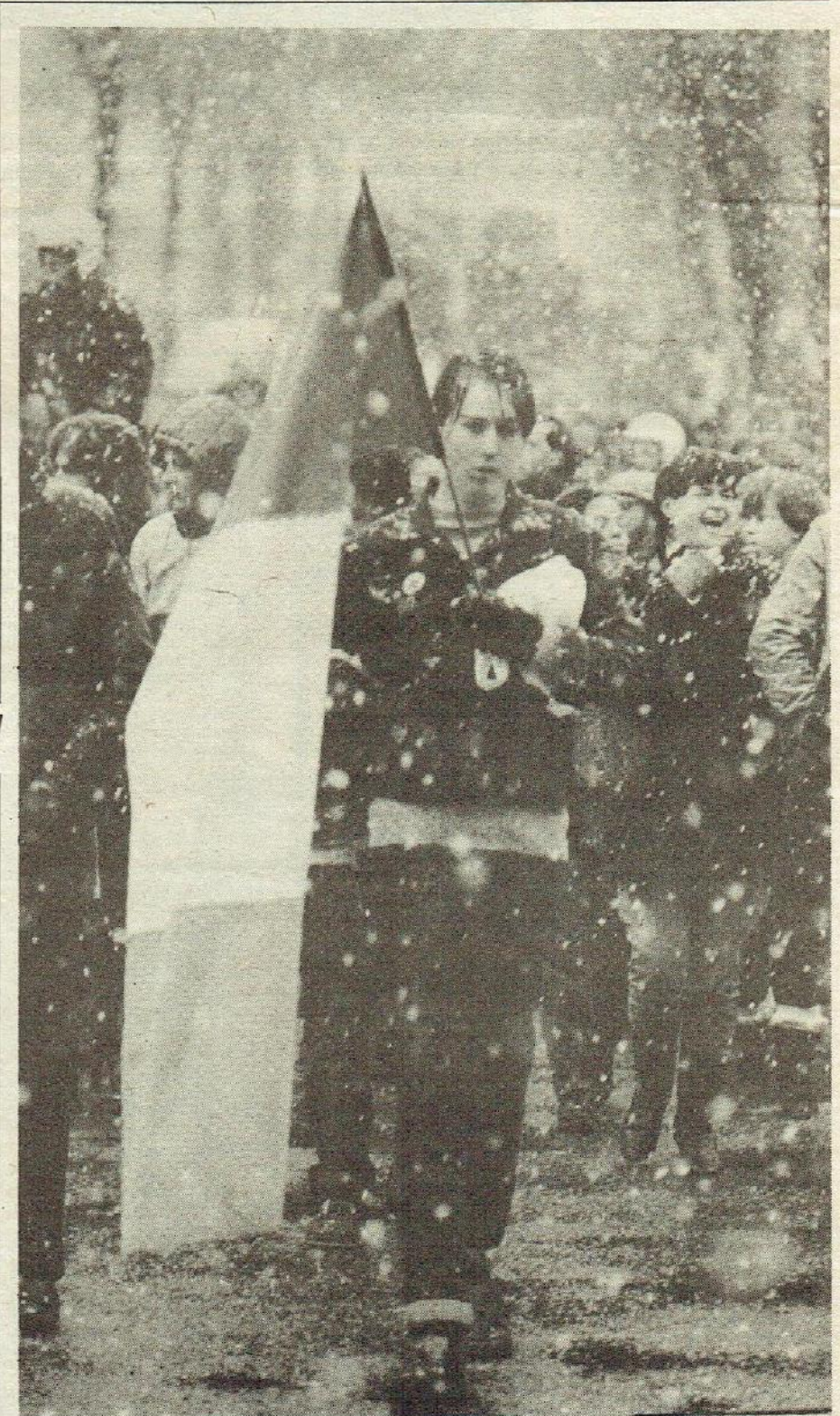
Since Bob Mellish became Vice-Chair, the LDDC has:

- Stolen 264 acres of our riverside land which had been earmarked for new council houses with gardens. Instead, the LDDC is selling off the land to property speculators for offices.
- Given notice to quit to 8 industrial firms in Surrey Docks employing 548 workers — most of whom are local people — so the land can be taken over for luxury flats and yacht marinas.
- Supported developers' plans for 2 million square feet of offices on Hay's Wharf.
- Agreed luxury flats on Corbett's Wharf at prices up to £170,000 each!
- Backed plans for 3 yacht marinas for the rich in Surrey Docks.

These are the policies which the LDDC has supported since Bob Mellish became Vice-Chair.

The LDDC effects EVERYONE in North Southwark and Bermondsey. It destroys EVERYONE'S chance of getting a LOCAL JOB or a TRANSFER to a HOUSE WITH A GARDEN.

LABOUR is the ONLY party pledged to BOYCOTT and ABOLISH the LDDC!



Leeds demonstration to commemorate Bloody Sunday

Photo: John Harris

Stop the missiles



Youth CND launch Festival Appeal Fund, pictured Paul Weller, Hazel O'Connor, Joan Ruddock (CND chairperson) and Anna-Joy David (Youth CND national organiser)

Photo Peter Gray

'Young people must fight the arms race'

MICHAEL HESELTINE, the new Tory minister for war, has been appointed by Margaret Thatcher to marshal the forces of the British establishment against the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. He has already explained that one of his first priorities will be to challenge CND's audience amongst millions of youth.

ANNA-JOY DAVID told us how CND and Youth CND intend to take on the Tory government in 1983. Anna-Joy David is National Organiser of Youth CND and a newly elected Vice-chairperson of CND itself.

'Young people have been in the forefront of the peace movement in Britain and Europe. It is unthinkable that CND could exist without a strong youth section. YCND is part of CND but keeps its own identity as the voice of young people within the campaign. We are growing at the rate of 400 new members a month. 250 joined in one day last week. But numbers of members are not the whole answer.

'Young people today live with daily social injustice — unemployment, racism, sexism, low pay. The question is how to help youth express their rejection of the arms race when they are facing so much injustice themselves. 'This year the YCND Festival will be treated as one of the main events being promoted by CND. Its aim is to show that young people are aware of the

threat to their future and do have the strength to oppose it.

'We want to involve people in the music business who oppose nuclear weapons. Michael Heseltine plans spending £80,000 to promote the government's anti-CND film 'The Peace Game', in schools. So bands are justified in using their influence to convince people to oppose the government's plans.

Event

'The event will be called YCND Festival for Peace and take place on Saturday 7 May. Our slogans are 'Rock the Bomb' and 'A Future Without Fear'. We have invited bands like The Beat, Paul Weller's new band, Madness, Linton Kwesi Johnson and many

others. It will start with a demonstration from the embankment and finish with the festival in Brockwell Park, South London.

'1983 will be a very important year. There is likely to be a general election and CND has the ability to make sure that Margaret Thatcher's government is not re-elected. We will be organising a door to door 'peace canvas' against the missiles. Thousands of young people will be voting for the first time and many of them oppose nuclear weapons.

'CND's strength comes from being a non-party-political campaign. I'd like to see a firm commitment by the labour movement to make sure the Labour Party carries out its policies.

'In the past they have ignored them when they got into power. But that is different from saying that we support the Labour Party. We support any party that has a unilateralist policy that fits in with the policy of YCND.

'Young people are very disillusioned with the existing political parties. We see working through youth culture as far more important than the party political organisations. As far as political parties go we do try to work with the Labour Party Young Socialists. Personally I

think their response has been very slow.

'The LPYS don't invite us to speak at their events or ask for us to write for their newspaper. Whereas YCND does seek cooperation. Also we would like to work with the Young Liberals because they got opposition to Cruise through the Liberal Party conference.

'I think Greenham Common has been fantastic. It shows that women are not just mothers, or wives, but are people, who can be everything that men are in their own way.

Women

'The leadership of YCND is dominated by women because young women in particular are realising how strong they can be. That doesn't mean we all have cropped hair and dungarees as the anti-CND press tries to present us. I think 'Take the toys away from the boys' is an excellent slogan.

