

A *Socialist* ACTION

UNITE BEHIND LABOUR

THE CHESTERFIELD by-election could play a decisive role in stopping the Tories and giving new hope to our people. For if Labour can get its message across clearly and with passion and commitment we could turn the tide against monetarism and militarism.

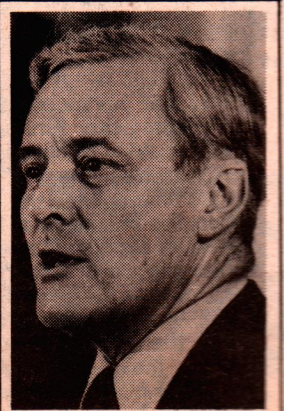
STOP TORY UNION BUSTERS!



Photo: MORNING STAR

Civil servants meeting outside their offices in solidarity with their Cheltenham colleagues

Chesterfield has a fine radical, trade union and socialist tradition going back over many years in a town that saw the very earliest examples of industrialisation. The battles that have been fought there have helped to win many of the rights that we came to enjoy.



By Tony Benn

Now that jobs in Chesterfield are being destroyed, along with essential services, and trade unionism is under attack alongside local democracy and our civil liberties, we have to re-awaken that tradition and help people to understand their strength.

It is well known that experience is the greatest teacher of socialism, and we must start by encouraging everyone to look at the experiences of today and ask themselves why this great tragedy is overtaking us. This by-election offers us a real chance to listen to the people and help them to understand why, in earlier years their parents and grandparents turned to socialism to solve these problems.

I hope that all those who want to help us get our message across will be practical and down-to-earth and full of common sense in arguing the socialist case, because if we do that we shall win the argument as well as the election and move socialism right back to the top of the agenda of British politics.

THATCHER HAS chosen the Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham as an easy option in the Tories' union busting exercise. Playing on the spy scare and national security the government is determined to make this the first step towards banning union organisation in 'sensitive areas' and towards getting a 'no strike' pledge from the public sector unions.

The TUC and the union leaders could not have been more helpful to the Tories. On the very day — 27 January — that thousands of civil servants came out in spontaneous protest against

the Cheltenham ban, Joe Wade was carrying out the TUC line in the High Courts by grovelling before Mr Justice Eastham and calling off militant action against Eddie Shah.

Meanwhile Alastair Graham was meekly offering the government a 'no strike' pledge which most of his members will read as a clear sign that the union can't defend them therefore making the £1000 seem an attractive offer. Protestations of patriotism, claims of responsibility and offers to give up the right to strike will not budge the Tories one inch.

Because the union leaders

are running away before the battle has even begun this will only increase Thatcher's contempt for them. The only thing that will make the government back off is action, and the basis for such action does exist on a wide scale. The protest strikes of their sisters and brothers in the civil service unions shows what can be done. But support for the right to belong to a union goes far beyond that.

Hundreds of thousands of other trade unionists are opposed to the government on this and so are many, many thousands of people who would not describe themselves as militants but

do believe in fundamental civil liberties.

If the TUC was to base itself on this groundswell it could defend its members at Cheltenham and it could stop Thatcher's trial run in union busting. If it fails to do that then it will open the gates for even more attacks on the right of people to be in a trade union. It will thus hasten its own decline in influence and accentuate its present decline in membership. The unions must:

- Break off all talks with the government
- Organise strike action to defend the right to be in a union.

Socialist ACTION

In the unions — hold the line

LAST WEEK saw three different, but closely related, events in the labour movement. Len Murray produced 'Strategy For The Future' — the right wing's policy document which aims to replace nasty — and expensive — strikes with 'workable compromises' with the Tory government.

Joe Wade of the NGA was forced to grovel before Mr Justice Eastham, to get back the sequestered NGA funds. And Peter Heathfield, the left candidate, scraped home as NUM General Secretary with a margin of 2.4 per cent.

Heathfield's nearest opponent, John Walsh, who had campaigned on an anti-left ticket, collected 70,571 votes. To all but the blind, it is clear that the right is on the march in the unions. It has been making ground since Thatcher's election victory in 1979. And its pace of development has been speeded up since the second Tory victory.

The right swept back at the 1983 TUC Congress, and advanced in the Labour Party with the 'dream ticket' Kinnock/Hattersley victory. It is now moving to consolidate its gains.

The development of the LCC in the Labour Party, linking with the right to crush the left, shows the unions what to expect. It is true that the NUM elections have resulted in a 'left wing leadership' of Scargill, MacGahey and Heathfield. But the closeness of the vote shows that the left is losing ground at the base.

In the TGWU the upcoming election to replace Moss Evans will see a very strong challenge from the right. If the TGWU were to fall to the right it would be a massive set-back for the left, putting for example the issue of unilateralism — of which the TGWU has been the main defender — up for grabs. In the TGWU the right has been organising and making ground in the regions.

The signals are clear for the left. They spell out — 'Hold The Line'. For that the left needs to organise as effectively as the right has done. This means organising the minority of trade union and LP members who are prepared to fight the rightwards drift. Unless this is done all the political and organisational gains made over the last few years will be wiped out.

Editor: ALAN FREEMAN

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent Socialist Action's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Reagan's re-election declaration

'America first'

RONALD REAGAN'S decision to run for a second term as US President is no surprise. But its significance should not be underestimated. JOHN ROSS looks at the background to Ronald Reagan's presidency.

After 1980 Ronald Reagan consolidated a new course for United States capitalism nationally and internationally. It is not that Reagan is more reactionary than the preceding post-war US presidents such as Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson or Carter. But he is authentically different.

