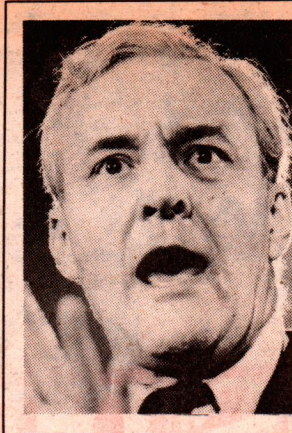


A **Socialist** ACTION

ALL OUT

WITH THE NGA

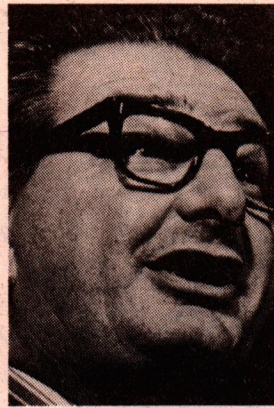


Tony Benn

If this is what the new Tory law means, many of the historic, hard won and legitimate rights of trade unions to support

their members interests, would be swept away ...

The 'law and order' language now being used to frighten trade unionists does not impress many of those most directly involved who know that it is only 'Tory Law' and 'Tory Order' that is being cited.



Eric Heffer

I believe that now is the time for all Labour Party members to spring to the defence of the trade unions and to give every practical support we can, both inside Parliament and in the labour movement as a whole.



Monday: supporters of the NGA dispute lobby the TUC talks

THE FIGHT of the NGA against Eddie Shah and the Fleet Street bosses is the biggest challenge yet to the Thatcher government. A powerful union, with the mass support to win, is in head on confrontation with the Tories.

Make no mistake. The NGA can win this struggle. It has already broken the lockout by the newspaper owners. If the NGA is backed by the trade union movement it will blow a hole right through the Tebbit anti-union laws and right through the Thatcher government.

Solidarity

If the NGA does not win it will be solely because solidarity is sabotaged by the TUC and the trade union right wing.

Thatcher has so far tried to pick off unions one by one in industries wracked by redundancy — such as steel. Or she has relied on the TUC to sabotage trade union action — as with the ASLEF

strike. Thatcher has hammered low-paid public sector workers like those in health.

But now the government faces a head on fight with a union whose leadership has given a clear and decisive lead. If the TUC had acted like the NGA — and made it clear no fines will be paid and that mass picketing for union rights will be supported — then there would have been no Tebbit laws in the first place.

The Thatcher government has no room to back down in this dispute. If any 'anonymous benefactor' turned up to pay the fines everyone would recognise that as a crushing defeat for the Tories. Either the NGA will strike a devastating blow to the Tebbit laws, and the government, or

the trade union movement will suffer an enormous defeat.

The decision by the Newspaper Publishers Association to sue the NGA for the strikes provoked by the courts is purely and simply an attempt to crush the union. If it succeeds every trade union in Britain will be threatened.

Support

The refusal of the TUC to come out in support of the full industrial and financial aid the NGA has requested is a suicidal disgrace.

The TUC should be organising a 24 hour general strike in support of the NGA — as it did in 1972 over the five imprisoned Pentonville dockers. It should be issuing calls for every trade unionist in Britain to come to the mass picket and totally close down the Stockport Messenger.

Those union leaderships that have refused to act must be bombarded with resolutions from their members for action. The pledges of the TGWU, NALGO, ACT and other unions for full support must be translated into action.

But even with the sabotage being carried out by the TUC, the NGA can still win if those unions pledged to its support act. Mass picketing has the power to close the Stockport Messenger Group. The print unions have the power to close down Fleet Street again. The TGWU by itself has the power of industrial action that would allow the NGA to win. Shah can be squeezed like a lemon.

If the government is defeated in this struggle the whole political situation in Britain is going to change. Every fight to defend democracy will take a great leap forward if the NGA wins.

If the government crushes the NGA every single progressive campaign in Britain will be decisively set back.

The stakes really are that high.

For as long as this dispute goes on every trade union, every Labour Party, every student union and every campaign has one priority. **THE NGA MUST WIN.**

Every resource the labour movement has must be thrown into that fight.

Your support is vital

Here are some of the things you can do to back the NGA:

- Get the maximum support for the mass picket at the Messenger's print works. Vital days are Tuesdays to Thursdays. Contact your local NGA branches for details of transport. The picket is at winwick Quay, Industrial Estate, Warrington (Junction 9 off the M62).
- Send donations and messages of support to Arthur Scott (Branch Secretary), Graphic House, Green Street, Stockport.
- Propose resolutions of support for the NGA's fight against Tebbit's law at your trade union, Labour Party and students union.
- Resolutions should call for your union executive and the TUC to call official industrial action in support of the NGA. Pledge your union branch and shop stewards committee to take unofficial action if no official call is made.



Photo: GM COOKSON

NGA secretary Joe Wade emerges from meeting with TUC

'You can't get me, I'm part of the union'

OUTSIDE THE Messenger Group's print works there were a thousand of us determined to stop the production of Shah's newspapers. NGA members had turned up in strength from all over the North-west and from Fleet Street.

A SOGAT 82 branch arrived from London armed with loudspeakers ringing out 'You can't get me, I'm part of the union'. Hundreds joined in.

Dennis Skinner

THIS GOVERNMENT has for the first time in just under five years begun to show signs of crumbling at the edges. This is not the time for the TUC general council to give it any opportunity to score further victories over the working class.

The NGA workers at Stockport, together with their allies from all walks of life in the trade union movement, have said 'enough is enough'.

There are opportunities that come so rarely that when they do emerge every fact of that opportunity must be seized with both hands.

The TUC should now understand which side it is on and call on all trade unions to take part in this historic battle and call on them to defy the judgements which have been railed against working class people.

NALGO backs the NGA

NALGO's national executive meeting on Saturday promised 'substantial financial support' to the NGA.

The union decided

- To urge branches to support picket lines set up by the NGA in the dispute.
- That NALGO representatives on the TUC general council should give positive backing to the NGA's call for 'financial and industrial support' from the TUC.
- To give 'substantial financial support' to the NGA.

Back the NGA blockade

SIX NGA members at Messenger newspaper offices in Stockport walked out on 4 July after persistent management harassment. They were sacked within a week without any negotiations and have been picketing the Messenger's various operations ever since.

Eddie Shah, the boss of Messenger Group Newspapers has consistently gone back on promises to the NGA that only trade union labour would be used to produce his five free local newsheets. He recruited scab typesetters to replace the sacked workers and he refused to discuss reinstatement.

By Bob Smith (Birmingham NGA)

Shah has taken out injunctions against the NGA for picketing and against journalists in the NUJ who refused to cooperate with the scabs.

The use of Tebbit's 1982 Employment Act to fine the union for 'illegal' picketing upped the stakes considerably.

The NGA nationally are committed to total opposition and non-cooperation with these anti-union laws. Refusing to pay the initial £50,000 fine, they have been hit for another £100,000 for contempt of court, with the threat of having all the assets of the unions seized.

As the crunch-time approaches, the leaders of the NGA finally realised the need to call on all the labour movement support they could muster. Regional officers of the union in the North-West at first tried to block non-NGA workers participating in the blockade at Warrington and at the other Messenger offices in the region.

However, Birmingham and other branches understood that it was impossible to mobilise sufficient pickets from the NGA alone — which has a membership of only 133,000 — for a round-the-clock blockade. They have mobilised support through Birmingham trades council and its Unemployed Workers Association.

Joe Wade, general secretary of the NGA, has stated: 'I am willing to go to

prison rather than pay the fine. It might be the law, but it is an unjust law and one the trade union movement is determined to fight'.

Socialist Action supporters should contact their local NGA offices for details of coaches travelling to the picket, and details of which days the various regions are mobilising.

Readers should also propose resolutions for support and solidarity at their trade union and Labour Party branches. These should call for donations as well as support for the picket — the vital days are Tuesday to Thursday.

This dispute could have the same significance in labour history at the battle of Saltley Gate, so get up here and help smash Tebbit's Act! Heavy boots and plenty of winter woolies are essential — though the local constabulary do their best to warm you up.

This is a fight we can't afford to lose.

- Donations and messages of support should be sent to Arthur Scott, Branch Secretary, Graphic House, Green Street, Stockport.
- The picket is at Messenger Print Works, Winwick Quay, Warrington (junction 9 of the M62). It starts at noon on Tuesdays.

Solidarity!

'SOLIDARITY' was the cry that greeted members of the TUC employment committee as they met on Monday 28 November to consider the NGA dispute.

Two hundred NGA members and supporters lobbied the meeting with an occasional chorus of 'We shall overcome'.

Among those lobbying were members of the Transport Union executive. Earlier in the day the TGWU executive had agreed to 'give moral, financial and physical support to the NGA'.

Alan Quinn, an executive member from Merseyside, has been actively involved in the Warrington picket.

He explained the TGWU decision to Socialist Action. 'It is essential that unions are allowed to operate freely.'

'If the NGA funds are sequestered and their property seized, we will give them full use of our offices, equipment and funds so that they can keep going as a union. If our union gets sequestered as a result, we'll go to Duffy and to ask him to do the same for us!'

'Our decision today was only an interim one. We've got two members on the employment committee and they'll express our full support tonight. But then they'll report back and we'll have to look at our overall strategy.'

'This may involve an approach to industry at large. We've got to look at the whole concept of the TUC calling a 24 hour general strike.'

'Neil Kinnock spoke to our executive today. His position was a legalistic one about the incoherence of the Tory trade union act.'

'This statement shows his support, but he is obviously only prepared to go so far at this stage.'

'Perhaps he doesn't want to give the Tory press a field day about Labour breaking the law.'

'But it wouldn't be a bad point to raise the need to break this bad law. We are very critical of Duffy, Hattersley and Alastair Graham. Their attitude doesn't help.'



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

The picket outside the Messenger works at Warrington

e, By Chris Jones
'Union'

Students from Manchester, T&G workers from Liverpool and local journalists had all turned out to support the print workers. The atmosphere was electric. With such a large and militant picket hopes were high that production could be stopped.

When the scab workers were driven through in dog patrol vans everyone surged forward, united in their hostility to the scabs who are allowing Shah's union-bashing activities to continue.

Each week the mass picket grows in strength and determination. 'It's another Grunwick', a picket explained, 'but this time the whole future of the labour movement is at stake'.

Shah has recruited a gang of security men complete with paramilitary uniforms. Screaming about police injuries, the press have ignored this and instead tried to brand the pickets as violent, an allegation which is hotly denied.

The first pickets to be arrested have been remanded on bail until 6 Dec and the numbers of arrests are escalating.

There are growing fears that in future pickets may be held in custody as the combined forces of Shah and his scabs, the police and the press barons try to break the NGA with a little help from their friends in the government.