'Look at the whole saga of the Falklands with the women shown waving goodbye to their loved ones as the ships sailed. We've had no role in the arms race.

'We can't afford to lose our fight in 1983. We are now in a situation, East and West, of a new

arms race, which is designed to increase the possibility of a 'first strike'.

'That increases the possibility of nuclear war and us all getting blown to bits. We welcome the negotiations going on in Geneva now. But negotiations have been going on for 37 years and haven't achieved much. So I would not advise anyone to rely on them in 1983.

'We'll only be able to stop this new arms race by combining all of the different types of action. For example, non-violent, direct action can be effective if used at the right time, not every day of the week.

'This year we will put special emphasis on the trade union movement. At CND conference the importance of the unions was recognised and we will be appointing a fulltime organiser for work in the unions. We have to get through to the grassroots of the unions in order to pressurise the leaders to act. This is starting to happen. The North West march last year got tremendous support and financial help from the factories.

'I am confident we can get some real solidarity action between the unions and CND. The kind of action we need is like the campaign organised to support the health workers?

CLPD gives register the kiss of life

By Alan Freeman

The Annual General Meeting of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) voted this Saturday by a tiny majority to apply for registration to the Labour leadership.

After a fierce and bitter argument the right wing of the campaign which pioneered the democracy battle in the Labour Party, also threw many its most respected and hardworking members off the leadership for 'failing to accept CLPD's strategy.'

The decision will give great comfort to Labour's witch hunters who had virtually given up trying to use the register. Before the AGM even the *Guardian* a well-known champion of Labour Party democracy, threw dignity to the winds and denounced the left as a 'shameless bunch of hypocrites' — for daring to challenge one of the most unpopular decisions the Labour Party had ever taken!

On the surface the argument was about whether the CLPD should abide by Labour Party conference decisions. But it went deeper. At this AGM, CLPD broke from a role it has played for nine years — a channel for rank and file opposition to the right wing leaders of the Party.

The rank and file do not want the witch hunt. Even Saturday's meeting backed a resolution from John Bloxam calling on CLPs not to carry out expulsions. It rejected a motion from the victorious right wing backing the 'Manchester Withington' amendment to the Labour Party constitution, which seeks to set up a witch hunt under democratic control.

The support for Labour Against the Witch hunt shows that this sentiment needs a means of expression. The CLPD's new leaders have turned their back on it.

To justify this they ran a scurrilous campaign of abuse against their colleagues, and even tried — and failed — to put through a motion closing CLPD membership to everyone who did not agree with their definition of its 'strategy'.

But by turning their back on their friends they leave only one channel open for themselves — the trade union 'soft centre' around Michael Foot. Their actions have placed them in a camp which is universally detested in the Labour Party.

Far from representing a 'consensus' in the Labour Party they have cast themselves as arbitrators. Unfortunately, as Michael Foot has shown, there is no point in arbitrating between irreconcilable forces — you become the prisoner of one or another.

This departure leaves a gap in the Labour Party. It means that the left now has no national, unified authoritative framework through which to organise. Such a framework has to be reconstituted — not after the general election, but during it, and before it.

The best basis for this unity — which can and should include all in CLPD — is a struggle to ensure that Labour's conference policies are included in the manifesto, above all its commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. This is the next step for the left.

Come to Briefing's national conference.

By Graham Bash, London Labour Briefing and Stuart Marshall-Clarke, Merseyside Labour Briefing.

THE NATIONAL conference of Briefing groups on Saturday 5 February is open to all Labour Party members and, we hope, will be able to build on the successes of local Briefings which have been set up in several places following the success of London Labour Briefing — whose print run now stands at 3,500.

Papers like Merseyside Briefing, with a print run of 1,000 show that the motive forces have been similar everywhere. The left needs to co-ordinate a reality in the Labour Party.

But although London Labour Briefing and others have made important contributions to unity on the left within each locality, there are some problems they have still to conquer — in particular, building links between localities. The CLPD conference showed that the left still lacks the national coordination needed to make London Briefing's original goals effective.

We do not intend to set up another national organisation. We want, as local Briefings have done locally, to provide a national forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences about struggles and campaigns. We hope you will come.

STARVATION AMIDST PLENTY

IN NOVEMBER 1980 Mrs Thatcher first told us the economy was about to turn up. Two years later the *Financial Times* says:

- Unemployment will rise to 3½ m in 1983
- Industrial production will rise at most one per cent
- No recovery is in sight until

autumn. When industrial production fell to a sixteen-year low last quarter, the recession had been in full swing for three

years. Most of us are living through the longest slump of our lives. How long will it go on? Is any recovery possible, and

what will the effects be? ALAN FREEMAN argues that the labour movement needs a Marxist analysis to understand what is happening.

AMERICAN television viewers tuning into Ronald Reagan's 1984 budget speech will witness a rare spectacle: born-again Keynesianism. 'Reaganomics is dead', explains American journalist Anatole Kaletsky. 'The singular economic cult to which Mr Ronald Reagan has given his name and which even Vice-President George Bush once described as 'voodoo economics' is being prepared for permanent interment.'

Mr Reagan has made some converts. On 18 January finance ministers from the 'Group of Ten' biggest Western countries met in full session for the first time since the world currency system collapsed in 1973 to announce that economic growth was in vogue again. Even Mr Howe startled EEC ministers last month when he told them he was going to inject £2bn into his economy and they ought to do the same.

The leading Western governments, in short, want to reflate the world economy. Can they do it?

Not every remedy can be trusted. In 1975 the Archbishop of Canterbury asked his flock to pray for the pound sterling. The result was an IMF visit. Divine intervention also failed to rescue the Ambrosiano bank, whose head banker hanged himself off London Bridge in December. The Vatican, heavily involved in his bank's collapse, had run up a deficit of \$27m and a debt of \$1.3bn in return for some dubious transactions involving 'letters of comfort' to several obscure companies in Panama.

The leading Western governments want to reflate the world economy. Can they do it?

Reagan is more down to earth than God but his track record is worse. His monetarist priests have been prophesying upturns since 1981. But total unemployment has topped 30 million and even Japan has been sucked into the slump with a dole queue of 1,390,000 and falling growth rates.

The banks are teetering on the brink. The top 100 have net assets of \$150bn; the world's 'bad risk' borrowers owe them \$50bn more than this sum. The bank and currency collapse of 1931 is seen as a grim precedent.

Even worse, trade war looms. Last month a meeting of countries in GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), which promotes free trade, broke up having agreed almost nothing. 'The parallel with the 1930s is alarmingly close,' said David Henderson, an economics professor. 'Western governments are increasingly treating the GATT system as something to be circumvented or set aside ... They are each becoming prisoners of each others' opportunist conduct.'

Whatever import controllers might dream, protection leads to contraction. Less trade means smaller markets; smaller markets mean less production; less production means less jobs and a longer slump. Ask the shipowners, who have to carry the stuff. Michael Revell, Director of the Shipping and Marine Midland bank of the USA, advises traders to 'plan for a depression as bad as the one we have had now for two years.'

The world is breaking up into regional trading blocks competing for shrinking markets over rising tariff walls. Europe and America are at war over grain and dairy produce, steel



The spiral of madness; goods are produced that business cannot sell; to save their falling profits they sack

workers and cut wages; and then wonder why they cannot sell their goods.

and cars. Australia wants a 'Pacific basin trading zone' involving South East Asia, South America, and itself. Japan is under siege. Western Europe, where 43 percent of world trade takes place, is threatened with economic disintegration.

Not surprising, then, that the *Financial Times* issued the following caution:

'It would be nice to believe that an obstinate recession, and the consequent fall in inflation, has restored the machine to working order. But there is precious little evidence for such a belief.'

In short, we are not only back in the hungry thirties; we aren't going to get out of them in a hurry. There will be no 'return to normal' for a long time.