Prior to Reagan, all US presidents since World War II, with the partial exception of Nixon, had followed the essential lines of policy laid down by Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s and consolidated by Harry Truman at the beginning of the cold War in the 1940s.

This US policy had two essential aspects. Internationally the United States sought to harmonise its interests to some degree with those of its imperialist rivals in Western Europe and Japan. This was summed up in the military alliance of NATO, the economic aid given in the Marshall Plan of the late 1940s, the creation of the International Monetary Fund, the 'Atlantic Alliance' etc.

At home an alliance was created between capital and the trade union leadership of the AFL-CIO — the United States equivalent of the TUC. A 'coalition' of capital, labour and blacks made up the Democratic Party. This alliance reached its most developed expression under the presidency of Kennedy and the civil rights and welfare programmes of Johnson's 'Great Society' of the mid-1960s.

The supremacy of the Democratic Party built by

these means was overwhelming. From Roosevelt's election in 1932 until Nixon's election in 1972 the Democrats held the presidency for 32 out of 40 years. The only Republican president in this period was Eisenhower from 1952 to 1960 who more or less continued the policies chartered by Truman.

Dollar

Reagan's presidency was an attempt to put together a quite different coalition of forces. United States success in foreign policy, on which its internal stability had been based, suffered a devastating defeat in the Vietnam war. The pressure on the US economy, worsened by the rise of its West European and Japanese economic rivals, made it incapable of ensuring continuously rising living standards and social peace.

The spectacular social explosions in the United States in the late 1960s, like the upheavals against the Vietnam war, the black riots and the extreme unpopularity of Johnson, represented the disintegration of the old coalition put together by the Democrats.

Reaganism preceded in certain aspects by Nix-



USA more and more under Reagan acting as a world 'cop'

on, is an attempt to put together a policy which may accurately be termed 'America first'. United States economic interests are put decisively ahead of its rivals — hence the huge Federal Budget deficits, the high interest rates, and the remorseless rise of the dollar. The American trade unions will be brutally assaulted to revive the US capitalist economy itself.

Blacks, women, Latino-Americans will not be placated by the ruling class but put down. US military power abroad will be used independently of,

and if necessary without consultation with, US rivals.

Internally the old Democrat consensus is being dropped by US capital, and is under huge internal strain. It is logical that the year of Reagan's challenge for a second term is also the first year of a black campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination and the first time the AFL-CIO has endorsed a Democratic candidate even before the primary elections start. These efforts however have no chance of putting back together again the

old Democratic consensus.

The real interest in the 1984 election in the United States will not be if Reagan wins. Nor is it the last gasp attempts of the Democrats to put back together Roosevelt's old alliance.

The significance of 1984 will be how far those fighting against Reagan's policies outside the United States can create a crisis in US politics itself. And also will be about how far the left and socialists in the US are capable of beginning to put together black and labour parties independent of both the Republicans and the Democrats.

'United left wing leadership in NUM'

DAI DAVIES, chairperson of Penrhifceiber Lodge and member of the South Wales NUM Executive spoke in a personal capacity to BARRY WILKINS about the results of the general secretary ballot.

The election of Peter Heathfield as the new general secretary of the NUM will give a lot of encouragement to the rank and file and to Arthur Scargill. Scargill has not had the support from Lawrence Daly but now we have a united left wing leadership and there's tremendous enthusiasm about that in South Wales I can tell you.

The vote was close — a lot closer than I thought it would be. But I don't believe it was a judgement on the overtime ban. In South Wales the overtime ban is totally solid and there's very little call for ballot. Even in areas like the Midlands, which is very mild don't forget, there has been very militant support for the overtime ban.

The continual media campaign against the NUM, and the attempted character assassination of Arthur, has had some effects of course. The media keep up a continual barrage. Look at the way they presented the election result — you'd almost think Heathfield had lost! But the election of Thatcher's government last year with just over 40 per cent of the vote was presented as a landslide.

Solid

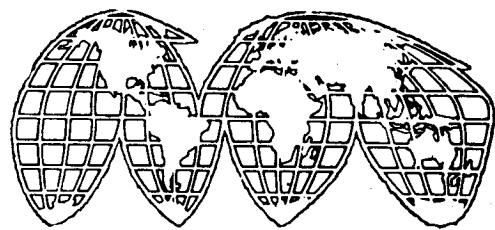
The fact is that after three months the overtime ban is still solid, despite intense media propaganda. And it's having a big effect on the Coal Board.

I don't think the right wing is gaining ground in

the NUM. But to get our case across and answer the media distortions, there is real need for continual agitation amongst the rank and file by the lodge and area leaderships. We've got to keep our nerve on the overtime ban and that way we can maintain support of the membership.

Shift

Of course we're worried about the shift to the right of the TUC. What the TUC and Len Murray did to the NGA was unbelievable. But I don't think the TUC could sell out the NUM like that. We have tremendous good will in the working class, and I believe we could mobilise enough support to prevent the TUC from sabotaging our actions. That kind of pressure and working class solidarity is going to be an essential part of changing the TUC.



The World Economic Crisis

Weekend conference on the world capitalist economy today.

with
Ernest Mandel

3/4 March, Caxton House, St John's Way, London N.19
Admission £2 a day, £3 for the whole weekend.
Tickets only from *International*, 328 Upper St, London N.1.



Heathfield's victory can encourage rank and file

Solidarity resistance still a threat

By Oliver MacDonald (editor of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe)

OFFICIALLY, Solidarity is dead. It no longer exists either in law or in fact. Repeatedly official spokespersons of the government claim that they have not the slightest worry about continued Solidarity underground activity.