Police use wedge tactics to crush mass picket at the Nottingham Post

de!

Their laws: our rights



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)



Ricky Tomlinson, one of the imprisoned Scunthorpe pickets betrayed by the TUC

THE MEMBERS OF the National Graphical Association and Thatcher's government are locked in mortal conflict. What comes out of this conflict will have enormous consequences in deciding what happens in Britain for many years to come.

The government is determined to break the power of the unions and is using the law to do it. The NGA can either give in and allow the Tories to wipe away years of gains made by trade unionists or they must refuse to recognise the law. There is no compromise between these two alternatives. If they take on the government and its laws the NGA members will inherit a noble tradition.

Ever since the Tolpuddle martyrs were deported to Australia, Tory governments and bosses have done everything they can to crush the unions. In the 1890s when the unions started becoming mass organisations the state began changing its laws to stop them. The *Taff Vale Decision* which fined the unions for striking was introduced.

After the defeat of the 1926 General Strike, a cocksure Tory government brought in legislation insisting union members had to 'contract in' to pay the political levy. This was a 'legal' way of bleeding the Labour Party's finances.

In 1951 the Labour government used **Order 1305** to arrest seven dockers who had been leading unofficial strikes for higher wages. When the seven workers

stable, Johnson, Harrison, Crosby, Saunders, Timothy and Dickens appeared at the Old Bailey for trial they were represented in court by their attorney Rose Hieldbron against Labour's Attorney General, Sir Hartley Shawcross.

Outside the court they were represented by thousands of striking dockers who gave British justice a vigorously push in the right direction. Surprise, surprise, the defendants were found not guilty. Ms Heibron's advocacy helped by strike action won the case.

In 1970, Edward Heath's Tory government brought in the Industrial Relations Act which was yet another attempt to tame the unions.

By Bob Pennington

As soon as the Act went to Parliament it was greeted by two unofficial strikes. In December 1970, and January 1971, half a million workers downed tools against the Industrial Relations Act. On 1 March 1971 two million more workers struck against the Act. By 1972 things were coming to a head.

The National Industrial Relations Court, a legal body set up under the Industrial Relations Act decided to jail five dockers for secondary picketing. This detonated a mighty explosion of working class resistance. Fleet St. saw factories, dockers and construction workers struck in behind the pickets. In 1972 the NGA was the only union to

called a 24 hour General Strike.

The sovereignty of parliament and the law collapsed like a pricked balloon. The official Solicitor had his ear bent by the powers that be, and lo and behold Vic Turner and his four mates were released.

The Industrial Relations Act, because of the willingness of the organised workers' movement to break the law, was finished. Every time the workers have effectively used their strength to challenge the law the government and bosses have been put on the retreat. In the big miners' strike of January and February 1972, an immense wave of secondary pickets closed down the power stations. At Salfley coke depot in Birmingham when the picket line was threatened by the police, the NUM rushed in more pickets and 40,000 car workers in Birmingham came out in solidarity.

Then 11,000 car workers joined the picket line so the police prudently decided that the miners had a right to picket the depot!

When the unions have been too weak to resist, like they were after the defeat of 1926, then the courts, the employers and the Tories have run roughshod over them. The courts under the Heath government resurrected an ancient Conspiracy Law and framed-up Des Warren and a group of building workers. The Street-soury pickets were charged with conspiracy. For what? The strength of the workers' movement was too big for them and they had no choice but to back down. The NGA are doing the right thing.

TUC, under the cowardly guise of obeying the law, disowned the workers.

When a Labour government was returned in 1974 it refused to repeal the men's sentences — to the delight of the Tories.

At Grunwick where Asian workers went on strike for union recognition, thousands of trade union activists rallied to their support. Miners, dockers and car workers with militants from all other sections of the labour movement went to picket Grunwicks. Even Shirley Williams showed her face on the picket line.

The TUC made sympathetic noises. It even made 'protests' against police violence. But it never got around to doing a Pentonville or a Salfley Gates. This meant that in time the police and the government wore down the workers.

Thanks to the TUC Grunwick is still a non-union open shop. For the bosses the law is a means of kicking the trade unions. When the law is not 'tough' enough they will change it. For working people the law is something that bosses use against their right to control their lives and working conditions.

To accept Tebbit's and King's law is the road to disaster — not just for the NGA but for all the working class.

When the NGA tell the law courts they will not accept their decisions they speak for all of us. Either our bosses and their courts will control our lives or we will organise and decide what is best for ourselves.

Socialist ACTION

Labour's Choice

NOTHING could more clearly show the choices that face the Labour Party than the NGA strike. A trade union is locked in a deadly battle with the government. If the NGA wins every socialist cause in Britain will take a step forward. If the NGA loses every democratic right in this society will be pushed back.

Some of the leaders of the Labour Party — above all Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, and Dennis Skinner — have come out totally on the right side. They have backed the NGA completely and without equivocation. They have called for mass support.

Roy Hattersley and his ilk have stabbed the NGA in the front — as everyone knew they would in advance. Hattersley has called for the NGA to 'respect the law'. That is to allow the scab organiser Eddie Shah to win.

If the labour movement had stuck to obeying the law Britain would still be in the stone age as far as democracy is concerned. Every democratic right from the 'sovereignty of Parliament' through the Tolpuddle martyrs up to votes for women was only won through people being prepared to defy and break the law.

Violation of unjust laws and struggle against them is the basis of virtually every major democratic right that exists in Britain.

But what about Neil Kinnock and his supposed support for democratic socialism? Do we hear from the leader of the Labour Party clarion calls for the labour movement to rally to the tremendous British tradition of mass struggle for democratic rights? Does Neil Kinnock invoke the shades of the suffragettes who chained themselves to railings and suffered imprisonment and torture to gain votes for the majority of the population? Or the tens of thousands of trade unionists who were imprisoned, victimised and deported to build the modern labour movement?

He can't make up his mind whether it is the NGA — fighting for democracy — which should be supported or the courts which are attacking it.



Neil Kinnock

Neil Kinnock cannot say the phrases that would settle the whole thing. 'I support the NGA in its struggle. The entire Labour movement should support them too.' Instead there is simply talk of an 'unjust law' — but no indication of whether it should be broken or not. Neil Kinnock's idea of a mass campaigning party disappears like a puff of smoke.

The whole NGA dispute shows why the 'dream ticket' was never any solution to Labour's problem in the first place. Perhaps those who voted for Neil Kinnock in October can see why *Socialist Action* called on people to vote for Eric Heffer instead.

Labour can either oppose the NGA or support it. Sticking its head in the sand will get it nowhere.

Defend the NGA

IT IS IMPORTANT to understand why the National Graphical Association is standing firm. And why we should be supporting them in their efforts to defend their members against an unfair employer, and unjust laws. The punitive fines and sequestration of union funds imposed by the courts, could obscure the original, and fundamental issue — the wrongful dismissal of six workers.

If that is what the new Tory law means, many of the historic, hard-won and legitimate rights of trade unions to defend their members interests would be swept away, leaving employers with the unchallenged power to do what they like to their own employees, knowing that any effective trade union opposition could be banned by the courts and then overwhelmed by a massive police presence to stop picketing and punish those who attempt it.

The media campaign against trade unionism has been so successful over the years that there are a lot of people who simply do not understand why trade unions are necessary, what they do, or why they do it.

Scale

Top people in Britain do not have to rely on collective bargaining to maintain their living standards. Many of them, like newspaper proprietors, derive their incomes from a private boardroom vote which settles directors' fees, or the payment of dividends; others, like senior civil servants, judges, and chief constables, can all rely upon an annual award by some commission meeting in secret, thus sparing any embarrassment to the recipients, who can also relax in the knowledge that they have job security until retirement — sometimes at 60 — with an income-

linked and inflation-proofed pension.

Results

None of these privileges are available to factory or office workers, or most salaried professionals, who still depend upon their collective strength in bargaining with their employer when real pay is cut, or jobs are destroyed, or working conditions are worsened.



By Tony Benn

For when we are told that it is a denial of human rights for anyone to be required to join a union, it is worth asking for examples of non-union workers who have ever conscientiously refused to accept a wage increase, or other benefit, that has been won for them by the actions of trade unions that had a conscientious objection to joining. And if we do ask that question we can begin to understand why so many trade unionists



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

The Grunwick struggle. Picketing is a vital right of the labour movement, under threat from the Tories.

sometimes regard non-unionists as little more than free-loaders riding on the backs of the very unions they affect to despise.

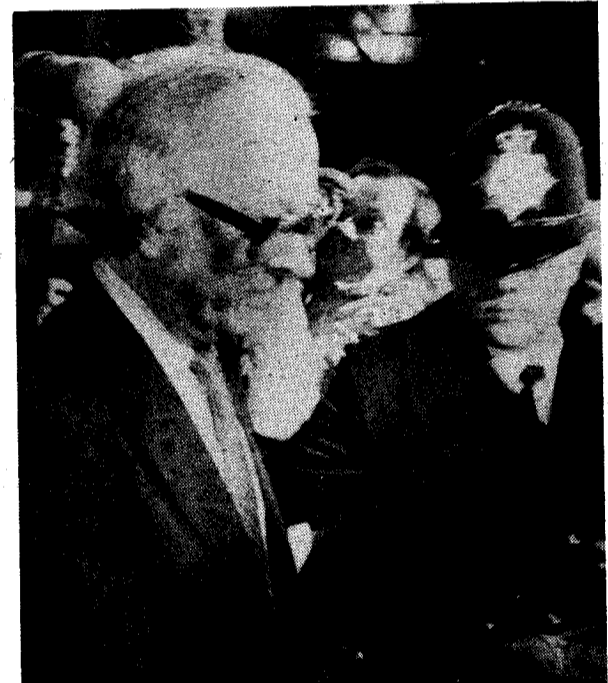
It is also instructive to compare the figures — available from the industrial tribunals — for those employees who lose their jobs because they want to join a trade union (which run into hundreds) and who succeed in their appeals against unfair dismissals with the tiny handful who may not find work because they will not accept union membership. We can then look through the newspapers and see whether cases of victimisations by employers ever get a mention, let alone a headline.

Capital

There are, incredibly, many who still actually believe that the unions enjoy special privileges under the law, although the truth is the very opposite, as the NGA case may demonstrate most forcefully. For under company legislation, which was tailor made to protect Capital, the directors of a limited liability company which goes bankrupt en-

joy personal protection, as happened after the collapse of many firms — including Sir Freddie Laker's tour business, which left a trail of debts, but allowed him to go right back into business again. This immunity will not be accorded to any union which is bankrupted by court orders, that could indeed actually lead to imprisonment for some of its officials.