How can we begin to make sense of this? The 'experts' are not very helpful. Throughout the sixties they

told us that slumps had been cured, refuting the 'backward' Marxists.

What of their current explanations and solutions? First, the most persistent myth of all; they claim oil price rises caused the slump.

The top 100 banks are worth \$150bn; they are owed \$50bn more than this by 'bad risk' borrowers

But a Bank of England study makes the obvious point: 'In 1974 the UK was still importing all its oil, and shared the common experience of other oil importers. But by 1979 it was near to oil self-sufficiency so that the 1974-type argument no longer applies.' Dead right: but if the 1980 slump wasn't caused by oil prices;

then why assume the 1974 slump was? Indeed, if either slump was caused by oil price rises, they would be unique in history amongst the twenty or more recessions so far recorded.

History has played an ironic joke on the 'Arab Sheikhs caused this mess' school. For they are now worried that the pound will fall with OPEC and they, too, want to keep oil prices up. 'The industrial countries have a common interest with OPEC in avoiding a too sharp fall in oil price rises,' said the *Financial Times* on 19 January.

But if oil is not to blame, what about that most mystical of totems, the money supply? If it was so important to control it before, why is Thatcher now letting the pound drop to its lowest ever? What was all the fuss about? And will devaluation or interest rate cuts now restore the damage, as Labour's leaders think?

The trouble with all arguments that see money as the 'cause' of slumps or booms is that they mistake cause for effect. Money movements can be influenced by governments, but they cannot part company from the most important features of the economy, which are what it produces, with what machinery, what labour force and under whose ownership.

Worship of the money supply was never an economic but a political creed. It aimed to reverse two historic features of postwar capitalism:

- Its commitment to full employment
- Its use of government-backed debt to smooth over crises.

'Creating money' in the boom years in fact meant creating debt — writing IOUs on a grand scale, and using them to pay for real goods.

As long as no-one presented the IOUs for collection, this worked like magic — by putting off today's problems until tomorrow.

Thatcher and Reagan stopped their governments creating large domestic debts. But they didn't stop the bankers, who went on creating new debt abroad on a breathtaking scale: mainly to countries like Mexico. Unfortunately, these countries have now built up such debts that they can no longer pay.

But money policy doesn't cause slumps.

It is not shortage of money, but shortage of investment opportunity, that stands in the way of a new boom. And investment opportunity must come at guaranteed, stable, higher than average rates of return or the industrialists will keep their money idle and wait for better times.

'Plan for a depression as bad as the one we've had now for two years.' — US merchant banker

It is only when we start looking at profit rates that we begin to get some picture of the underlying causes of recession. The rate of return on capital has been systemically declining in all Western countries since 1960. But this in turn has led to a long-term decline in investment; and this has led to a long-term decline in growth rates.

A socialist plan could easily deal with this problem by taking investment out of the hands of private bodies. But this is the one 'solution' that none of the experts are prepared to contemplate.

This is leading many to look at a 'third answer' — wage cuts. A keynote article in the 27 November *Economist* calls for 20 percent cuts to restore British competitiveness. Peter Shore would have to accept wage cuts on this scale to make his policies remotely acceptable to industry.

There are two great flaws in the argument. First, it is presented in a misleading way. Writers point out that wage costs are a high proportion of total costs in Britain compared with other countries, so they must fall 'to bring us into line'. But this flatly contradicts a fact everyone knows: you get the highest real wages in the most prosperous countries. British workers aren't better off than their German, Japanese, Swedish or Dutch counterparts! A proper wage comparison, looking at relative money wages, shows Britain way down the list.

Wage costs are high in Britain for the same reason they are high in a peasant economy: because industrial productivity is much lower, in turn



The spiral of war; last time the world entered such a crisis, only fascism and war resolved it. The alternative is a planned, socialist economy.

because investment in machinery is far too low.

A 1973 survey showed for example, that each Swedish worker created £4,600 as against £2,700 created by her or his British counterpart. But in the five previous years their bosses invested 2½ times as much! A British assembly line worker can no more 'compete' with a robot factory than a one-horse plough with a combine harvester. *Investment*, not wage-cuts, is the answer.

But wage cuts also fail to deal with a basic problem; how to sell what is produced. If you cut wages, as Keynes pointed out when all this began, no-one can buy what you make. You prolong the slump instead of ending it.

Yet the opposite to this argument — put forward by Alternative Economic Strategy supporters — is just as one-sided. They call for government spending and money creation to ensure that goods are sold,

stimulating growth. The problem is that they cannot offer the capitalists higher *profits*, which are the only guarantee of fresh investment.

Indeed, the two 'Keynesian' conditions for a boom, which the AES supporters have been demanding since 1979, are both now present and the boom is not happening. Consumer spending is rising — by as much as 3 percent — and interest rates are falling. Yet no new growth or investment is taking place.

The spiral of debt; America and Britain used monetarism to bring back unemployment and force uncompetitive firms to the wall. They hoped this would cut back the burden of debt. But the bankers merely lent abroad, driving Mexico and Brazil to the wall: world debt now stands at \$560bn and the crisis is no nearer solution.



BANKRUPTCY COURT

What, then explains the recession and what are the prospects for recovery?

The most important thing for socialists is to understand that this crisis is generated from within the private enterprise system. Searches for 'external' causes such as an 'oil shock' or 'monetary mismanagement' or even Thatcherism are all attempts to avoid the unpleasant conclusion that whatever temporary improvement can be made by alternative policies, ultimately we can only solve today's problems by doing away with this system altogether, and in particular by taking *investment* right out of the hands of private individuals and corporations.

Second, the recession marks the beginning of a return to the classical course of the capitalist trade cycle as analysed by Marx, and Marxists, from 1870 onwards. Keynesianism has not solved capitalism's problems, but postponed them and brought them back in a much sharper form.

Third, this is a crisis of *over-production*.

This is one of the cruellest and most senseless things about it. Two-thirds of the world is starving. Poor people the world over are crying out for food, houses and clothing and goods are being stockpiled, factories are closing, and workers thrown on the dole.

There will be no 'return to normal'

The biggest tragedy is in food. On 26 November it was reported that the USA has stockpiled 120m tons of grain and butter. This is a *year's* supply. On 30 November 1,086m tons of skimmed milk were added to the list. A major trade war with Europe loomed when the US threatened to unload this at cheap prices on European and third world markets; the EEC stopped this so as to maintain farm prices.

Nor was it just food. This year leading European man-made textile producers agreed to cut capacity by 500,000 tonnes by 1985, bringing total cuts this decade to nearly one third of output. Excess capacity in polythylene in Europe stands at 1,850,000 tonnes, in PVC at 1,300,000 tonnes, and in Polystyrene at 700,000 tonnes. 30m too many tonnes of steel are produced each year in Europe alone.

Are these goods 'not needed'? Tell the starving millions of India that they 'do not need' Europe's butter mountains, or America's grain surplus! What sense does it make for Reagan to offer US farmers gigantic subsidies to cut back production by up to 30 percent when famines are about to break out in the grain-importing countries? Capitalist crisis is always overproduction, not of use values but of exchange values. Our system cannot *sell* these goods and it is therefore forced to destroy them and the machines that make them.

This is the only way it can 'adjust' to the decline in their value caused by the introduction of new machinery in the boom.

However, there is one important difference from the thirties. In all slumps prior to the war, overproduction always led to slumps in *prices*. This is the 'cleansing' mechanism by which capitalism eliminates backward producers and restores profitability.

Since the war this has not happened for two reasons: first, because monopolies gang up to prevent price falls by restricting output; second, because governments help them by printing money to maintain demand for their goods.

British bosses want a 20 percent wage cut

It was to be expected that a 'tight money' policy would begin to reverse this trend, and it has begun to happen: but in a *partial and uneven manner*. These producers who are strong enough to band together and maintain control of the market can keep prices up, and the weaker are going to the wall by having their cartels busted open.

Thus nearly all primary prices have fallen on world markets.