They claim success for the amnesty offered to those in hiding. According to official figures released on 4 January, 1,120 people came out of hiding, including 411 who gave themselves up between 1 November and 31 December when the amnesty expired.

Press spokesperson Urban claimed that those remaining underground numbered less than 100 and were now 'generals without an army'.

At the beginning of this year, the leaders of 13 new, officially inspired trade unions met to establish a unified national council. On 6 January, the Communist Party announced that its strength and activity had been largely restored. It claims 2.2 million members who are now said to be more active, especially among the workers.

During the last three months of 1983 there were elections of local party officials and about one third of these officials are said to have lost their posts.

Daily

The authorities declare themselves well satisfied with relations between Church and state. The Polish Primate, Cardinal Glemp had a five hour meeting with General Jaruzelski on 5 January.

The Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy* insisted that the meeting gave the lie to all suggestions that tensions existed between the two bodies and there are now plans to establish full diplomatic relations between Poland and the Vatican for the first time since the war.

This official picture of normalisation is not entirely a bluff. Opposition sources acknowledge that the government has been able to restore its effective authority.

An opposition assessment of the political situation published in December by the Paris-based Solidarity Information bulletin said: 'Once a minority has successfully breached the allegedly impenetrable defences of the regime — as happened in August 1980 — an immense human stream flows into the gap, tearing down the banks even further; once, however, the defences are repaired, the river resumes its lazy and apathetic course, and the waters go where the engineers want them to go. Just as before August 1980.'

The writer points to last year's May Day celebrations which 'were in fact attended by several million people', not only officials but also 'quite a number of ordinary people who normally grumble to their hearts' content, criticise and ridicule the authorities'.

The Solidarity underground leaders are nevertheless much more confident about their position than at earlier moments in the two years since the crackdown on Solidarity began.

Claims

Indeed, the underground's main leaders, Zbigniew Bujak, made the following claim in an interview for the underground journal *Tygodnik Mazowsze* published on the 24 November: 'At present, we exert a greater influence on our country's political life — as well as on other matters — than we did towards the end of our open and legal existence.'

'In the three months before 13 December 1981 (when Martial Law was imposed) the authorities were only pretending to negotiate with Solidarity. In fact, they were already by-passing the Union making all their decisions apart from it, and preparing for the introduction of martial law.'

People

'Now, the situation has been reversed. The authorities pretend that the Union doesn't exist, while in reality having to take it into account before taking any important step.'

'By lifting martial law and by acknowledging the situation as "normalised" while the underground exists, the authorities have signalled their reconciliation to the fact of our existence.'

Conflict

Bujak's assessment is based on the continuing numbers and organisation of the resistance. In addition to the hundred or so people in hiding — who include the main leaders of the movement — there are some thousands of permanently active union members (some say tens of thousands of them).

Beyond these, a much wider layer of people continue to pay dues to Solidarity or take its newspapers regularly. Bujak claims that these number a million or more. Others put the figure in hundreds of thousands. These supporters are especially concentrated in the main industrial centres and large enterprises.



Lenin shipyard workers were the backbone of Solidarnosc in the early days



Zbigniew Bujak worked in Ursus tractor factory and is now an underground leader of Solidarnosc



Jacek Kuron, founder of KOR — Workers' Defence Committee

Just as important has been the change of perspective amongst the activists. They no longer expect a showdown with the state right now. They tend to compare their strength with what happened before Solidarity, and feel much stronger in that time scale. They have to concentrate less on general propaganda against the regime and deal more with bread and butter issues.

This has strengthened the movement's unity by concentrating on less divisive issues than general questions of ideology and programme. The sinews of leadership from the TTK — the national committee — downwards have been strengthened.

Unity

The government is trying to convince the workers that they can use new official institutions for their own practical purposes. It is allowing the new unions to voice criticisms, uses wide consultation on price increases and lets the new political front organisation PRON make demands for changes in policy.

The authorities are hoping that such flexibility, along with its co-

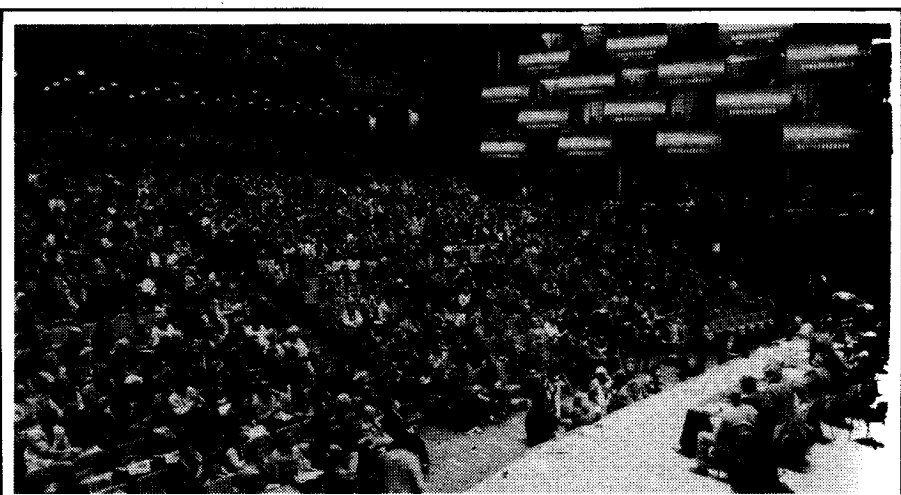
operation with the Church hierarchy will eventually make workers apathetic towards the underground.

Issues

The Solidarity underground is raising demands for the release of seven jailed Solidarity leaders and four KOR leaders (KOR stands for the Workers' Defence Committee that championed the cause of independent trade unions in the late 1970s). It is calling for a price freeze, cost of living allowances and united trade union action in defence of living standards. It is also planning to campaign against the projected parliamentary elections if these do not give people a real choice.