No wonder that the 'Law and Order' language now being used to frighten trade unionists does not impress many of those most directly involved, who know that it is only 'Tory Law' and 'Tory Order' that is being cited, and that it was drafted solely to protect Capital against Labour, and has nothing whatever to do with Justice, Equity or Fair Play.



NGA General Secretary Joe Wade leaves the TUC

Photo: G.M. COOKSON

LAW charts anti-witch hunt battle

OVER the last year, Labour Against the Witch Hunt has played a leading part in resisting the victimisation of socialists in the Labour Party. LAW held its AGM on Saturday 26 November. The difficulty the National Executive Committee had in expelling *Militant* was due in part to LAW's campaigning.

LAW also helped to get trade union abstentions, or votes against the suspension of the Wythenshawe CLP at the annual Labour Party conference.

By Chris Jones

Early in the new year there will be a conference in Manchester to defend the rights of CLP's arising from the Wythenshawe case.

The AGM agreed to support and build this conference. Alf Holme, chair of the Wythenshawe CLP, told the conference that other CLP's must not be isolated like his own.

The meeting opposed the new appeals and mediation sub-committee of the Labour Party NEC. This is a witch hunting body and its members are entirely white, male, right wing and drawn from the trade union NEC members — the CLP members are left out in the cold.

Delegates were not against an appeal body, but it should be more representative of the Party. One idea was for a committee elected by conference, which would report back to it directly.

Local witch hunts are continuing throughout the Party and the AGM

discussed how to support the threatened socialists.

This includes Tariq Ali in Hornsey, the *Militant* editors in Islington and Hammersmith North and four socialists in Birmingham Yardley.

It is vital to expand the support for LAW and increase affiliations. Fringe meetings are planned for regional Party conferences, to reach out to new constituencies. Individuals are also encouraged to join.

Women's sections are under attack and need support too and LAW needs more women delegates from CLP's. LAW reaffirmed that women should decide nominations for women to the NEC slate and agreed to seek closer links with the Women's Action Committee in the Party.

• LAW can be contacted at: 11 Wilderton Road, London N16

Advertisement

24 hour picket
 FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER 5.30pm -
 SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 5.30pm
 Outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Square

RELEASE NELSON MANDELA!

Release all Political Prisoners in South African Jails!

I'M HERE FOR WINNIE

This Picket marks the anniversary of the 86-day Picket and we would like all those who took part to come along and join those who have since participated in our activities.

ALL WELCOME!
 MUSIC GROUPS - STREET THEATRE -
 SPEAKERS - SINGERS - DANCERS

come and join us!

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Women's Action Committee 'We want to end token gestures'

NEXT SUNDAY sees the Annual General Meeting of the Women's Action Committee of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. Valerie Coultas spoke to ANNE PETTIFOR, secretary of WAC about the issues which will be discussed at the AGM.

GWYNNETH Dunwoody has said that WAC makes a fetish of constitutional reforms in the Party and doesn't relate to the day to day concerns of ordinary women.

She has also argued against you on the issue of positive discrimination, saying that the majority of women reject tokenism. Do you think that this is why you've failed to win your demands so far?

Gwynneth Dunwoody's criticism of positive action is remarkable given that her position within the Party derives entirely from Arthur Henderson's distorted notion of positive action in 1918.

It was in that year that Arthur Henderson and the Party agreed to reserve four places for women on the NEC. The discrimination was distorted because the election was by men.

Gwynneth Dunwoody owes her place on the NEC entirely to this form of positive discrimination. She is your genuine token woman. She is the trade union leadership's token gesture towards women. We want to end token gestures. We want positive discrimination at all levels of the Party, not just at the level of the NEC.

As to the question of relating to working class women, if she knows anything about the history of the labour movement in Britain she knows that working people cannot relate to each other and oppose their enemies without organisation.

We seek that same collective organisation of working class women that working class men have enjoyed for so long.

As to whether working class women understand the constitution of the Labour Party and are interested in changing it I think Gwynneth is probably right.

Firstly Labour Party procedures are deliberately mystifying and complicated and this acts as a deterrent to working class women (and men), and secondly they are engaged in their own separate struggles and to them the Labour Party looks light years away from that experience. What we are trying to do is to demystify procedures, and organise and begin to open up that organisation to the direction of working class women.

What Militant argue is that WAC, and the campaign for positive discrimination in the Party, is not relevant to the concerns of socialist women because it focuses on getting women into parliament. It doesn't serve the cause of the broader struggle for socialism.

I think Militant are saying

two things here. One is that feminism is not central to the struggle for socialism. We argue that the feminist project of ending women's definition by their sex and their role in the family is central to the socialist project.

As to parliamentarianism, women are denied access to powerful institutions whether they be the TUC, the Labour Party or parliament. Men exercise power. Women are powerless.

We entirely refute the notion that by remaining powerless women will not advance their own interests. I suspect that the men in Militant rather take that view.

On the question of the left in the Party, what is WAC's reason for discussing the 'relaxation' of its relationship with the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy?

To the great dismay of many, from Clause 4 to Socialist Action, our reasons are purely administrative. It simply is organisationally impractical to continue dual membership of both organisations. It's also very expensive for WAC supporters.

But there's no denying that women are getting increasingly Bolshie (can I use that word?) in the Labour Party about organising themselves. When eight out of 15 members of the NEC are men this reaction is entirely understandable.

At the same time we have no intention of giving up our style of campaigning. We intend to achieve for women what CLPD achieved for the rank and file — using the Party's democratic channels and procedures to gain maximum grass roots support for changes in the women's organisation.

The point about my question is that the left of the Party is in crisis to an extent, it's fragmented.

I can see why WAC has to continue to focus on women's demands, but what about the alliances that WAC is prepared to make independent of CLPD?

Women in WAC feel that the left have brought the crisis on themselves. Many of us have been vociferous in allocating blame to individuals and organisations.

I feel this particularly and I am extremely critical of the way in which men on the left have organised their claims in a personalised and aggressive way. We in WAC have a far more informal, and friendly way of organising although we recognise the need for discipline and the formulation of clear sighted strategy.

But surely behind WAC's attitude to the rest of the left in the Party there is more involved than a question of style. There's also a debate about what political project the left should have following the victories on democratic reforms and how they should approach the new leadership.

The LCC have made their choice very clearly, demanding a blank cheque in support of the new leadership as a condition for unity.

What is your personal view of the question of organising the left in the Party?

The first point to make is that women have always been on the margins of Party decision making and organisation. The situation we find ourselves in now, outside the main body of support for the current leadership, is not new.

This is not to say that women do not want to be part of the mainstream. We very much do. Equally I cannot deny that life would be a lot easier for us if we were enjoying the happy position of the LCC.

For a moment before the leadership election some of us thought that this new, young, dynamic leadership would show itself progressive on the women's question.

Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley both very firmly closed the doors on us in their reply to our questionnaire. Women are once again on the outside, but unlike the rest of the Party we are not satisfied and not afraid of causing trouble and strife. After all our aim is a lofty one — that is of uniting the labour movement as a whole not just the male section of it.

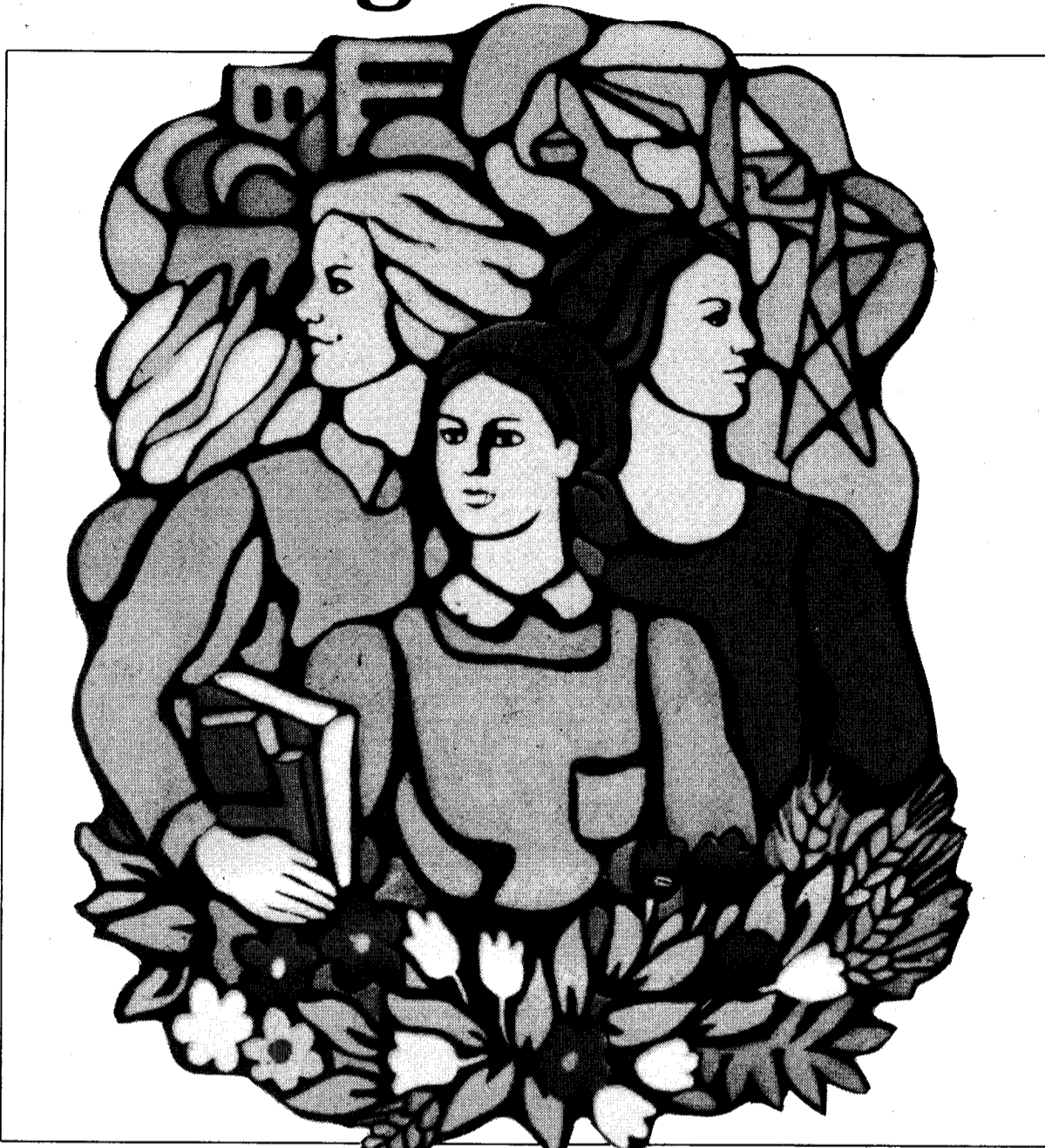
You still have some pretty powerful opposition to defeat if you are to achieve victory — namely the trade union bureaucracy. They have been pretty steadfast in their hostility up until now, with the exception of the backing you got for a special rules conference for the women's organisation. What is your strategy for defeating this opposition now?