Some falls outside of raw materials have been even more dramatic; for example the rate for transporting 50,000 tonnes of coal from the USA to Japan fell last year from \$28.50 to \$11.20. However the prices for *finished goods, retail prices, and manufactures* have not gone down. By and large, the big cartels — often co-ordinated by government action — have moved to cut capacity and production rather than prices.

The most blatant case is the so-called 'Davignon Plan' for European Steel production, which is co-ordinating Steel closures of 30m tonnes per year throughout Europe. When the Tories say that steel closures are to maintain steel profitability, and the philosophy of free enterprise they omit to mention that the closure is being settled by closed inter-firm agreements co-ordinated by EEC officials!

Parallel plans are going through in cars, petrochemicals, artificial fibres, and many other areas.

This extends to retailing. The principle function of the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy is to keep farm profits up by a combination of sales restraint (hence the lakes and mountains) subsidies and restrictive tariffs.

That's the reason you don't see lower prices in shops, a damning condemnation of the hypocrisy involved in the Tories' 'free market' policies. But nowhere is the hypocrisy more evident than in the attitude taken to the OPEC producers, whose cartel works against the interests of the *more* powerful cartels of oil retailers. OPEC countries were doing no more than carrying out normal economic capitalist practice.

What is going on is that, as usual in a slump, competition between capitalists grows far fiercer and some capitalists win and others lose. Monopoly and cartels arrangements, backed by national and sometimes supra-national government intervention, are *being used* as a form of competition to determine who will be the losers and who the winners in this latest slump.

Competition, this time round, is

- Driving the so-called 'Advanced Developing Countries' like Mexico and Brazil back down the road to penury
- Driving a wedge between the three great continental blocks of capital — America, Europe and South East Asia
- Forcing the two imperialist political leaders — America and Britain — out of their position of world dominance and into increased reliance on their financial and military might as a bludgeon in the commercial war
- Driving Britain, as the oldest and weakest imperialist power, to the brink of the abyss

Who wins out of this struggle?

You *don't* win, because you have to pay the artificially inflated retail prices fixed by the big distributors. The poorer countries don't win, because they do not have the economic clout of the big buyers.

And between the big imperialist countries, a politico-economic struggle is raging, on the verge of outright trade war, to decide who will step up the ladder and who will step down.

Every instrument of government policy becomes a weapon in this war, so that all the phenomena of capitalist competition are also expressed at political level, in the formation of customs unions, trade blocks, foreign policy struggles for political allegiance and trading favours.

This struggle may have an economic basis. But it can only be solved by political means — in a fundamental re-alignment of the system of imperialist alliances and roles.

Until now, capitalism has shown that it possesses only one means to carry through such a realignment — war. After the thirties, came the forties.

This time round, such a 'solution' would lead to destruction on a scale never before witnessed.

Democratise the block vote

By Pat Hickey

THE IMPORTANCE for the left in the unions and the LP of dealing with the way in which the trade union barons wield the block vote to frustrate the democratic and socialist aspirations of the membership has been forcibly underlined by two events this week.

First was the NEC decision to proceed with the expulsion of the members of Militant, which is clearly a prelude to an assault on the whole left. The second was the leaked reports that the Labour Party manifesto does not include a commitment to unilateral disarmament, despite overwhelming votes at conference in favour of this.

Most trade union conferences have voted solidly in favour of unilateralism. Similarly, the trade union conferences have supported the democratic reforms in the LP, and rejected the idea that the register was to be used to launch a witch-hunt against the left.

The right wing, supported by the trade union

first step towards organising the fight back in the unions. While the forces at this conference will be small, the potential for a campaign for democratic control of the block vote is very great. We have only to refer to the deputy leadership campaign to see this.

Step

One step that can be taken by the Conference would be to issue a statement for the guidance of union activists taking up this issue. Important in this will be the demand for the mandating of delegates to LP conference on union policy, and for the mandating of union delegates to the NEC on similar lines.

The second issue at conference will be the setting up of work-place Labour Party Branches. In the run-up to the general election this will be very important, and given the half-hearted way in which

Crucial

The fight in the unions is crucial in the Labour Party. The Broad Lefts Organising Committee trade union conference is a

"DEMOCRATISING THE BLOCK VOTE"

Broad Lefts Organising Committee

PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS

TONY BENN MP
ALAN GRIFFITHS (NALGO)
PHIL HOLT (POEU)

10.30-4pm. Sat 19 Feb.
County Hall, Waterloo, London.

the right has approached it, there is a need for clear guidelines and for information on practical experiences.

Finally conference should make every effort to unite all the currents on the left in this campaign. It would therefore be in the best interests of the campaign if a small, but

broad-based steering committee were established to help coordinate activities and prepare future events.

Attendance at the conference is limited to delegates from trade union branches and to people who are active in the broad lefts in their unions. There will also be provision for observers. We urge all our supporters to attend.

Labour movement solidarity with Central America

By Stuart Piper

WHAT Reagan is doing in Central America, with Thatcher's support, utterly exposes the myth of 'defending the free world' which both use to justify placing Cruise missiles in Europe. This was the core of Tony Benn's closing address to the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign's AGM.

By making this connection he pointed to the important part which solidarity with the people of Central America must play in the mass campaign to turn back the whole war drive of western imperialism.

Benn's address was a fitting culmination to a weekend which should mark a decisive new phase in the growth of the solidarity movement. Held in Bristol on the 22/23 January, the AGM brought together around 100 delegates from some 40 local groups. Delegates decided unanimously to make their number one priority the Labour Movement Conference on El Salvador planned for 14 May at County Hall, London.

Aim

The aim of this conference is to develop through the Labour Party and the trade unions the groundwork for a mass campaign — one which, in cooperation with CND, will pose a serious obstacle to Reagan and Thatcher's attempts to escalate the war-drive. In this run-up to a general election, such a campaign would put ef-

fective pressure on the Labour Party leaders and any future Labour government to implement its paper policy of support for the struggle in Central America.

Task

This task will be greatly helped by the declaration of solidarity made by Sheffield City Council. That declaration should be endorsed by other Labour councils, CLPs and trade union branches throughout the country.

The tremendous impact of the women's peace movement and YCND suggest the crucial part which women's sections and the LPYS can play in forwarding this movement.

Socialists in the labour movement should be acting now to take up these issues in their LP and TU branches and sections, get delegates elected, and make the May conference a success.

For information, publicity and delegates credentials, write to: El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, Labour Movement Conference, 29 Islington Park Street, London N1. (Tel 01-359 2270)



Newham 8 — Whose conspiracy?

Balbir Johal who witnessed the police attack on Asian youths on 24 September in Newham after a series of racist attacks, explained why plainclothes police attacked the youths.

'They saw a large group of us and they thought we were enticing others to fight. We think they knew we were going to be there and they set us up.'

They were frightened of us sorting out the problem in our own way. Neither they, nor the teachers had sorted out these problems in the last years.

There were too many serious attacks — the police teachers and parents were doing nothing and we decided we had to protect ourselves and the youngsters.

Balbir's brother and seven other Asian youths were arrested by uniformed police, racially abused and charged. The white youths who had been attacking Asian schoolchildren in the week up to 24 September got off scott free, as have the police who hospitalised one of the eight.

The 8 feel that their only chance of getting off is by a massive campaign. They already have local labour movement support and support from local Asian youths, over five hundred of whom joined a school strike when the 8

first went to court.

The parallels with the Bradford 12 are clear and have been made clearer by the 8 all having an extra charge of 'conspiracy to assault persons unknown' slapped on them in December. This is in addition to charges of 'actual bodily harm' to a policeman and possession of offensive weapons.

The 8 are widening their support and have already gained backing from a few MPs, including Tony Benn. Last Sunday a meeting of over one hundred activists from all over London and supporters from Leicester, met in Newham to discuss ways of taking the campaign forward.

Ideas put forward included a special monthly

campaign bulletin for schoolkids who have been the mainstay of the campaign, and setting up a support group in Fords, Deganham where one of the defendants work. The meeting appealed for support groups to be set up all over the country.