The government's handling of these issues gives some support to Bujak's assessment of the situation. It has not brought the Solidarity 'Seven and KOR Four to trial and seems keen to avoid doing so. It has moved with great caution over prices and seems to be still debating how to handle election arrangements.

In short, uprooting the traditions of independent trade unionism is proving to be a long and difficult battle.



30,000 demonstrate to defend metropolitan councils

ALTHOUGH you may not have seen it in the press or on the TV, London had its biggest-ever weekday demonstration last Tuesday. 30,000 people marched from Hyde Park to a rally at the Festival Hall, attended by a packed audience of 10,000.

More than 300,000 children did not attend school as 21,000 education workers took strike action, and many council offices were closed.

Ken Livingstone pointed out to the rally that the proposed £700m saving from axing the GLC would not buy a

single Trident missile.

Despite the impressive demonstration and the strike action in education and councils, a major weakness was the decision by transport unions to keep London Transport working. This decision reflects the lack of unity and coordination in the campaign to defend the GLC itself.

It also reflected the fact that the bulk of the campaigners have so far staked the campaign on protest action rather than a campaign of industrial action and non-cooperation with the Bill to abolish the metropolitan councils. The TUC is organising a day of action at the end of February.



The historic connection between the British Labour Party and the trade union movement is one of the party's great strengths.

Defend Labour Party affiliations

Davy Jones, Islington North and Finsbury Park Labour Party

WATCH OUT! There's an innocuous-looking document circulating inside the party from the National Executive Committee. It's implications are anything but innocuous. It could lead to disaffiliation of the socialist societies and the Co-op from the party.

The NEC sent out the document, entitled 'Affiliation of small single purpose organisations', to constituencies and affiliates in December. Comments must be in by 1 March. So constituencies don't have much time to respond.

The report catalogues the history of party affiliation: from the early days of the federation seeking parliamentary representation, through the 1918 constitution establishing individual membership, to the 1937 decision to allow socialist societies and the Co-op to affiliate.

It explains the anomalous situation of some organisations being affiliated (like the Fabians

and Paole Zion), while others have been refused (like the Labour Middle East Council and the Christian Socialist Movement).

Three options are laid out for consideration: no change, disaffiliate all organisation except the unions, or extend the affiliation category. Socialists in the party should argue strongly for the third and against the second option.

It is an inappropriate time to raise the spectre of disaffiliation. The Tories are doing their level best to force the trade unions to sever their links with Labour in an attempt to depoliticise the unions and

weaken the Labour Party.

Fighting this will be an uphill battle. The last thing the party needs is a plan for further erosion of the unifying character of the British Labour Party — unique for bringing together the different wings of the labour movement. This tradition is well worth defending against those who would have us follow the model of other European social democratic parties.

We must take this opportunity to argue in favour of expanding affiliation. The only conditions should be agreement with the aims and objects of the party and that affiliates don't stand candidates against Labour.

A much more useful role for the NEC would be investigating the extension of affiliation so that organisations of women and black people could

join. Such a proposal need not compromise the autonomy of these organisations. But it would strengthen the links between the party and the broader labour movement.

Would organisations apply for affiliation solely to vote at annual conference? I doubt it. Even so, why should the party fear this? Would their vote upset the union barons' calculations? It would be sad to return to the bad old days when right wing constituencies used to tell new applicants 'sorry, we're full up'!

It's not often the NEC asks the rank and file what they think. So seize this chance. Make sure your constituency or affiliated organisation schedules a discussion before the end of February. And cast your vote to extend the affiliation category.

London Labour Party: Defend the GLC

NOT SURPRISINGLY, this year's London Labour Party conference is dominated by defence of the GLC. Twenty-four resolutions are devoted to calls for campaigns in support of the GLC, the Inner London Education Authority and London Transport.

These are vital issues for London Labour. The abolition of the GLC, and the other attacks on local democracy, are aimed at severely weakening the Labour Party. Conference should commit itself to joining with the unions for an all-London campaign for industrial and political action to defeat these proposals.

By Carol Turner, Vauxhall Labour Party

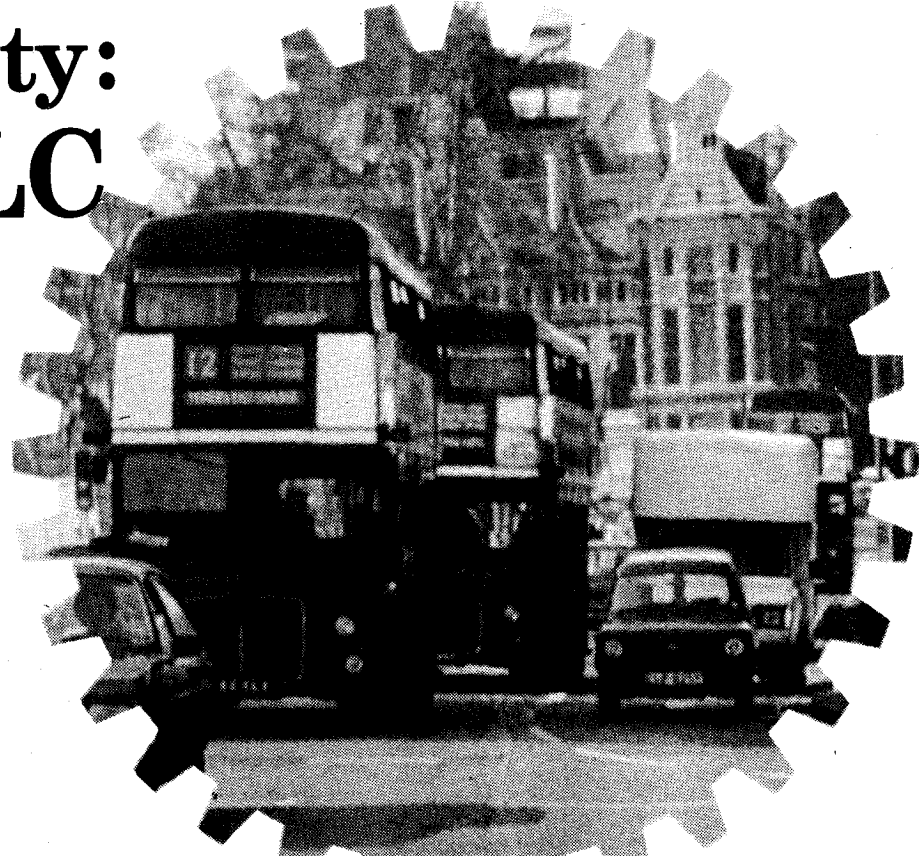
The campaigning theme doesn't stop with the GLC. Labour's election defeat and the Tory offensive against welfare benefits has certainly affected the whole London region agenda. A whole section, 12 resolutions, is devoted to the theme of changing Labour into a campaigning party.