I hope at the AGM that WAC will make a priority of working in the unions, especially in APEX, ASTMS, USDAW, COHSE and the Tailor and Garment Workers where women form the overwhelming majority of the members.

The three demands that WAC will be prioritising for the next Labour Party conference are:

- The NEC women's section should be elected by the Women's Conference.
- Positive discrimination on parliamentary shortlists for women.
- The holding of a special rules conference to establish proper rules for the Women's Organisation.

**Women's Action Committee
annual general meeting
Sun 4 December, 10am-5pm, County Hall,
London SE1. (Creche provided)**



We have to channel all our energies into pushing our demands through democratic procedures in these unions.

It's a hell of a task for three reasons. One, most women are not in unions that are affiliated to the Labour Party. They are in NALGO, the NUT and the CPSA where there is already a strong feminist presence.

Secondly, and I speak from personal experience here, if you go out to work, if you're a parent and you're active in the Labour Party taking on the trade union bureaucracy is incredibly difficult.

Thirdly, the unions affiliated to the Party are controlled by men who are intransigently determined to keep their hands on the levers of power.

Take ASTMS. The male dominated delega-

tion voted against an ASTMS conference decision to support WAC. Admittedly they were persuaded to do this by Mel Reid, an ASTMS fulltimer. But they had the

power to give effect to this conference decision and instead they used their power to oppose the women in their union.

Naturally all this is

daunting for us but at the same time the confidence of women has grown since 1980. More importantly we are channelling our anger more effectively than in the past.

FRIDAY 9 DECEMBER
is
SEX EQUALITY DAY
the day that the
SEX EQUALITY BILL

will be voted on in the House of Commons

THE SEX EQUALITY BILL is a private members bill, introduced by Jo Richardson MP. It will fill the loopholes in the present sex discrimination law and introduce new rights to fight inequality and discrimination.

THE SEX EQUALITY BILL will:

- allow part-time workers to claim equal pay (proportionately with full-timers)
- make sexual harassment at work unlawful
- make paternity leave a right for all fathers
- make it unlawful for private clubs to exclude women members from using club facilities
- introduce stronger measures for positive action at school and at work
- make discrimination against homosexual people at work unlawful
- stop discrimination against single people at work
- stop occupational pension schemes giving different benefits to women and men who are members of the same scheme.

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR SEX EQUALITY DAY?

1. WRITE to your MP, if s/he is likely to be sympathetic to the Bill, asking her/him to be there on 9 December to vote. It is crucial that 100 MPs are at the House of Commons to support the Bill — less than 100 and a vote will not be taken and the Bill will fall. Fill in the form at the bottom of this leaflet and send it to your MP at the House of Commons, London SW1.

2. Be at the House of Commons yourself, in the public gallery from 9.30 am on December 9 to hear the debate and to show that women are concerned.

3. Write to NCCL Women's Rights Unit, 21 Tabard Street, London SE1 for more of these leaflets to circulate among your friends, trade union branch, at work, your political party branch and anywhere else.

4. Write to Jo Richardson at the House of Commons, telling her that you support her Bill.

5. Ensure your local paper carries a feature on the Bill on 9 December.



Is Mrs Thatcher's smile beginning to slip?

THE NGA STRIKE against Tebbit, the **POEU** campaign against privatisation of British Telecom, the **400,000** strong **CND** demonstration against cruise, have highlighted the growing opposition to the Thatcher government.

Evidence is also emerging of a slow but steady erosion of support for the Tories. **JOHN ROSS** looks at what the opinion polls have revealed about the popularity of the Thatcher government and its policies.

OPINION polls are justifiably regarded with suspicion by socialists. On particular questions they are often notoriously biased.

A recent **MORI** poll on unemployment for example saw the only alternatives to unemployment as women leaving work, jobsharing, or a lower retirement age. Even official Labour Party policies like reflation of the economy or job creation schemes — never mind socialist measures — were not mentioned. Not surprisingly the poll found wide acceptance that mass unemployment was inevitable.

The polls generally have an inbuilt bias against the labour movement. At the last general election virtually every single poll underestimated Labour Party support by around two to three per cent. In February 1974 almost all the opinion polls predicted a Tory victory. In fact Labour won narrowly.

Telephone polls are even more biased. The results of polls conducted by telephone are in general reckoned to show an inbuilt trend in favour of the Conservatives of between 11 and 14 per

THATCHER



SLIPPER



SLOW

cent. Finally, and most important, opinion polls do not show the actual forces which are creating the shifts in public opinion they seek to measure.

For example in 1972 and 1974, the polls at the beginning of the miners' campaigns of those years showed the majority of people opposed the miners. However, by the end of the 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes public support was overwhelmingly in favour of the **NUM** claim. These polls in 1972 and 1974 accurately showed the way in which shifts in public support were taking place. But they were powerless to explain that it was the decisive action being taken by the miners themselves which had actually changed opinions and won over mass support.

Limitations

Despite these limitations however opinion polls do reflect in a general manner the way in which opinions and attitudes are shifting. They have the same sort of advantages and drawbacks as election results. Elections underestimate the real strength of the labour movement and do not show the real choices open to the working class. But no sensible socialist would ignore election results as an indicator of political trends.

Election results and polls — provided they are integrated with the real dynamic of politics — are valuable indicators of political trends. Judged by that yardstick the trend of the polls since the general election confirms the trends already showing in June. This is even more important, as the opinion polls are biased against Labour.

The polls of the last weeks refute the myth that the Thatcher government is invincible. They also show important ways Labour can build up its support.

In a distorted way the polls reveal that Thatcher's popularity is on the wane. The latest Gallup poll shows Tory support at 43½ per cent. However nearly every opinion poll, including Gallup, overestimated the Tory vote by two to three per cent at the last election.

The Thatcher government's real support is therefore probably down to 40-41 per cent of the electorate. Hardly an impregnable strong popular base from which to assault the labour movement. Given another six months or year of decline and Labour could have a very interesting base indeed from which to launch a campaign for an immediate general election.

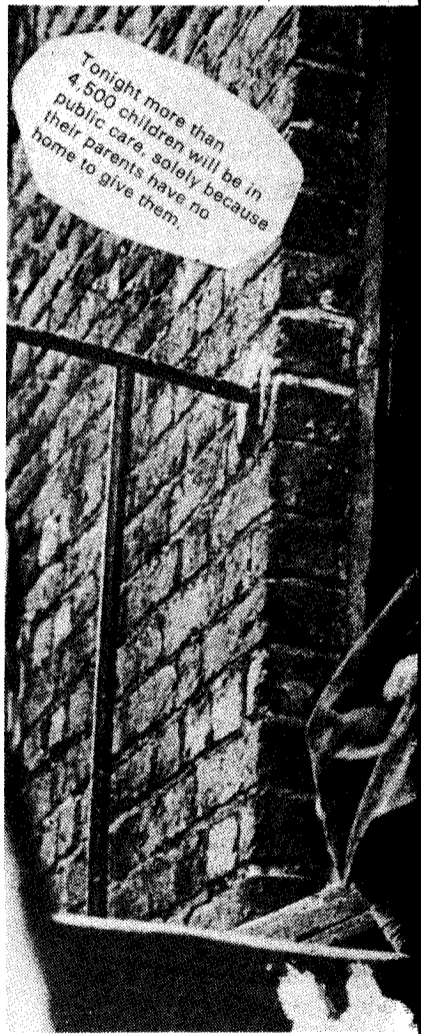
An outstanding popular success has also been the **POEU** campaign against privatisation of British Telecom. Although the **POEU** executive has retreated over the use of the Tebbit Bill against the union nevertheless the shift of public opinion on the privatisation of British Telecoms has been dramatic.

In December 1982, before the **POEU** campaign, the polls in the *Times* run by Gallup said 43 per cent favoured

privatising British Telecoms and 37 per cent were against. By November 1983, at the height of the **POEU** campaign, opinion had been reversed. Forty six per cent opposed privatisation and only 39 per cent supported it.

This shift in support from a majority in favour of privatisation to a majority against is one of the most successful political campaigns carried out by a trade union in recent years. It shows that industrial action is not counterposed to propaganda campaigns — as Len Murray and the right wing of the trade union movement claim — it demonstrates that industrial action and propaganda go hand in hand. The two together are the best way to win public support. This was the lesson the miners taught in their strikes in 1972 and 1974.

On only one issue — that of attacking the trade unions — do the polls show the government's central policies keeping almost unchanged majority support. On almost every one of its other most central policies — like



Shift

privatisation of British Telecom — public opinion has been gradually moving away from the Thatcher govern-

The most dramatic shift of all is the one which has taken place on the welfare state. Thatcher has consistently attempted to present as a central plank of her government's policy the need to slash the welfare state to 'permit' tax cuts. Nigel Lawson reaffirmed that policy in this autumn's parliamentary financial statement.

Shortly before the Tories were elected, in 1979, polls did show some significant support for a policy of tax cuts financed by welfare cuts. Thirty three per cent of those questioned in Gallup polls for the *Daily Telegraph* at that time favoured tax cuts at the expense of cuts in health, education and social services. An equal number — thirty three per cent — opposed such policies.

Since then the shift in support has been dramatic. By February 1982 only 20 per cent of those questioned favoured tax cuts at the expense of health, education, and social services. Fifty per cent — more than twice as many — favoured extending health, education and social services spending even if it meant tax increases.

By February 1983, 80 per cent of those responding to a Marplan opinion poll wanted no further cuts in health, education or social welfare even if that meant that taxes could not be reduced at all. In short Thatcher is progressively losing the battle around her chief project to cut the welfare state. The Tories

have also completely failed to gain popular support for their policies of destroying local government. No Conservative policy was more loudly trumpeted at the last election than the pledge to abolish the **GLC** and the Metropolitan councils. Ken Livingstone has been subjected to a quite unbelievable campaign of vilification in their press. Yet the first opinion poll on the subject, for the *London Evening Standard* of 1 November, found 54 per cent of Londoners against the abolition of the **GLC** and only 22 per cent favouring it. Thatcher's attacks had brought about a two to one majority against the policy of abolishing the **GLC**.

Most dramatic of all has been the continuing shift of opinion not merely in Britain but throughout Europe on the question of the cruise missiles and the attitude to United States bases in Europe. To coincide with the vote of the West German parliament on the arrival of Pershing missiles the *Daily Telegraph* commissioned a special European wide opinion poll on the



These pensioners are against Thatcher

EVERY EVERY PEOPLE?



results were described by the *Telegraph* as 'disturbing' for the Tories.