Balbir explained what is needed now: 'If we are going to win we need to publicise the case nationally and also get support from other schoolchildren.'

'Anti-racist groups, trade unions and the Labour Party should give support. We want to visit factories where there are a lot of Asian workers. They have experienced the same problems as us. Articles in papers, like *Socialist Challenge* have helped, and we need publicity in Young Socialist papers since the readers are our age. We also need more publicity in the national press.'

The 8 are willing to send speakers to meetings. Requests for speakers, motions of support and donations should be sent to: Umesh Desai, c/o 285 Romford Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9HJ.

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

Scotland

BERDEEN: SC available at Boom-own books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.
EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 1.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrew's Square and bottom of Waverly (Tues 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from at 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 1.30-5.30pm 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 Sawayay, 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, Montpellier, 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.
HUDERSFIELD: 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 Arndale 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-12.30 Sats 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 12-1 pm 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.

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.

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

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

COLIN ROACH

We want the truth!

By Tim Wright

LAST SATURDAY morning, Stoke Newington saw an impressive demonstration of police strength; riot control barriers, police vans patrolling the street, and tens of police men and women standing in lines in front of Stoke Newington police station.

The reason for this display of might was a peaceful picket of the station demanding a full and public enquiry into the death of Colin Roach. As it was, the picket was kept well away from the station — behind barriers on the other side of the road. What are the police afraid of if they feel they have to mobilise in such numbers? The truth?

They are certainly doing their very best to hide and distort the truth, such as when the Sunday papers of 23 January — following the protest of the day before — carried a story of 'looting demonstrators'. The source of this story: the Stoke Newington police.

On Monday they issued a second statement: saying the looting of the jeweller's shop in question had 'nothing to do with the demonstration'. The media had already done its damage.

The intent of the police was clear — to portray with the help of the media the demonstrators as lawless looters without genuine grievance. Commander Taylor of the local force told the press that there is no breakdown of relations between the police and the local community. The community disagrees.

As Lester Lewis said on the platform of a Hackney Black People's Association meeting on

Friday 28 January, these lies must be combatted. This is far from the first time the police have misrepresented the protests of the black community, he said, but this time they are under the spotlight and they will not get away with it.

Combat

Patrick Kodikara, a Labour councillor and member of Hackney Black Alliance, who talked to me at the time of the Saturday picket, said that to combat the false notion that the police have any credibility in the community, a broad-based campaign of all concerned, black and white, must be waged to force the elected representatives of the community to take a stand: 'We don't want police to be racist and to oppress black people, and our elected

representatives have got to be pushed to act for the community.'

Patrick sees the campaign around the death of Colin Roach, with its demands for a public enquiry, the closure of Stoke Newington Police Station, and the withdrawal of the police precept by Hackney Council, as a step along the way towards the goal of police accountability. Accountability is only going to come about through the coercion by the community of the police and establishment. Persuasion will not work.

Resistance

He also sees what is now happening in Hackney as part of a developing movement of resistance to the growing strength of the police and the racism of the state. Whereas before, that focus has been in Brixton, Lewisham, and Southall, 'the issues are sharpest in Hackney at this moment', he explained, but the relevance of recent events is general.

Control

The demand for democratic control 'strikes at the roots of the establishment' and is one reason why black people, with their active opposition to the police, are so feared by the establishment.

If, however, the struggle for accountability, he added, is not just to take place merely at the level of street skirmishes and sporadic demands not easily sustained, the campaign must be taken up and under-pinned by the Labour Movement.



Part of demonstration against death of Colin Roach.

Roach Family Support Committee

At an open meeting of the Roach Family Support Committee on 28 January, it was decided that the following would be done in the campaign to get an independent inquiry into the death of Colin Roach.

1. An open letter will be written to the Home Secretary demanding an independent public inquiry into Colin's death. A time limit will be set in which he can reply.
2. A picket of Stoke Newington police station every Saturday from 11am to 1pm.
3. A RFSC bulletin will be produced regularly.
4. Poster campaign to be launched

around Stoke Newington, all supporters to display them.

5. Team of three to begin to accumulate information for community inquiry.
6. Second demonstration to be held on 2 February.
7. Demand that Hackney borough Council pass a vote of no confidence in Stoke Newington police.
8. All community groups, schools, etc to be asked to break off all relations with the police.
9. A meeting of all arrested — setting up of defence committees — picket of courts. Call for the dropping of all charges.
10. Call for withdrawal of police precept.

Stoke Newington Police

Colin Roach died mysteriously of gun shot wounds in Stoke Newington Police station on 12 January. Stoke Newington police are renowned as racist thugs amongst the local black community. Over recent years three black youth have died in unexplained circumstances in their hands. SUE MACDONALD spoke to a local black youth about his experiences in Stoke Newington.

What is your experience of Stoke Newington Police, and why are they hated so much by the local black community?

They keep picking up on the streets and telling us to take down our trousers and searching us. This is really degrading. I've had personal experience several times. You're treated like a dog. This is what happens in this society.

The police laugh in your face when you have something wrong. One time I was really ill. I went to the police station for help because no phones were working. They told me they were closed! If blacks are attacked or burgled the police are no help at all.

Everytime they pass me in the street they pretend they are shooting me through the car window. Like as if they want to round up all the black people and shoot them one by one. It's going from bad to worse.

I don't go out at night time because there's too many police about and they like to stop you for no reason and search you. If you drive a big car the police will stop you and ask where you got the money to buy this car.

I have heard about people being wrapped in blankets when they hit you over the head or across the body so no bruises will show.

The black policemen are being used, every single one of them, to get infor-

mation about black people, to try and bring down the black people. Black people all know that the black policemen are being used.

Black people should read Malcolm X, he is a black man and very easy to understand. I've read some of his works and he says: 'All thinking people today who meet any body who's afraid of the word revolution, wipe them out of your way!' He talks about African history, how we're descended from kings. We built the African country and the white people came along and broke it down, and through all history we've been slaves.

What do you know of Stoke Newington police station and do you agree that it should be closed down?

It's a bad police station and they don't care whether blacks die or what. It's the third time that somebody has died there. Just like the fire in New Cross where 13 young

blacks died — nothing has been done about it. Though it was the fascists who burned down the house. That's what I believe.

We have to close the police station down. We have to raise it at the LPYS. The Labour Party could help to do it, and the workers, along with everybody who lives in Stoke Newington should rally against it.

How do you think the campaign to find out the truth about Colin Roach's death, and what goes on in the police station should continue?

We need a public inquiry, more demonstrations. We need to get in every paper and on the television. We need more talk about it. We need somebody to leaflet everyone's doors and to talk to people. Because something has to be done about it. If the police just go on like this they can murder a lot of black people and people then will be just too scared to do anything about it.

Police complicity

ON 20 JANUARY, at or about 4.45pm Rajesh, her husband Bala and their three children were about to leave their flat to see the doctor.

As they opened the door, two strange men approached and asked who Sister Rajesh was and then identified themselves as George Wild and Stuart Jones from New Scotland Yard.

After she identified herself, two plain clothes policemen wanted to interview her. At this stage Bala asked the policemen whether Rajesh had committed any offence. They said 'no, but since she had organised a picket outside the Ceylon Tea Centre last Saturday, we want to have a friendly chat.'

Rajesh was worried that her husband may get involved in an argument or worse with the policeman and therefore asked him to take the children to the doctor and she waited behind to find out what the men from Scotland Yard wanted. They said they had come to find out whether Rajesh was going to organise any more pickets so they could assess how many policemen they had to allocate. When Rajesh told them that she had not thought about organising further pickets they began to ask a series of questions about Nirmala Nithiyathan, asking why she was concerned about Nirmala and what group she belonged to.

Ms. Nithiyathan is a well known Tamil writer and a dramatist who was arrested by the Sri Lankan Government along with her husband and a number of Catholic Priests and Students. She is now being held in an Army camp. There are no female guards at the camp and she is being held amidst male soldiers with no access to relatives or friends. To date she has not been charged with any offence and she is being held under the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act which permits the Sri Lankan government to arrest and detain any person, without trial, for a period of 18 months.