The same call is echoed on poverty (five resolutions), women (13 resolutions), and the health service (15 resolutions). The message from London's rank and file is clear as a bell: Labour must raise its standard to regain the support of working people.

The inspiration of Labour women is evident in resolutions calling for positive action to break Labour's institutionalised racism by recognising black members' right to set up their own caucuses.

And discussion on women takes a suitably sharp tone, demanding we are properly represented at regional level, and that the executive implement this decision from last year's conference.

This time round, it's particularly heartening to see the campaign for women's rights no longer restricted to internal party questions, important as they may be. Two resolutions — from City of London and Westminster South, and Tooting — call for a London Labour Party campaign on women's employment.



Predictably, the fly in the ointment comes from the Labour Party Young Socialists, who reject positive discrimination in the interest of an abstract call to 'class unity'. Fortunately, they're flogging a long-dead horse. The class consciousness of Labour Party women, based on our many ex-

periences of sexism in the labour movement, is years ahead of Militant's moralistic propagandising.

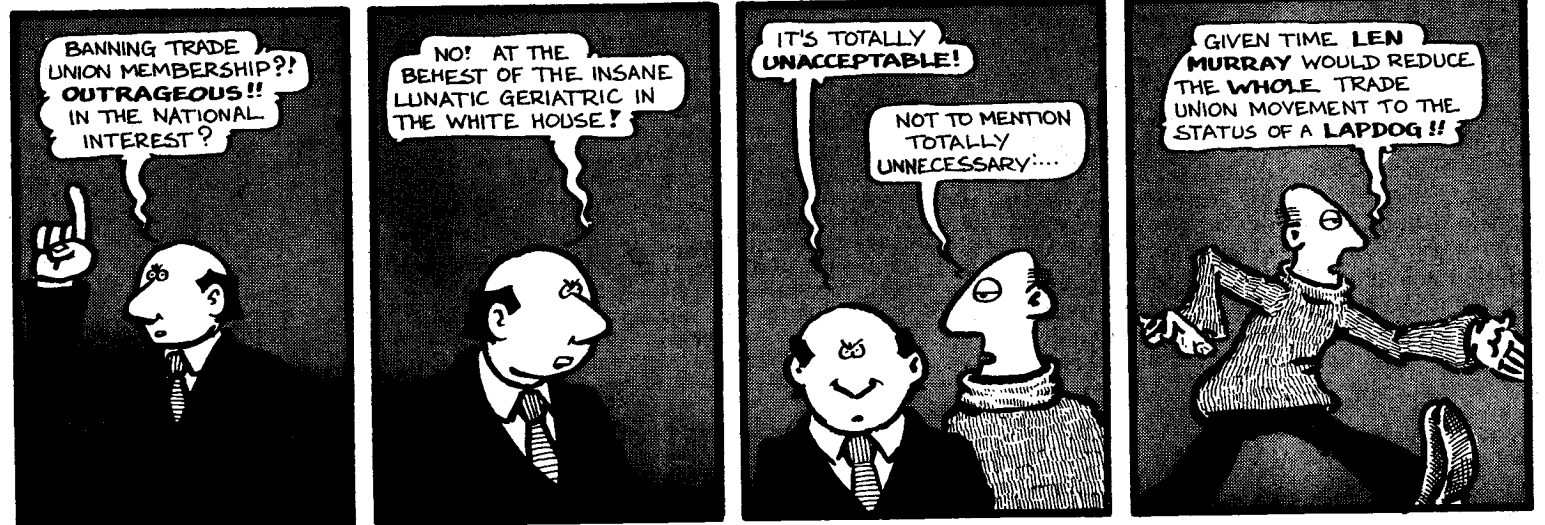
The resolutions on the GLC are sure to be supported. If they're acted on then Labour in London stands a fighting chance of

regaining the national ground lost over the past few years.

Amendments to the preliminary agenda are out now. Compositing meetings will take place at Herbert Morrison House on Saturday 4 February. Regional conference is on the weekend of Saturday 3/Sunday 4 March.

BY #42 2/84 CORMAC

A PIECE OF THE ACTION



Blackburn 6: NEC investigates

THE WITCH HUNT took a step forward recently when the right expelled six Militant supporters from Blackburn Labour Party, with a now-familiar disregard for natural justice.