In all three countries there was bigger opposition to the missiles than support for them. The difference was 48 to 41 per cent against the missiles in Britain; 48 to 25 per cent against in West Germany, and 62 per cent to 27 per cent against in Italy. Opinion polls in West Germany have shown even bigger majorities opposing the missiles — up to 72 per cent of the population are against the installation of cruise and Pershing missiles.

Dramatic

Even more important for future political developments has been the shift in opinion on the question of existing United States nuclear bases. In Britain support for maintaining existing US nuclear bases was still 58 per cent in favour and 34 per cent against. But in both West Germany and Italy there is now greater support for removing the American nuclear bases than for their staying.

In West Germany 37 per cent of those asked believed that US nuclear bases should stay compared to 40 per cent who believed they should go. In Italy 54 per cent believed the US bases should go and only 36 per cent thought they should stay.

As the *Daily Telegraph* moaned, 'The governments of Britain, West Germany and Italy, American's most important allies in NATO, do not command majority support for the siting of new American missiles in their countries.' People do not want to die in a nuclear war. The major West European states have lost the battle to win over their populations to support the missiles and this is going to have a big effect on European politics.

missiles and nuclear weapons. This poll took in Britain, West Germany, and Italy, the three major countries that are going to receive the new missiles. The



School building in Nagasaki where 133 out of 152 children died — people in Europe are more and more determined it will not happen again



Ken Livingstone and the GLC have tried to improve life for millions of Londoners

Can socialism be popular?

The slow but steady decline of support for the policies of the Thatcher government gives big opportunities for the Labour Party to rebuild its popularity and vote. But to do so Labour must know how to take advantage of the openings that exist.

It is on issues such as opposition to nuclear arms; defence of the welfare state; opposition to privatisation; defence of the trade unions and defence of local government that a majority of people are coming into conflict with Tory policies. Labour can rebuild a majority for itself if it vigorously champions these causes.

But as the miners showed in 1972 and 1974, and the POEU have shown recently, it is *action* combined with propaganda that builds support. Thatcherism can be defeated only by mass campaigning both outside and inside parliament involving the trade unions, the local councils and every single body that can get across the Labour message.

This means understanding clearly what is meant by the phrase 'building Labour as a mass campaigning party' which is now so popular. One common idea of a mass campaigning party is that modelled on the successful campaigns and movements which developed in the 1960s and 1970s — the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, the successful fight against the 1972 Industrial Relations Act, the Anti-Nazi League, the women's liberation movement.

Many local Labour Parties are today participating in united front organisations and movements of this type. And this is a big step forward for building the Labour Party.

But to be a real mass campaigning

party Labour has to go far further than simply these campaigns — crucial as they are. The truth is that there are many Labour Parties today which discuss CND, or the fight against fascists, but never get round to discussing about the local council flats in their ward and constituency which have water coming in the basement. Or that the local roads are so dangerous that children and old people are everyday threatened with being

knocked down and killed.

A Labour Party which only discusses damp in council flats or the threat of dangerous traffic is no good as a fighter for socialism. But a Labour Party which does not discuss council flats and local problems — but only discusses CND — will never win mass support for socialism.

The huge impact and popularity of Labour councils such as the GLC and Sheffield is that they have really reached out and affected ordinary people's everyday lives.

The GLC has been in the forefront of promoting struggles such as Ireland. But the GLCs reductions in public transport fares, the fact there is a massive increase in children's entertainment in the parks, the many cultural and sporting events that have taken place have reached out and made London a nicer place to live in.

Transport

For a council like Sheffield, or one like Lambeth, just go into any council office and you will feel the difference. In most boroughs you meet some haughty bureaucrat who obviously feels that the public simply exists to fit in with his or her plans. In Lambeth or Sheffield you generally find someone who thinks their job is to *help* you. The difference really can be felt by ordinary people.

To emphasise that success is not to support everything that Ken Livingstone or David Blunkett have done. Far from it. All sorts of mistakes are made. But types of Labour councils such as the GLC or Sheffield have done more to make socialism *popular* than probably anything else that has happened for twenty years.

Sheffield and London, whatever their shortcomings, have shown the basic truth that socialism is not about the state dominating people. It is about the state providing the resources that can allow people to lead richer, fuller and *more individual* lives.

Like the National Health Service good local councils ram home the basic truth that there is no freedom where there is disease and there is no liberty where there is poverty.

Only the massive resources of the state, democratically controlled, can provide the facilities and the base on which ordinary people can live freer lives.

The state, based on democracy in every aspect of society, is a great instrument of freedom and not of tyranny. Without those resources,

which only the state can provide, the only people who are free are those who have the money to pay for their own health, who have the money to finance their children's education, and who have the money to own newspapers that slander socialists.

The words the great Russian socialist Lenin wrote about political activity in his country could well serve for the type of Labour Party that needs to be built today. 'The ideal ... should be the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before* all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands.'

A Labour Party campaigning to defend the NGA. A Labour Party campaigning to defend the National Health Service and Women's Rights. A Labour Party also campaigning on council houses and traffic. That is the type of 'mass campaigning party' Labour must become if it is to win.

That is the type of party it *can* become if it puts its democratic socialist ideals into practice.



'This is by far the best book that has been published about electoral politics for a very long time' — Tony Benn

Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N.1. £2.50

MOLES EYE VIEW



Our leaders

SOCIALIST ACTION has been getting out and about finding out what your leaders think we should do about the NGA dispute. Len Murray thinks 'its all very serious' — but didn't say for whom.

He pleaded with people to 'be calm' which is excellent advice to workers threatened with the loss of their jobs and a union threatened with bankruptcy. Above all he pleaded with 'people not to get

provoked' no doubt realising that if the Tolpuddle Martyrs had followed advice like that they wouldn't have caused all that trouble which forced the state to deport them.

Roy Hattersley is very worried about 'people not breaking the law'. He is only too well aware that the dockers who came out on strike against the jailing of seven of their leaders in 1951, and again in 1972, might have saved the day for the unions, but at what

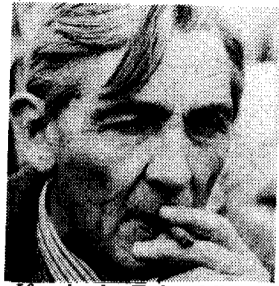


Photo: G.M. COOKSON

If only the Tolpuddle Martyrs had listened to him.

price?

The law was brought into disrepute and surely Roy thinks that's too big a price to pay for things like worker's rights. Mr Kinnock — he is the man who never uses one word when 50 will do — was soon in full flow.

He explained the virtues of democratic and parliamentary socialism, the compassion he felt for humanity, the need for Britain to be one nation — visions of Mr Shah having the pickets from the



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

A deafening silence on what Labour will do

Stockport Messenger sent round for Xmas dinner — and how he would try and make sure Labour didn't upset public opinion.

On what Labour would do to help the NGA to win, his proverbial verbosity failed him. All we got on that was a deafening silence.

We could not get an exclusive with Terry Duffy, Bill Sims and Alastair Graham they were too busy working out how to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

Caption award



M TURNER of Gillingham wins the Best Caption Award for the above picture along with a copy of Steve Bell's *The If Chronicles* with 'Well Nancy, I did warn you about walking too near Three Mile Island'.

The next best came from RR of Hackney 'And another thing Bonzo, don't go pushing any buttons while I'm playing golf this afternoon.' We also liked the one from Dave Carter of Middlesborough which reads: 'I know you're not Sir Geoffrey Howe — but who'll notice the difference?'

Thanks to all those other people who sent in captions, most of which were good — unfortunately space precludes us printing them all.

Moles Eye View is compiled by BOB PENNINGTON. Contributions should be sent to arrive by Thursday am.

DIARY

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

International

- **The Politics of Health in Zimbabwe** Hour long video available for meetings or functions. £10 (payable in advance). Send to Books for South Africa Fund, PO Box 50, London N1.
- **Sri Lankan Research & Information Group** will provide speakers on the current situation there for meetings. Write to 9 Grays Inn Buildings, London EC1.
- **An Evening for El Salvador** Sun 4 Dec, Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, 7.30pm. A cabaret with Julie Christie, The Flying Pickets, The Joys, Leon Rosselson, Peggy Seeger & Ewan MacColl, Emma Thompson, Yolocamba I-Ta, Andy de la Tour. Tickets £4/£6 from ELSSOC, 01-359 3976.
- **No Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean** (NICAC) is a broad based coalition of solidarity groups, human rights orgs, aid agencies and political parties. More details from NICAC 20/21 Compton Terrace, London N1 01-226 6747.
- **Hounslow Socialist Forum** last of a series of meetings on the internationalisation of the world economy and of conflict: 11 Dec **The orchestration of violence and repression** with speakers

from Southern Africa, Latin America & Palestine. All meetings Sundays, 7.15pm, George IV pub, 185 Chiswick High Rd, W4 (Turnham Green tube).

● **Nobody's Backyard** — week of action on Central America, 27 Nov to 3 Dec. For details write to Nobody's Backyard, 4 Replingham Rd, London SW18.

● **From War in the Third World to the Third World War** — new pamphlet published by El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 50p. Order from ELSSOC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1 01-359 3976. ELSSOC have also produced a 1984 calendar showing scenes from life in the liberated zones, £3 from same address.

● **Labour Group for Human Rights in Sri Lanka** public meeting with Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Rajes Balasubramanyam (Labour Group/Tamil Women's League) John Chowcatt (ASTMS) & speaker from EELAM Solidarity Campaign. Thur 1 Dec, 7pm, Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, NW3 (opp Belsize Pk tube).

● **Central America and the Caribbean** A series of open educational with speakers at Peckham Labour Club, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5: 6 Dec Cuba; 13 Dec Nicaragua; 10 Jan Guatemala; 17 Jan Honduras; 24 Jan El Salvador; 31 Jan Grenada; 7 Feb Evening of Central American culture. Admission £1/UB40 free. Organised by

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

Sth London Central American Group, contact Edwin 01-733 7706

● **Reagan's war plans in Central America & the Caribbean** Sth West London Socialist Action forum, 8pm, Wed 14 Dec at Clapham Community Project, Venn St, SW4 (Clapham Cmmn tube). Further details from Carol 01-359 8371.

Ireland

● **'Cause of Ireland'** London premier of the controversial film, plus 'Free Country'. 7.30pm, Weds 7 Dec, Brixton Ritz cinema, Coldharbour Lane, SW2 (Brixton tube). Entrance £2.25/1.50 UB 40 or NUS.

● **Labour Committee on Ireland** — meeting to form a South London LCI, 8pm,

Hands off Grenada!