There has been a wave of mass protests against these indiscriminate arrests by the Sri Lankan government which is

becoming more and more repressive. That is why Rajesh and a number of Ceylonese and British women organised a picket outside the Ceylon Tea Centre in Piccadilly Circus on 15 January.

Rajesh told the policemen that Nirmala, like her was a writer and a woman and that she felt that she should protest against her continued detention without trial. But the police wanted to know much more. The friendly chat turned into a full scale interrogation. How does she get the time to write when she is doing a full time job and has to look after three children? Who is this man who has been thrown out of India recently? Who were the groups who supported the picket? Who came to it? etc. etc.

In the meantime Bala went to the doctor and explained to the receptionist that something unexpected had come up and he could not keep the appointment and returned home as quickly as he could. This took him about 20 minutes and the cops were still at it.

Bala accused them of collecting information for the Sri

Lankan government. But they denied it and left soon after leaving their telephone number (230 1212 Extension 3629). On the same day police have visited several other addresses of Ceylonese activists.

Although the police denied that they supplied information to the Sri Lankan government this is difficult to believe because a number of students had been arrested by the Sri Lankan police, on arrival from Britain, and they have had up to date mug shots of persons they had arrested.

The Sri Lankan government does not have the resources to organise a 'savak' type (Secret Police of Iran under the Shah) operation in Britain. Also the Ceylonese police still get specialist training in Britain.

The Scotland Yard is obviously maintaining files on Ceylonese activists in this country and most likely providing information to the Sri Lankan government. If so this raises several questions most important of which are: should the British tax payers money be used to support the activities of a repressive government in Sri Lanka? should British police maintain files on people who are protesting against human right violations in Sri Lanka? And what guarantee is there that these files contain accurate information?

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.

WRITE TO US!

Think of this page as a noticeboard for your comments, criticisms, or even congratulations. Be brief, to leave space for others — maximum 400 words. Write to: Letters, Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper St, London N1 2XP. (tel 01-359 8180/9)

SWP in decline

CAN you remember the open letter to the SWP printed in Socialist Challenge four months ago? I only draw a brief reference to it because for some of us the wheel has turned full circle.

It has taken the collapse of the Tameside branch, a suicidally pessimistic SWP conference, and the disenchantment of a few months in retrospect in the political wilderness for the truth of the facts of life to be driven home.

Yes, unquestionably the SWP is in decline, and in isolation from the pulse of the labour movement, armed with a polemic purism which almost matches the elitism of the RCP.



Tony Cliff

Burdened with a pessimistic analysis of the 'downturn', we dropped every campaigning front with the exception of paper sales, because we were unable to recruit and our sphere of influence has considerably shrunk.

I'm now convinced that the most reliable tactic is entrenchment within the Labour Party. I may be an ex-Cliffite, but by God I've learned from it!

AJ WARNER,
Tameside
Manchester

Wrong on Falklands

THE FRONT page of Socialist Challenge 275 is a scathing denunciation of Thatcher's disgusting Falkland's visit. And quite right too! But in the article a number of arguments are used that seem to me to have dangerous implications.

Why all the emphasis on Thatcher's 'isolation in the world' and what does the fact that 'not one single Latin American country will grant landing rights to British civilian aircraft' prove?

Since when have we been concerned about the votes in that thieves kitchen, the UN, or the views of a bunch of bourgeois nationalists and Stalinists calling themselves the 'Non-Aligned Movement'?

The article goes on to simply assert 'Argentine rights' over the islands — based on what? Geographical proximity? The events of 1833? Strange arguments for Marxists ...

Certainly the islands are not 'British' and we must use every opportunity to expose the hypocrisy of Thatcher's case, including as the article does, the plight of the islanders themselves, outnumbered two to one by servicemen. But neither are the islands 'Argentinian' from any socialist criteria.

After all, if the Falklands/Malvinas really belong to Argentina as of right, then we should be in favour of an Argentinian re-invasion at some point. I sincerely hope not!

DICK BERIGAN
Birmingham

Greenham Common article missed the point

GREENHAM COMMON has, as the article in last week's Socialist Challenge rightly said, 'changed the balance of forces on the missiles'. This article correctly focused on supporting the actions rather than an empty debate about whether or not they should be women only.

However the article misses the point in quite a major way. The article takes a distance from the fact that women hung nappies, photos, etc on the fence. We are told this 'dangerous' as it emphasises women's 'traditional role', but we understand that this is 'positive' to many, presumably misguided, women.

The fact is that millions of women found it positive! To the overwhelming majority of women, who are housewives and mothers, who do bring up kids and love them, this is precisely what it's all about. They care enough about their kids and their families to take political action for the future despite their 'traditional role' tied to home and domestic concerns.

Nappies, kids, women's 'traditional role' is exactly the mainspring of the mass radicalisation of women on the nuclear question. Right now it is mainly through taking on the fight for a future that this mass of women will come to feel the real constraints of their traditional role and fight against it.

And was it just 'positive' for women? This is incredibly patronising to both women and men. It was positive for millions of men too, because when women (yes housewives, mothers, sisters) make such a powerful statement of opposition to holocaust and death it is an inspiration for everyone.

It teaches many men that human dignity is not a matter of 'the self-respect of a job' or a new car, but a matter of being prepared to care enough to fight for a future.

So it's true, women are not more peaceful than men. It's not more peaceful to invade a missile base than to go to work everyday and pretend the world can pass you by. But right now women are more peaceful in this sense, we are more prepared to fight the missiles and for the future of humanity.

Why be ashamed of saying that this is because of the 'traditional role' that women play? It is wrong to imagine that millions of women will struggle on any other basis than from where they are today — it is finding how to bring this to bear as a revolutionary force that is the key. Not hoping that some vision of 'what it would be like if ...' will allow women to by-pass their actual experience as they come into struggle.

Women rioting for bread for their starving kids started the Russian revolution. Women in Central America today fight for the right for a decent life for their family. And the mass base of the suffragettes were the thousands of women who wanted the vote, not for themselves, but because they wanted to change the position of the whole working class — men, women and children.

What we see today is a radicalisation of the mass of women on the nuclear issue. If marxists want to be part of that they have to speak with the voice of those women — and that is a voice that comes straight from the heart of women's 'traditional role'.

JUDE WOODWARD,
Manchester

Don't fight PR

I DON'T agree that revolutionary socialists should oppose proportional representation, as suggested by Paul Lawson (SC 276). SC coming out against PR shows that it is in danger of adapting to the illusions of the reformist left in the Labour Party that capturing the apparatus and using the current unjust electoral system, to get a Labour government in, is the key to socialist advance.

In reality only a socialist programme based on stimulating mass self-activity can break the hold of the Labour bureaucracy and advance towards socialism. This is because the bureaucracy is unaccountable — not that it is staffed by the wrong people.

In the meantime it would be disastrous if the labour left presented itself to the public as a bunch of conspirators addicted to the bureaucratic power struggle.

PR would demand more political activity and threaten all the rotten boroughs of contemporary British politics, including some 'Trotskyists' ones such as Militant.

As far as the coalition question is concerned — isn't the Labour Party already a tacit coalition, in which the left constantly makes concessions in order to stave off the right's threats to split and thereby lose the election? What substantial difference would PR make to that?

Paul Lawson should listen to himself. We are, he says, 'in favour of democratic reforms in general' — but not PR. The Labour leadership is in favour of socialism 'in general', but not when it might upset the daily routines. Revolutionary socialists are in favour of acting on principles, as they should be in this case.

MARK JACKSON,
Surrey

Antique arrangement!

PETER HAIN (SC 277) says socialists should oppose proportional representation 'on principle' because big constituencies would break the link between MPs and their constituents. What an incredibly reactionary argument!

The argument about the sacrosanct (and generally, let it be said, non-existent) relationship between the MP and constituents is precisely what right wing Labour MPs have used to fight re-selection.