By Chris Jones

A 60-page report published last January purported to prove malpractices such as caucusing, preparation of stales, and misappropriation of Young Socialists funds. At the North West regional conference Tribune rally last year, Blackburn MP Jack Straw explained the report was 'not a right wing attack on the left — just ordinary members expelling an alien threat'.

To carry out the expulsions, large numbers of inactive delegates were drawn to the meeting. And to prevent confusion, the defendants weren't allowed to put their case. In fact, the police were called to

remove the six when they tried to present their case to the December executive committee.

Now they have appealed. They await a regional investigation which will report to the National Executive Committee. If this fails, they will appeal for reinstatement at 1984 annual conference.

After the expulsion of Tariq Ali, and events in Gillingham and Wythenshawe, no more proof is needed that Labour's new leadership intend to continue the witch hunt.

The Blackburn 6 have already received support from local MPs, including Stan Thorne, and from Hindburn Trades Council, as well as many other individuals and organisations. Resolutions of support should be sent to Peter Harris, 35 Westminster Court, Blackburn BB1 1UG. Copies should be sent to Labour Against the Witch Hunt (11 Wilderton Rd, London N16) and to the National Executive Committee.

Build Trade Union CND

TRADE UNION CND holds its annual general meeting on Saturday 25 February. Since the arrival of cruise, more and more people have been joining CND. As a specialist section, TUCND has an important role to play in 1984. ANDREW HEWETT, TUCND's full-time worker, told Socialist Action about the campaigning priorities for the coming year.

Twenty-eight national unions are affiliated to Trade Union CND, and between 450-470 regional and local bodies. All registered workplace groups and affiliates vote at our annual meeting to elect officers and executive which meets monthly.

Unions' work varies. For instance, NUPE's peace pack is probably the best campaigning material around. But many don't go beyond paying their yearly affiliation and voting the right way at TUC and Labour Party conferences, important though that is.

We've already circulated model resolutions for 1984 trade union conferences, and we're hoping to organise fringe meetings at all of them.

We don't have a very effective regional network. Only a few regions have an active TUCND group. Building them is one of our priorities.

We're also hoping to get a network of peace-ships going — an idea pinched from the Australian seamen's union. And we're suggesting the miners' union consider peace-pits. These are more imaginative variations on workplace groups, similar to declaring a nuclear-free zone.

We have some specific targets. Some of our unions have members in the armaments industry. We hope the Bradford conference we're helping

organise on 7-8 April — sponsored by some major unions — will involve people in the industry in discussing alternative, socially useful production.

And there are unions directly affected by the new civil defence regulations which came into force on 1 December last year. After our Hard Luck exercise — against the government's Operation Hard Rock — we can have another success on this front in 1984.

Success

A national focus currently being discussed, is a week of action along the same lines as the German peace movement's last year. One day the churches do something, another day women, another people in education and so on. The trade union day could be organising a workplace meeting, or a five-minute protest stoppage.

Imagination's the only limit. A lot of CND members want to work in the unions, but have little idea about union structures.

The unions are in a fragile state at the moment. Defending members' living standards is the first and immediate priority. We have to find ways to integrate their main concerns with our main concerns.

Making the connections between spending



Arthur Scargill leads the trade union contingent on 22 October CND demonstration

cuts and increased military expenditure is a good way for CND groups to build union links. And the government's industrial legislation is another.

CND is aware that this legislation attacks our right to organise and protest. It doesn't just affect the NGA.

CND cannot take on board opposition to the new industrial legislation — that's outside our charter. But the NGA is affiliated, and an NGA member of our executive spoke at CND's conference and at a TUCND fringe meeting.

CND's priorities remain removing cruise, making sure the Trident contract is stopped, and contributing to the international nuclear disarmament movement. That includes building a mass movement to achieve them.

The labour movement is crucial. Trade unions organise 10 million people, six million of which are already affiliated through their unions. If a majority were campaigning for nuclear disarmament, the voice of the movement would be a lot stronger. It would be hard force to ignore.

Trade unionists are involved in the production, maintenance, servicing and transportation of nuclear weapons. There is

a lot of potential for holding up, stopping and closing down the nuclear weapons industry. The

labour movement, in conjunction with other social forces has a very important role to play in CND.

TUCND News
December 1983
No. 1

Business journals mean CND is not just a name on paper. See page 2.

Welcome to the first edition of the Trade Union CND Newsletter! It's hoped that the two-way communication — between local TUCND, CND activists and national registered workplace groups — will be sent regularly and we hope other friends of CND in the labour movement will decide to subscribe.

Under the shadow of Cruise deployment it may seem strange to talk about the 'success' of the drive priority to the general of information about especially at work and the level, and to creating closer contact between Trade Union CND and a series of day schools. TUCND has worked with a number of major national trade unions through the publication of special information packs for their members. The NUPE peace pack has been widely printed and there has been a lot of interest in it. The development of workplace groups is a high priority for TUCND. Such groups are able to undertake concrete action in their own workplaces, linking the work issue of their factories or office to the wider issue of the nuclear threat.