The New Jewel Movement and the Grenada Solidarity Campaign appeal for support on pickets every Tuesday and Thursday, 5-7pm. These will take place at:

- US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London W1
- Eastern Caribbean Embassy, 10 Kensington Ct, London W8
- Barbados Embassy, 6 Upper Belgrave St, London SW1

Tue 6 Dec, Rm 31, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton. (Admission with LP card only). Further information 01-737 1968 (eves).

Lesbian & Gay Liberation

● **London Lesbian & Gay Young Socialists** meet every four weeks on Sundays at 6pm, Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont St, WC1. Next meeting 11 Dec. Further details from Martin 01-263 9484.

● **London Labour Campaign for Gay Rights** Further details from Mike 01-659 2983 or Bob 01-341 0666.

● **Gay NUR group** just forming. For details of inaugural meeting write to Gay NUR c/o 119 Southwyck, Coldharbour Lane, London SW9.

● **Nottingham Labour Campaign for Gay Rights** meets monthly. Next meeting 21 Dec, 8pm, Salutation Inn, Maid Marion Way. Details: Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton 0602 780124.

Women's Liberation

● **Women and Unemployment** — a conference for unemployed women & women workers at Centres for the Unemployed in the south east. Sat 3 Dec, 9.30am-5pm, Congress Hse, Gt Russel St, London W1. With Jo Richardson MP, theatre, and workshops. Full details from Celia Minoughan, Guildford Unemployed Peoples Centre, The Old Police Station, 3a Leapale Rd, Guildford, Surrey 0483-33942.

Civil Rights

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

● **Affront to public decency?** Come to the Gays against the Police Bill launch meeting at County Hall, 30 November, 8pm. Contact for details: Gay London Police Monitoring Groups on 01-278 6215.

Disarmament

● **National CND Conference** in Sheffield, 3/4 Dec. For details contact CND 01-272 8896.

● **Women against cruise** hearing begins in US Federal Court — 21 Nov actions in USA and Britain. For details phone 01-720 1374.

● **'Sound around Greenham'** 11 Dec. National

SOUND AROUND GREENHAM!

Come to USAF Greenham Common on 11 December



action at Greenham Common, women only. For details ring Manchester 061-225 7352 or 236 3112 or London 01-251 3133/226 6258.

Anti-cuts campaigns

● **London Health Service Campaign**. 34 Dalston Lane, London E8 3AZ 01-249 8086.

● **Hayes Cottage Hospital Occupation Cttee**, Grange Rd, Hayes, Middx 01-573 5593.

● **Stop the privatisation of British Telecom** public meeting organised by Islington Labour Parties. 7.30pm, Mon 5 Dec, Central Library, Fieldway Crescent, London N5. Speakers: Jeremy Corbyn MP; POEU; NUPE; Mike Barratt (Nat League of Blind and Disabled); Judith Arkwright (NUR); Jock Campbell (London City POEU).

Miscellaneous

● **Films at work** — a series of films at Jacksons Lane Community Centre, 271 Archway Rd, London N6. 4 Dec **Borinage**; 11 Dec **WR** — *Mysteries of the Organism*; 19 Dec **Days of Hope**. All start at 7.30pm, £1.50/80p UB40.

● **Camden Labour Briefing Xmas social** Sat 10 Dec. The Cock Tavern, Charlton St, London NW1. 7pm to midnight, £1.

● **The political crisis in Britain** Camden Socialist Action forum with speaker John Ross. Wed 7 Dec, 8pm, Camden Labour Club, Carol St, NW1.

● **Marx & Philosophy:** Socialist Society debate with Ted Benton and Sean Sayers, 7.30pm, 7 Dec, ULU. Details from 9 Poland St, W1 01-734 8501.

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The roots of the Middle East crisis

By Paul Lawson

VIRTUALLY EVERY day for a decade Western television screens have been bombarded by scenes of military conflict in the Middle East and Western Asia. The 1973 Arab-Israeli war; the 1975-6 Lebanese civil war; the revolution which overthrew the Shah of Iran; the long drawn-out saga of the American hostages in Tehran; two Israeli invasions of Lebanon, culminating with the bombing of Beirut; the Iran-Iraq war; and over the past year the communal conflict in Lebanon and the fighting against the Israelis and the Western 'peace keeping' forces.

The chronic instability of the region has one fundamental source: the attempt by international imperialism and the United States in particular to keep the region under its control. Imperialism's vital interest in the region can itself be summarised — the oil supplies and the pivotal geographical position of the region which cannot be ceded to anti-imperialist or pro-Soviet forces. Nothing in Middle East politics can be understood without these considerations.

At the beginning of this century the area was dominated by Britain and France. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1917 drew an arbitrary line down the middle of the area which is now Jordan and Syria, to allocate the area to the competing imperialist powers. But in line with what happened in many parts of the world, the Second World War destroyed the British and French domination and replaced it with United States' tutelage.

In 1948 the politics and geography of the area were moulded by the creation of the state of Israel. The Zionist state was created under the auspices of Western imperialism and above all the United States; it has remained the West's crucial strategic ally in the region ever since. But the creation of Israel was rapidly followed by a phenomenon which has shaped the politics of the Middle East ever since — the rise of Arab nationalism.

Coup

The officers' coup in Egypt in 1952 brought Nasser to power. The rise of Nasser was followed by the coming to power of the Ba'ath party in Iraq, the commencement of the Algerian war of independence against France, and a host of nationalist regimes throughout the region.

What did Nasserism represent? Essentially its project was that of trying to reverse the relationship between the Egyptian ruling class and international imperialism, to the benefit of the former. Nasser based himself on the growing manufacturing sections of the ruling class — at the expense of the traders and landowners. He promoted the idea of Arab unity to try to create a more unified Arab market. Two decisive mechanisms were used in this project — the nationalisation of large chunks of the economy and the mobilisation of the masses.

Nationalisation didn't mean a transition to socialism, however, but rather the use of the state sector to promote industrial development. And the mobilisation of the masses was kept within definite limits — the left was viciously repressed.

Nasser's most dramatic action to benefit the Egyptian rulers at the expense of imperialism was the nationalisation of the Suez canal — owned by a Franco-British company — in 1956. Imperialism's response was the British-French-Israeli invasion, the 'Suez crisis'. But the imperialists failed to bring Nasser down. After 1956 he turned more and more to the Soviet Union for arms and economic aid. The hugely expensive Aswan dam project was financed by the Soviet Union, not the West.

Despite the real, but limited, social gains for the masses under Nasser, the regime gradually went into crisis. Arab nationalism failed to solve the fundamental economic development problems of the Middle Eastern countries. And it failed in its military confrontation with Israel.

In 1966 a coup brought a 'leftist' nationalist government to power in Syria. Fearing the consequences for the whole region Israel launched a war against the Arab states in 1967 — the 'Six Day War'. It was a devastating defeat for the Arab nationalist states and set the seal on their failure to confront imperialism either economically or militarily. To do either would have meant a mobilisa-

tion of the masses and a thoroughgoing break with imperialism. Because Arab nationalism didn't break with capitalism, despite all its radical measures, it was incapable of mobilising the workers and peasants for revolutionary goals.

But if it threw Arab nationalism into crisis, the 1967 war had another consequence. The Palestinian people drew the conclusion that only their

own armed struggle could be relied on to defeat the Zionist state. The launching of armed struggle by the PLO fedayeen organisations threw the relationship between all the Arab states and Israel into turmoil. Fearing the destabilising effects in his own country, in 1970 King Hussein launched a bloody attack on the Palestinians, driving them out of Jordan. Fatefully, most of the Palestinian fighters

went to Lebanon.

Following Nasser's death Anwar Sadat increasingly steered right in Egypt, becoming a faithful ally of United States imperialism. In the early 1970s the different strands of imperialist policy began to unravel. As the wave of Arab nationalism, which had lasted 20 years, began to recede bourgeois reaction conquered in the Arab states. Jordan remained under the control of the Hashemite monarchy. Saudi Arabia, which under King Su'ad had given aid to Nasser, showed its true feudal colours under King Faud. And Sadat's Egypt became firmly ensconced in the American's pocket.

The United States thus constructed a new system of alliances against the remnants of Arab nationalism in Iraq and Syria and above all against the Palestinians. The essence of this strategy was to secure good relations with the reactionary Arab leaders as well as Israel. This meant military and economic assistance to the Arab states, as well as bailing out the crisis-ridden Israeli economy.

Complicated

The overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1978 further complicated the situation from the point of view of imperialism. The alliance with the Shah was the linch-pin of its strategy in the Arab Gulf region. As a result the United States is forced to rely on the Saudi regime for the stability of the Gulf area. But the overthrow of the Shah has had another consequence — the unleashing of a wave of Islamic fundamentalism, the results of which are only now beginning to work themselves through. Already a powerful Shi'ite fundamentalist militia — Amal — has been created in Lebanon. The Syrian regime is threatened by Islamic fundamentalists, and Islamic fundamentalism is even having repercussions in Saudi Arabia.

In the present conflicts in the Middle East three fundamental features stand out. First, imperialism has drawn the conclusion that in this region of chronic instability it can't rely entirely on its local surrogates. Direct intervention will be more and more necessary. Second, Arab nationalism has reached a complete dead end and is losing its way — Islamic fundamentalism could temporarily fill the vacuum it leaves. And third, the strategy of guerrilla struggle waged by the Palestinians has failed, defeated by the alliance of imperialism, Zionism and the reactionary Arab states.

Ever since 1967 the Palestinian struggle has been at the forefront of the struggle against imperialism in the region. But the strategy of the PLO has always been flawed by its policy of 'non-interference' in the affairs of the Arab states, and its material reliance on the reactionary Arab leaders. It is impossible to defeat imperialism in the Middle East, or to win Palestinian self-determination without winning the struggle against Arab reaction. That means that the Arab revolution must be carried through by linking the struggle against the Zionist state with the struggle of the increasingly powerful Arab working class — 'interference' in the internal affairs of Arab states par excellence.

If Arab nationalism and the Palestinian leadership have failed to put forward an adequate strategy to confront imperialism, that doesn't mean that the radicalisation of workers and peasants has ended. For the United States and Israel, that is precisely the problem. But if the wave of defeats is to be overcome it means new leaders and new movements to take the place of nationalism, and take the struggle in a socialist direction.

If that doesn't happen then the revolt of the Arab peoples may well go through a long detour of Islamic fundamentalism — which will be a step backwards.

The Arab revolution still lacks a leadership which will link the fight against the Zionist state and its imperialist backers with the fight against Arab reaction. Without such a leadership new defeats are inevitable.



Top: Anwar Sadat and the Shah of Iran — pillars of pro-US reaction.
Below, pillars of Arab nationalism Ben Bella (left) and Nasser (right) hold hands with Nikita Krushchev.