MPs should represent parties and programmes. The regional list system used in Italy makes every vote for each party count.

Millions of votes in Britain are literally wasted through the 'first past the post' system, which incidentally robbed Labour of victory in 1951 when it received its largest popular vote ever.

Socialists shouldn't oppose democratic reform because it might lead to a coalition — a really manipulative argument. If socialism is about winning the majority, then that will be reflected much better through a PR system than our present undemocratic and antique arrangement.

STEVE HARTLEY,
Liverpool

Reformism on police?

WHAT were Toni Gorton's two articles on the police doing in Socialist Challenge? They could have been lifted straight out of the pages of the Morning Star or Tribune! Their whole tenor was one of uncritical support for the NCCL's reformist project of 'community control of the police'. Instead of going along with this Toni should have pointed two things out.

First, and this is the ABC of Marxism, there is no such thing as the 'community'; Britain is a class society.

The problem with the police is not that they are accountable only to themselves: rather it is that they are only too accountable — to the capitalists. The adoption of more aggressive tactics is due, not to the pernicious influence of American TV series, but to the determination of the ruling class to crush any signs of working class insubordination.

Second, the demand for community control is not one which has arisen from the class struggle, but has been raised by left councillors and Eurocommunist intellectuals. By no stretch of the imagination can it be equated with the marxist demand for a workers' militia.

If implemented it would result merely in another committee for councillors to sit on. At best it would be ineffectual, at worst it would involve the labour movement in the planning of police operations, as unpaid advisors.

It is true that at the end of the first article Toni writes; 'In the final analysis the police are anti-working class and anti-black and anti-labour and nothing can prettify this ugly picture'. Unfortunately no conclusions are drawn from this, not even a hint is given that working people, if they are to take control over their own lives, must close down the existing police force and replace it with a new body which will defend working class interests, ie a workers' militia.

I trust that in future Socialist Challenge will not pursue its dialogue with the Benn current by adopting its policies.

DERRICK HIBBET
North London

Death of a traitor

By Bob Pennington

Last week Lord Walter Citrine head of the TUC from 1926 until 1946 — died.

Citrine took over the general secretaryship of the TUC just in time to help make sure that the TUC sell out the miners in the General Strike. It was he who argued that if the miners would not give up their negotiating rights to the General Council, then the TUC could not commit other workers to support them.

The miners were after all rather awkward in not accepting a cut in wages.

Always a reasonable man he enthused about what he called his 'friendly intimacy' with employers' leaders. At the 1932 TUC he told critics of his support for a joint statement from the TUC and the Federation of British Industries, 'it cannot be a bad thing to get the support of the people who crack the whip.' He omitted to mention they invariably cracked it on his members backs!

Like many a true British 'radical' he was fascinated by the establishment and served it well. His services did not go unnoticed. In the Birthday Honours List of 3 June 1935, his monarch made him Sir Walter. In 1947 he was given a sinecure on the



Walter Citrine

newly formed National Coal Board and then from 1947 to 1957 he earned himself a 'bob or two' as chairman of the Central Electricity Board.

His theoretical contribution to British socialism was his book 'The ABC of Chairmanship' whilst his practical contribution was to make sure that the TUC remained class collaborationist.

Socialist Challenge suggests that the most appropriate words that the labour movement could inscribe on his tombstone would be: 'good riddance'.

Individual copies 65p from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St., London N1. Subscriptions £16 for one year. Send cheques POs made out to 'PEC' to IV, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108, Montreuil, France.

What's good for United Fruit is good for Central America!

Bitter Fruit by Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, Sinclair Browne £8.95

By Paul Lawson

IF YOU pop down to the Honduran capital Tegucigalpa these days, and have a little discussion with the US ambassador, he won't mind admitting to you that he's in charge of the de-stabilisation campaign being run against Nicaragua. De-stabilising and overthrowing potentially hostile regimes in the area is an old American occupation. Whether the Nicaraguan operation comes off remains to be seen; the Bay of Pigs didn't, but the 1954 operation against the Arbenz regime in Guatemala did.

Bitter Fruit explains exactly how the CIA and the State Department — goaded by the United Fruit Company of Boston organised the demise of Arbenz's government. The consequences for the political evolution of Guatemala don't have to be emphasised. Since 1954 Guatemala has been dominated by one after another military junta.

Up until 1944 Guatemala was more or less owned by United Fruit. The domination of the country's banana trade had continued since the beginning of the century, with United Fruit owning huge swathes of the Guatemalan countryside. As side concessions, United Fruit had their fingers in many Guatemalan pies — owning for example all the Guatemalan railways.

But the end of world war two brought about a democratic upheaval, which resulted in the election of Arbenz in 1951 on a programme of democratic reform.

Arbenz himself was, as the book makes clear, a 'bourgeois reformer'. But his popular base was among the urban workers — both manual and white collar (teachers played a disproportionate role in the democratic upheaval of 1944).

Although slavishly backed by the Communist Party (the PGT) Arbenz never defended a socialist programme. But he made one progressive move which finally antagonised US imperialism. He proposed the nationalisation of sectors of the United Fruit company land.

We won't spoil readers enjoyment of the book by explaining in detail what followed, except to say that the United Fruit company was very well connected in US government circles. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and his brother Allen Dulles who operated an outfit whose headquarters are located at Langley Virginia (yes you've guessed it) both were stockholders in United Fruit.

Joke

So was UN representative Henry Cabot Lodge. Arbenz played a little joke, considered by United Fruit to be in very poor taste. He offered compensation on the basis of UF's declared tax value. The company owners demanded ten times as much.

The result was a classic de-stabilisation campaign, with the portrayal of the CIA-backed invasion in July 1954 as an 'internal



Ambassador James E. Peurifoy. He was in command of the invasion. He is seen here with CIA agent Euno Hoffing (left).

rebellion'.

The invasion was organised from Guatemala City itself by the US ambassador John E Peurifoy, with the cooperation of the Honduran and Nicaraguan governments. Somoza personally gave orders to US air crew used in the invasion.

When the chips were

down, Arbenz paid the price of being a bourgeois reformer. The army deserted him, but his popular base did not hold up.

He never had any in-armed resistance, but even if he's tried it's doubtful whether after three years of unfulfilled promises the masses would have

mobilised to defend him. The rural masses had seen no benefits from land reform, and the conditions of the urban poor had not improved. Lesson: don't annoy a snake without preparing to chop its head off. As in Chile, so in Guatemala. Cuba proved a more difficult nut to crack, and so will Nicaragua.



Carlos Castillo Armas, chosen by the CIA to lead their invasion of Guatemala.

AN EVENING

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FRENCH + SAUNDERS
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FOR NICARAGUA

Racism — the 4th 'R'. London Teachers against Racism explain their new TV film.

IN A RACIST society schools have a duty to develop anti-racist teaching and anti-racist school policies, claim the All-London Teachers against Racism and Fascism in their controversial new film made for the OPEN DOOR series to be shown on BBC2 on 16 February. Pupils relate how racism they encounter on the streets is often reinforced in the attitudes of teachers and pupils, in what is taught, and in how schools are organised.

Black teachers and parents confirm the message: schools have a choice, to ignore racism and thus help perpetuate it, or to fight it.

Multicultural education, which is becoming more widespread in our schools and has been recently supported by Sir Keith Joseph, seeks to contain black disaffection and attempts to make other cultures more 'acceptable' to white pupils.

In fact by concentrating on the superficial it stereotypes black pupils

and often increases the prejudice of white. It totally ignores the political issues involved and the exercise of power.

Thus, Sir Keith Joseph can support the 'plea for tolerance' implicit in multi-cultural education whilst ignoring the fact that his Government's Nationality, Immigration and 'Law and Order' policies daily reinforce racism.

The recent case of the suspension of the Anti-racist element in the

multicultural course at Hendon Police Cadet School reveals the hypocrisy involved in cosmetic multicultural courses. As soon as the real issues are faced panic sets in.