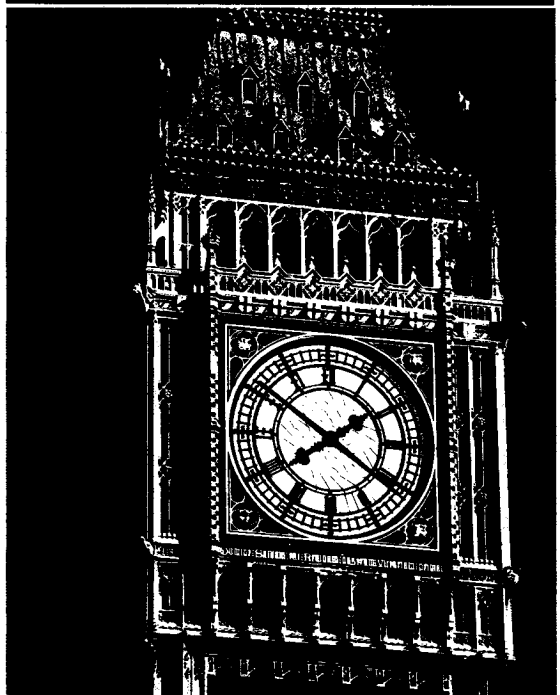
At a national level we have tried to make sure that the issues of peace and disarmament remain in the minds of workers. Fringe meetings, literature stalls and links with unions on the temperature of the debate. For example, in the newsletter, major unions like the NUPE and NUJ are now affiliated to CND (see last page). We have also been working with the NUJ, the NUJ and the NUJ. We are also working with the NUJ and the NUJ.

Looking ahead our immediate priorities are stepping up the campaign against the new civil defence regulations, developing awareness of the national trade union conference in Bradford next April, and making sure that the 'Hard Luck' exercise is well publicised and active. We are also working with the NUJ and the NUJ.

The potential of the trade union movement and movement is massive. Over 6 million workers are organised through their unions. The NUJ is the largest of these. It is the job of Trade Union CND to develop the potential of the trade union movement. We will need your energy and activities. For hard work. Please contact us to find out what we can do and how we can help — together we have the strength to win.

Copies of TUCND News are available from Andrew Hewett, 11 Goodwin St, N4
Latest issue out at the end of January (extra copies at 3p each)
Model resolutions for trade union conferences also available

View from



Westminster

Defend the unions

By Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North

THE UNILATERAL and high-handed announcement by the government that henceforth there will be no trade union membership at the Cheltenham communication headquarters is a serious attack on trade union rights. It's part of a long process that started when the Tories took power in 1979.



It can't have escaped their notice that public sector unions are becoming increasingly militant. I believe they'll follow up this attack in other key areas: gas workers, water workers, civil servants in the Home Office. Gradually trade union rights will be denied in any 'sensitive' area of government.

We must defend trade union rights for all workers, irrespective of where they're employed. It's important that the Labour Party campaign in support of the Cheltenham workers.

But the trade union movement must realise how serious this attack is. Frankly, I was looking for a bit more than statements of intent from the council of civil service unions and the TUC. First the NGA, now this — when will the trade union leadership stand up?

The campaign to defend the GLC and local democracy within London is faring better. The recent day of action saw 40,000 out — in very bad weather — to support something the media keep telling us is unpopular.

Recent meetings I've held in Islington on the GLC, London Transport and the Inner London Education Authority have been packed. People are angry and determined. The tide has turned.

I don't think the London Transport Bill, which gives central government control over transport in the capital, is getting enough attention. I'm on the commit-

tee in parliament dealing with it. The minister, Linda Chalker, has made it clear she envisages a London regional transport authority run on business lines.

Each bus and train route must run at a profit. That means thousands of miles of routes are at risk. More than one in four busworkers could lose their jobs.