THE ACTION INTERVIEW

'Women can't afford to lose the gains from this revolution'

SINN FEIN'S recent Ard Fheis (conference) discussed the issues of abortion, positive action and the role of women in the party and in the nationalist struggle.

ANN MAGUIRE and CHRIS McAULEY, are both active members of Sinn Fein and talked to Valerie Coultas about why they became involved and what significance the Ard Fheis discussions have for women in Ireland.

Ann, how did you get involved in the nationalist movement in Ireland?

I started in 1970, after I'd been burned out of my home in 1969 by loyalists and RUC men. I knew people that were in Sinn Fein and approached them and asked to join it. My reasons for joining were that I believed that the British government should pull out of Ireland, shouldn't be there, and the troops shouldn't be on the streets and I wanted to do as much as I could to help have them removed.

I was actually brought up in British army camps. My father was in the army for 27 or 28 years and my brother served in Cyprus with the Irish Guards. We came back to Belfast when my father was demobbed in 1954.

I started work in a mill on the Falls Road. I worked part time in temporary accommodation in clerical buildings — very dark and very cold, and I had three children. It was when I was six months pregnant that we were burned out of our home on 15 August 1969. We were with my parents for a while and then given temporary accommodation in clerical buildings — very dark and very cold. The baby that I was expecting was born in 1970, and because of the conditions we lived in she died in April of pneumonia.

We got a house in Ballymurphy. I'd been around to visit my mother who lived a few streets away, and on the way back home I ran into a confrontation between the soldiers and youth. The soldiers then were using rubber bullets. I was hit in the side with one — I was three months pregnant and a few hours later I lost the baby. So that's twice I've lost babies because of the situation in the North.

At the beginning of 1971 when the soldiers and the RUC men were raiding the houses in the nationalist areas, myself and my husband and a lot of neighbours were objecting very strongly to this happening and were arrested. I was given six months in Armagh with nine other women that were in for the same type of offence, if you want to call it that.

A few months after I'd been released my sister in law Dorothy was shot. She was in a car with three other women in the Falls using a loudhailer to warn people that there was raiding going on when the soldiers opened fire on the back of the car and blasted it and blew most of Dorothy's head off.

How did you get involved, Chris?

I served a four year prison sentence in Mountjoy jail in the Free State after being charged with possession of explosives at the special criminal court, which is no different from the no-jury Diplock courts in the six counties. This charge was based on possession of a few batteries and some household wire — the sort used for mending fuses.

In prison, like most prisoners, I went through an educational process because you've little else to do. I was involved in a lot of issues in the prison — fighting for the rights of ordinary women who weren't political prisoners. I joined Sinn Fein when I left prison, and became very active in my local cumann (branch) and in working for *Republican News*.

What do you think about the decisions of Sinn Fein's recent Ard Fheis?

Prior to the hunger strike we were involved in local issues, but not to the extent we are now. We've come to the realisation now that we have to be fighting all the different systems the state has for putting our people down. The Brits thought the hunger strike was the ruination of the republican movement and of Sinn Fein. But during the hunger strike what you had was the involvement of every section of the nationalist people.

Since then Sinn Fein has progressed from mainly being involved in conspiratorial politics to being a revolutionary political party. For example, the decision to intervene in elections as a tactic. Sinn Fein now speaks for over 100,000 people in the six counties.

'I was hit in the side with a rubber bullet. I was three months pregnant and a few hours later I lost the baby'

How do you see the relationship between the military and electoral sides of the struggle?

The combination for me is that any sort of vehicle through which we can promote the Irish people's right to self-determination is legitimate and should be used.

What about the debates in Sinn Fein about women?

The Ard Fheis at the weekend changed the name of the Sinn Fein Department of Women's Affairs to the Women's Department. The name change is very significant because prior to that we had men coming in to the meetings and we felt very strongly that Sinn Fein should recognise that we are one of the most oppressed sections of the Irish community. That we needed the space to sit down among ourselves, we needed the time to get confidence ourselves and pull our common experiences together without having men literally sitting on top of you at meetings.

One of the most important motions was that now Sinn Fein will be getting involved as a party in any broad-based campaign mounted to defend the rights of any well-woman centre or family planning clinic or any individual woman who's going to be prosecuted under the new anti-abortion amendment. Many individuals in Sinn Fein were involved in the campaign against the amend-



Ann Maguire and Chris McAuley

Photo: LABOUR HERALD

ment and there was a lot of discussion at the Ard Fheis saying that we should have got involved.

Isn't there a big political difference in Sinn Fein about the abortion issue?

You have to take into consideration that Sinn Fein is a mass movement, it's the only 32 county-wide nationalist party. It takes in people from all different backgrounds. The fact of

The main message that came across was that Sinn Fein realises the forces at work in society that compel women to have abortions, and let's work on that. To remove the stigma of criminalisation from women.

Over the last four or five years, there's been a big movement of women inside Sinn Fein towards women organising as women and beginning to debate specifically feminist questions. There's always been a tradition of women playing a strong role in the nationalist movement, both historically and more recently. But this is something new isn't it?

Yes, and one of the other motions bears that out. Look at the elec-

'We look to the women in Armagh as an example of courage and determination which has kept us going'

partition has also inevitably affected the 'think-tank' of the people along with the great influence of the Catholic church in the South where it can almost dictate to the state what it does.

There's a lot of women in Sinn Fein who've debated the issue and feel, personally, that they would like to see abortion being available to women. That discussion is ongoing. Four years ago you could hardly have raised the issue.

There was more open discussion at this year's Ard Fheis, and there was a motion which wanted the words 'we are totally opposed to abortion' removed from our policy document on women. It was finally amended to remove the word 'totally'.

tions. No woman stood for election, no woman was put forward as candidate.

Part of that was a tactical move because we needed to win. We needed to say to the British, OK you told us to stand, we're going to stand. We won because we already have personalities who had gained momentum through the long history of our struggle, like Gerry Adams. They were there, so it was obvious that they were the people who should have gone forward, who were the strongest candidates.

There's now a policy on positive discrimination in view of promoting women candidates in Sinn Fein for

next year's local council elections in the free state, if they come off, and in May 1985 in the six counties.

There needs to be a conscious change of attitude at the grass root level so that women are taken into consideration first and foremost. And that if a woman has the potential and the ability to go forward as a candidate, then nothing should be put in her way. The excuse that she has children or anything shouldn't be used.

All these motions will have to be acted upon, not just paid lip-service — it's up to the women in Sinn Fein to make sure that does happen. The women in Armagh have always said, we can't afford to lose the gains which we make from this revolution, the way the women in the last phases of the struggle did lose out after 1916.

Has the solidarity of women in Armagh made a particular impact on women in Sinn Fein?

Yes, we look to the women as a real example of the courage and determination which has kept us going. You know, sometimes when you think, God I can't go on any longer.

Stop the strip searches!

ONE OF the main reasons for Ann and Chris's visit to Britain was to highlight the situation of the women prisoners in Armagh jail. Chris described the conditions and harassment that the women are suffering.

Republican remand prisoners in Armagh are systematically strip-searched going out to court once a week. It's just degradation and humiliation and it's being used as a political weapon against the women, to break them before they're sentenced.

These are women, remember, who haven't even been sentenced. Under so-called English law, you're supposed to be innocent until you're proved guilty.

The prison governor, Thomas Murray, who's a born-again Christian has the attitude that the women are going to have to pay for their sins. He's locked the women up 23 hours a day, they have lost association periods and 'privileges' such as letters visits and parcels. They're being groped by prison screws.

This has been going on for a year now, since last November. Strip-searches are carried out on women in Britain, but it's discretionary. It's been systematic in the six counties and for the women in Armagh.

US holds hundreds in Grenada prison camps

US TROOPS and plainclothes agents are imprisoning hundreds of Grenadian revolutionaries in a massive dragnet that reaches into every corner of the island.

The U.S. soldiers are stationed at roadblocks throughout the country and in immigration offices. They are conducting house-to-house manhunts and search-and-destroy operations in the mountains. Everyone stopped is checked to see if their name appears on lists of labour activists, members of the Grenadian army or militia, employees in the government of murdered Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, or members of the New Jewel Movement he led.

The US troops are known to have jailed more than 200 citizens. The real number may be higher.

By Cindy Jacquith

The prisoners are held in intolerable conditions. According to an eyewitness quoted in the 4 November issue of *Justice*, the newspaper of the United Peoples' Movement in nearby St Vincent: 'Those pointed out are being taken away where they are carrying them I don't know. What I saw at Point Salines is that they have people I know behind barbed wire in the hot sun being questioned'.

The *Washington Post* reported on 13 November that the prison camp at Point Salines is surrounded by a high fence with US guards watching the detainees from towers. The prisoners are forced to sleep in wooden packing crates.

Among those who have been arrested is a central New Jewel Movement leader who was a close associate of Bishop, Kendrick Radix, former Grenadian ambassador to the United States, was picked up at his mothers home 12 November by an armed, plainclothes American. While incarcerated, he was denied food and water and given a crate to sleep in.

Radix told the media he was subjected to interrogation both by U.S. authorities and by a Barbadian cop who is part of the Caribbean occupation force. He was released November 13. But, reports the *Washington Post* he was warned he would be arrested again if 'he indulged in anti-government activities or threatened the public order'.

'This is a witch-hunt,' Radix declared. The New

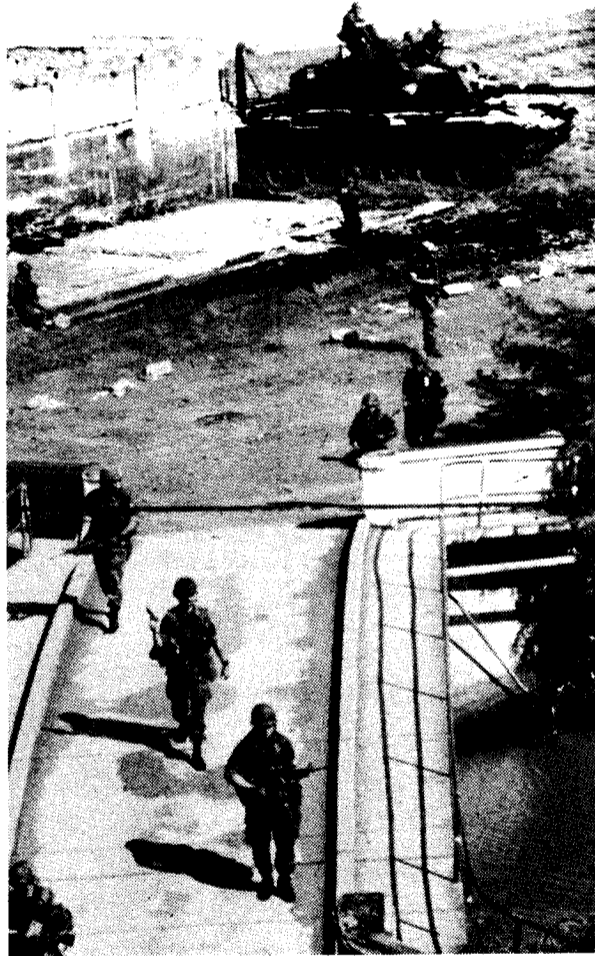
Jewel leader has been speaking out against the U.S. invasion and in defense of the revolutionary policies of Maurice Bishop.