Ideas

Anti-racist teaching challenges traditional ideas about education. Schools cannot be 'neutral' about racism. Anti-racist teaching is political, but so is ignoring racism. Children who are taught to question what the mass media say about race, to seek their own evidence, to organise their own learning, to take up issues of racism in their school and community, are far from the passive pupils that many teacher prefer. Pupils in the film talk about how they

organised themselves to combat racism.

It is by no means easy to get a school committed to combatting racism. There needs to be a thorough-going 'no holds barred' examination by teaching and non-teaching staff of the practices of the

school and their own attitudes.

They have to listen to parents and pupils accounts of their experience of the school. It is a threatening process but has to be gone through to make an effective anti-racist policy. It is no use

imposing the policy from above.

The discussions that precede the writing of a policy are often the most valuable part of the exercise. Without democratic discussion of the issues the policy will remain a piece of paper, albeit highly

principled, hidden away in the Head's bottom drawer.

Further info. Martin Francis 743 0675 or 385 6847, Marion Pencavel 946 2672 /377 0040, Sue Birchall 720 7286, Laurie 228 1293/639 4790, Liz Lindsay 452 5681 /722 8141.



Socialist Challenge

Labour must fight to:

BAN PLASTIC BULLETS!

A LABOUR MOVEMENT DELEGATE CONFERENCE

Rubber and plastic bullets have killed 14 people in Northern Ireland, seven of them children. Despite mutilations and scores of injuries, the authorities continue to pretend plastic bullets are 'harmless weapons'. Allegations of their indiscriminate use and abuse go unanswered and unheeded. Increased repression and daily use of plastic bullets only prevents a political solution in Ireland being found.

The British Government has given its reply to the international condemnation of the plastic bullet by extending its availability to British police forces. The Labour Party believes the plastic bullet should be withdrawn and banned.

Sessions: *What is the plastic bullet? *How is it used?

*The Northern Ireland context

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

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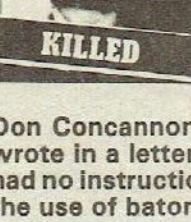
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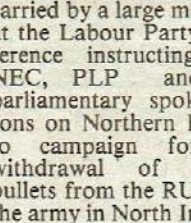
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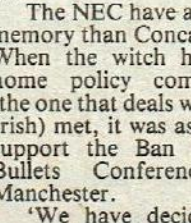
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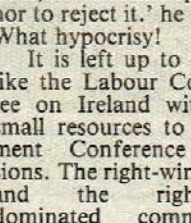
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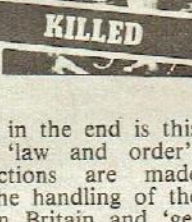
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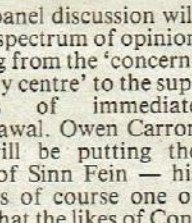
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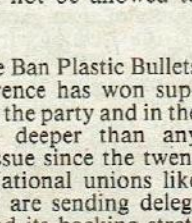
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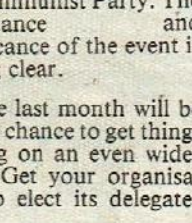
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Don Concannon, Labour's Irish spokesperson wrote in a letter last week: 'I am afraid I have had no instructions about campaigning against the use of baton rounds.'

We can refresh his memory. A resolution was carried by a large majority at the Labour Party Conference instructing 'the NEC, PLP and our parliamentary spokespersons on Northern Ireland to campaign for the withdrawal of plastic bullets from the RUC and the army in North Ireland, and from the police in Britain.'

The NEC have a better memory than Concannon. When the witch hunting home policy committee (the one that deals with the Irish) met, it was asked to support the Ban Plastic Bullets Conference in Manchester.

'We have decided to note it' said Geoffrey Bish, 'neither to support it nor to reject it.' he added. What hypocrisy!

It is left up to groups like the Labour Committee on Ireland with our small resources to implement Conference decisions. The right-wing MPs and the right-wing dominated committees,

meanwhile go their own way, blithely ignoring majority votes at Conference.

How do you campaign against plastic bullets? Certainly it's no good just relying on passive resolutions. The issues have got to be put across to a wider audience, overcoming the mystification introduced by the pro-Unionist Labour leaders.

That means going beyond the simply humanistic appeal, based on numbers killed, and looking at the relevance of the Irish issue to the whole of Labour's strategy.

Can we really have an alternative which is complicit in the continuing occupation of Ireland? This is the question facing the left. Now indications are beginning to appear that the left is starting to realise this.

The structure of the Ban Plastic Bullets Conference is ideal for the debate we need. It begins with the facts about plastic bullets, their use, abuse and social consequences.

asking in the end is this really 'law and order'. Connections are made with the handling of the riots in Britain and 'get tough' police policies.

A panel discussion will hear a spectrum of opinion ranging from the 'concerned party centre' to the supporters of immediate withdrawal. Owen Carron MP will be putting the views of Sinn Fein — his voice is of course one of those that the likes of Concannon and Foot say we should not be allowed to hear.

The Ban Plastic Bullets Conference has won support in the party and in the unions deeper than any Irish issue since the twenties. National unions like NUPE are sending delegates and its backing stretches from Tony Benn to the Communist Party. The importance and significance of the event is getting clear.

The last month will be a great chance to get things moving on an even wider scale. Get your organisation to elect its delegates now.



Tories in a panic over CND

By Alan Keene

THE Tories' plans to give £1m to advertising agency J Walter Thompson to fight against the nuclear disarmament movement shows they are in a panic. In an election year, as defence minister Douglas Hird says, it is a disaster for the Tories that nuclear disarmament will be a crucial election issue.

But the scandalous proposal to spend public money in this fashion is just the tip of the anti-disarmament iceberg. The Tories are mobilising a huge array of private and public resources to attempt to combat the influence of CND. In particular the Tories want to combat CND's influence in the Church and among youth.

They are working through a network of front organisations, which work parallel with two government committees, one chaired by the defence minister and the other chaired by the Prime Minister.

Playing a crucial role in this array of anti-disarmers, according to anti-nukes expert Duncan Campbell, is the *Coalition*

for Peace through Security (CPS).

This is a 'New Right' organisation working both inside and outside the Conservative Party to develop the type of right wing characteristic of the extremist wing of Republican politics in the United States.

CPS apparently prepared a 'petition of welcome' among influential folk to welcome President Reagan during his visit last summer. CPS enjoys the confidence of Tory Central office to such an extent that they were given a copy of the Tories' mailing list by Tory chairman Cecil Parkinson.

Conservative Central Office have their own *Campaign for Defence and Multilateral Disarma-*

ment (CDMD), putting out anti-CND material and chaired by Winston Churchill. Another major organisation linked up with these is the British Atlantic Committee, which runs a consistent pro-NATO campaign: its vice-chairman is Denis Healey.

Churchill also coordinates the *Committee for Peace with Freedom* (CPF) which is run from his flat and involves people like Lord Chalfont, Group Captain David Boulton, Edward Leigh and Julian Lewis, both members of the Conservative Party and the CPS.

Tagging along with all these other committees is the *Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding*, which is run by people like Frank Chapple, Roy Hattersley, Terry Duffy and Roy Mason together with a leavening of SDPers like David Owen and Bill Rodgers.

It is obvious that there is now a considerable mobilisation of resources on the right — and for

their organisations money appears to be no object — to fight the widening influence of the unilateralists. But as the date for the siting of the cruise missiles approaches, the proportion of the population against them just goes up and up.

In the early 1960s mysterious transatlantic agencies financed the very successful Campaign for Democratic Socialism in the Labour Party. This body had nothing to do with democracy or socialism, but fought a very successful battle against unilateralism. It won through the complacency of the left.

Against today's well-heeled right, this time there can be no complacency, inside the Labour Party or in society at large. Every piece of anti-disarmament propaganda should be fought tooth and nail. The Tories may have the millions in pounds, but CND has the millions in people, and that will be decisive.

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