Little is known about the fate of other revolutionaries. Washington adamantly refuses to reveal how many Grenadians have been killed since the U.S. invasion began. The ridiculously low estimates of some U.S. officials — they claim only 21 were slain — is an ominous sign that the actual number slaughtered is very high, and going to increase.

A lynching atmosphere is being prepared to justify Washington's next moves to eliminate opposition forces. Former Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard and Gen. Hudson Austin are to be put on trial soon.

Conditions

Their trials will be used to set the tone for further repression. Posters have already begun appearing on the island put out by a special U.S. Army 'psychological operations unit'. The posters show Coard and Austin, who is wearing only a towel around his waist, with a U.S. soldier guarding them. This humiliating, racist portrait is accompanied by the following text: 'These criminals attempted to sell Grenada out to the Communists. Now they have surrendered. The Grenadian people will never again allow such characters to assume power and cause such hardship. Support democracy in Grenada'.



US troops are caging hundreds of Grenadian revolutionaries



CND and unilateralism

IN THE RUN-UP to the CND conference, the CND leadership has suspended the executive of Labour CND, as Socialist Action has reported in previous weeks. One of the pretexts for this suspension was an article in the *Labour Briefing* Labour conference bulletin defending unilateralism against Kinnock's attempt to fudge the issue.

Here the author of that article WALTER WOLFGANG, the vice-chair of Labour CND looks at the issue of the 'freeze' and unilateralism which will be discussed by the CND conference.

Cruise missiles have arrived in this country. The West German Bundestag has sanctioned the stationing of Pershing II in Western Germany. In consequence the Soviet Union has strengthened its missile arsenal, some of which will be stationed in Eastern Europe. The one new chink of light is that Romania is refusing to have missiles stationed in its territory. A new twist in the nuclear arms race has started. The situation is becoming increasingly dangerous.

In that situation the task of CND is clear. CND must give a firm and unequivocal lead in demanding that the newly-installed weapons systems are sent back in order to lay the foundations for new meaningful negotiations.

It must expose the nature of the new threat, the nature of the new weapon system and use the demand for their return to the United States as an opener for making the case for unilateral nuclear disarmament by this country as a necessary prerequisite for a campaign for a nuclear-free Europe and ultimately world-wide

negotiated nuclear disarmament.

In that task the Greenham Common women have shown the way, which all of us will have to follow.

Stop

Europe-wide protests — although for the moment unable to stop the arrival of the new weapons — have set the scene for a strong Europe-wide agitation to send the missiles back and a demand that the super-powers engage in meaningful negotiations. That also means there is pressure on the United

States to give up its quest to retain nuclear superiority.

As far as Europe and as far as Britain are concerned the demand for a nuclear freeze — always an unnecessary and inappropriate adoption of a transatlantic slogan in a substantially different situation — is now meaningless. For the arrival of Cruise and Pershing has raised the nuclear threshold — and with it the risk of a nuclear holocaust to an unacceptable level.

The outgoing National Council of CND, has partly recognised this by declaring that a nuclear freeze must mean a freeze at pre-deployment levels. Yet such a stance does the kind of violence to the English language which makes a 'freeze' inappropriate as a campaigning slogan.

Opposition to cruise will have to be extended to opposition to Trident, to MX and to Tornado. And in opposing them we have to say that Britain must get rid of all nuclear weapons unilaterally.

Demand

Those who oppose that demand will probably also oppose a freeze. We must not give our opponents the chance to say we are coy about our ultimate objectives. That way disaster lies. A firm rejection of the 'freeze' slogan by National Conference, provided it is acted upon by CND in 1984, would pave the way for a number of campaigns to bring the demand for the British abandonment of nuclear weapons and nuclear strategies to the forefront.

The Labour Party has firmly and unequivocally stated its position in composite 40 passed by the Labour Party annual conference. A good lead has since been given to the opposition to cruise missiles.

This must now be augmented by repeated statements from Labour's parliamentary spokespeople that cruise must go

back. This has not yet been done and pressure must be put on the Labour Party.

Crucially, the demand for a nuclear freeze must be a demand for a freeze at pre-deployment levels. There must be no fudging over either Cruise or Polaris.

Work

Labour CND has done valuable and successful work in propagating and firming up Labour's unilateralist commitment. It is understandable that those who want to substitute a vague stance against sin and against 'the bomb' for a detailed unilateralist commitment, want to clip Labour CND's wings. What is deplorable is that the outgoing CND executive has allowed itself to be used by those who do not share its unilateralist commitment.

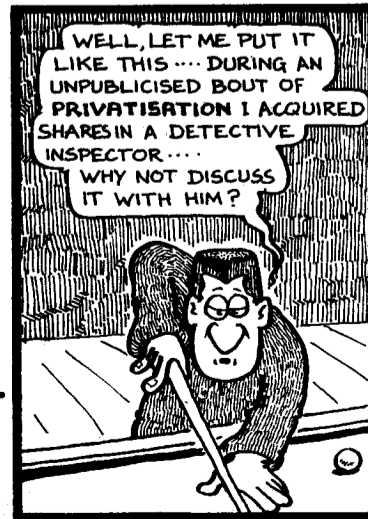
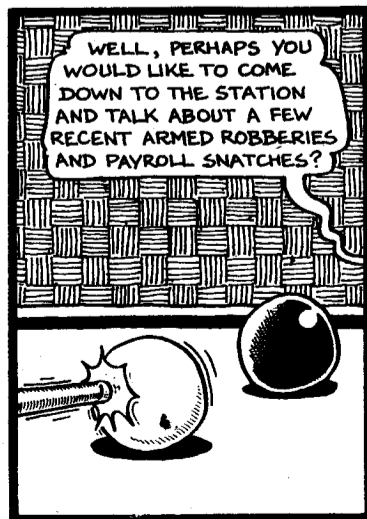
To 'supercede' the elected committee of Labour CND by an interim committee is not only undemocratic — in the present situation it is a grave political blunder. Some CND organisations have sponsored the emergency resolution reprinted below for the CND conference. It is to be hoped that it will be signed by others before 2 p.m. on 3 December and discussed and passed by the CND conference.

Emergency Resolution for CND Conference

This Annual conference supports the work Labour CND has done to build support in the Labour Party for the resolutions passed at recent conferences supporting unilateral nuclear disarmament. We deplore the action of the CND executive in 'superceding' the elected committee of Labour CND by appointing an interim committee. This Annual Conference therefore reappoints the committee elected by the Labour CND AGM as the Labour CND committee.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION

By GORMAG #35 11/83



A Socialist ACTION

As the missiles arrive...

STEP UP THE



CRUISE MISSILES have arrived in Britain and Italy. The lethal Pershings are being deployed in West Germany. Heseltine may pretend that it's a victory for NATO and the warmongers, but things are not so simple.

After this autumn's mass demonstrations majority opinion in all the recipient nations is heavily against the missiles. For the first time the German opposition party — the SPD — has come out against the missiles, an action which breaks the bi-partisan consensus on defence and foreign policy in West Germany. The message to the anti-missiles movement throughout Europe, and to CND in Britain is — don't give up the fight to send the missiles back.

The installation of the missiles has resulted in the collapse of the intermediary missile talks. In any event, the United States and its allies are determined to create overwhelming nuclear superiority. The chances for a negotiated agreement are minimal so long as the West maintains this stance.

What we have now in Europe is a completely new situation. The overwhelming majority of public opinion is hostile to the missiles; the talks have collapsed and the missiles are here. The task facing the missiles movement is therefore to redouble its efforts at mass mobilisation of the opposition to get the missiles removed. Any strategy at lobbying politicians for a negotiated agreement is a non-starter.

Now that the missiles are here, concentration on the demand for a nuclear 'freeze' will demobilise the movement. At worst it means sanctioning the missiles that are already here, at best — if it means a freeze at pre-deployment levels — talk of a freeze will just confuse people.

Of course, those who point out that many more

people are against the missiles than are in favour of unilateral disarmament are right. CND's policy of highlighting actions against the missiles, rather than nuclear weapons in general, has also been right. But this priority can be encapsulated with slogans against the missiles rather than confusion about a freeze.

The whole point of CND's campaigning — both against the missiles and before the missiles issue arose — was that it focussed on the need for unilateral action by Britain to break the arms race spiral. Since the deployment of the missiles, and since the huge demonstrations in Europe this autumn the number of people in Britain in favour of complete unilateral nuclear disarmament has doubled.

Instead of counterposing anti-missiles campaigning and total unilateral nuclear disarmament, CND must build on the anti-missile feeling to deepen unilateralist feeling. That is the trend in any case.

This weekend CND meets in conference. The opinion polls in Britain and throughout Europe show the arrival of the missiles have not demobilised opposition.

The time has come to build on the gains already made to extend opposition to Cruise to the fight against Trident, US nuclear bases, the British Bomb and the warmongers' alliance — NATO.

With these tasks ahead CND need neither a retreat on policy nor a retreat on the organisational front. The most determined campaigners for unilateralism — in Labour CND, Youth CND and among the women's peace movement should be championed, not repressed and witch hunted.

UNILATERALIST FIGHT!

Photomontage Loraine Leeson

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We want your money

AS our readers will see, Socialist Action has gone back to 12 pages. The reason is simple — money, or rather the lack of it. This has been a hard decision for us to make.

At a time when the government is beginning to falter, and when there is a crucial struggle like the NGA fight going on, reducing the size of the paper is a last resort. Every conceivable alternative was tried, but to no avail.

The result is that we have not been able to run important material that we wanted to carry. The paper will be 12 pages until Christmas.

Every labour movement paper is heavily subsidised, ours is no exception. We appeal to you, our readers, to help us win the fight to keep the paper at 16 pages by sending us all that you can.

11 December Sound around Greenham!

ON 11 DECEMBER thousands of women will descend on the missile base at Greenham Common for the 'Sound around Greenham'. Using musical instruments, whistles, pots and pans and anything else that makes a noise, the women will surround the base as they did last year.

Both last year's chain of women round Greenham and this year's demonstration will be on the anniversary of the 12 December 1979 NATO decision to site the missiles in Europe.

After Heseltine's threat to shoot women who get into the base, 11 December will show that the women at Greenham are just part of a giant army of women against the missiles.