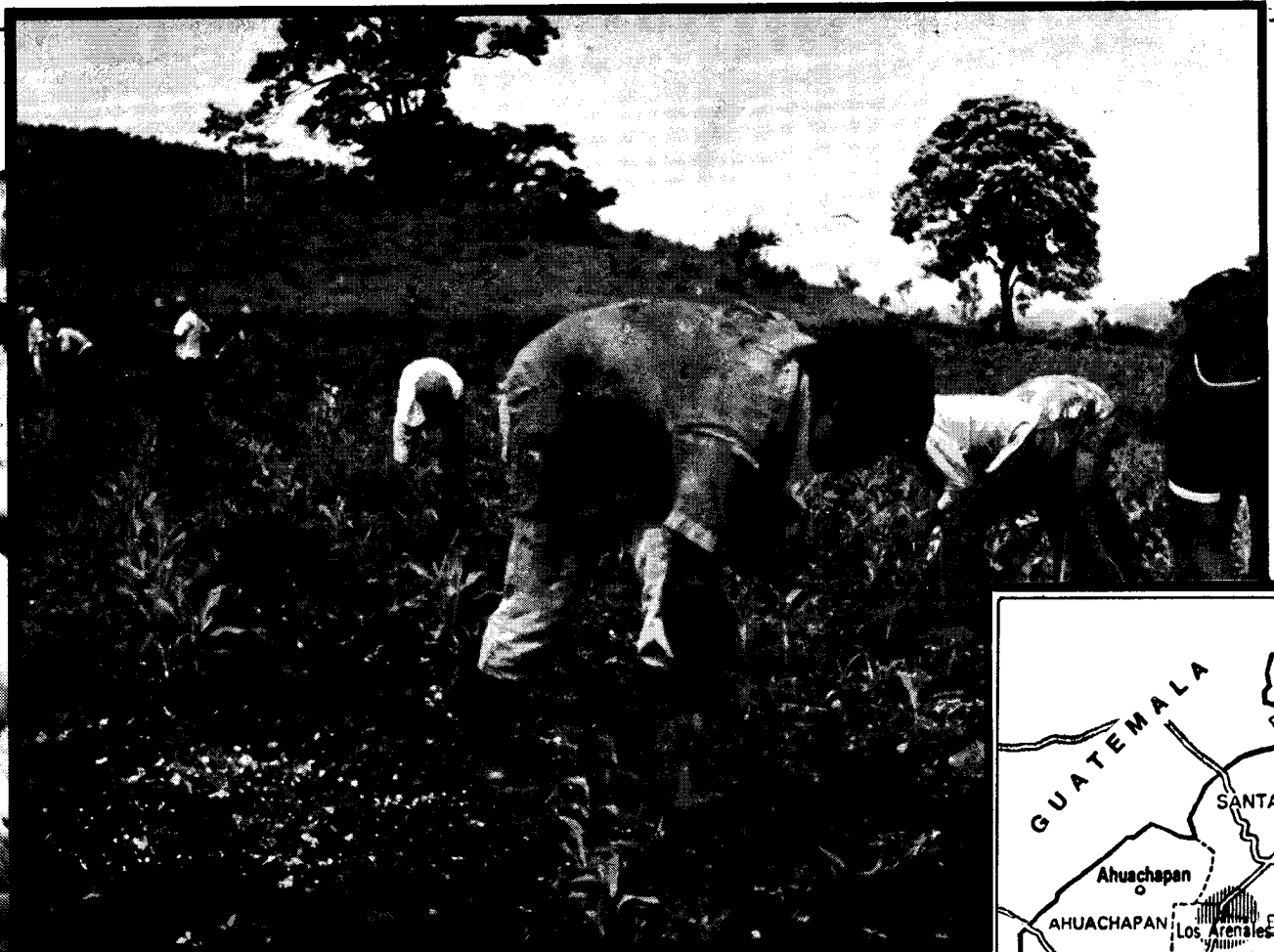
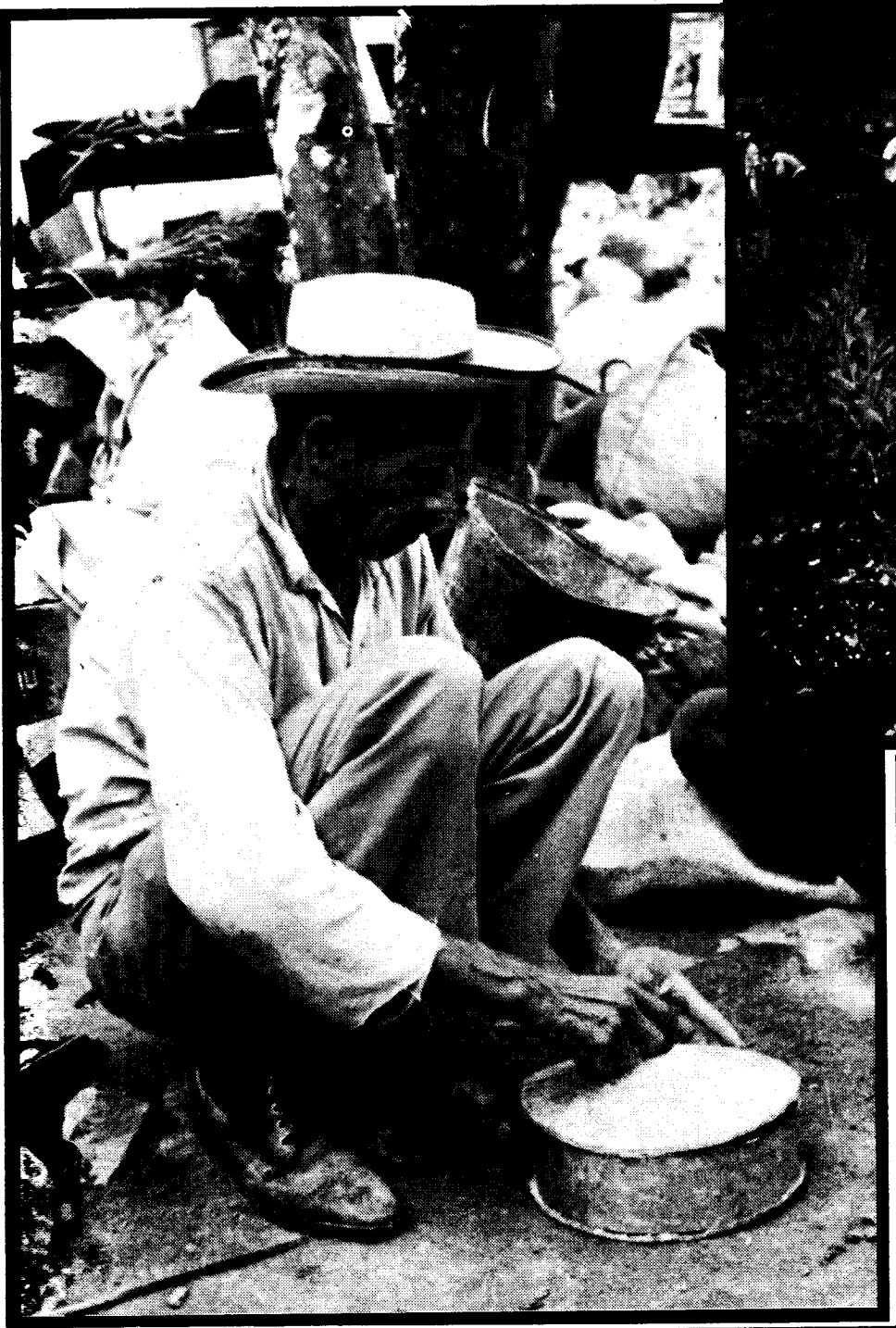
We can win on this through a big campaign outside parliament, among trade unionists and public transport users. We have to get across that we're not just defending LT, we're defending the right of the disabled for mobility within London and peoples' right to cheap transport such as most other Western European capitals enjoy.

The disparate nature of all these campaigns has meant that more people have been involved. Now the demands of the campaigns must be unified. They are fundamentally the same: government resources for inner city areas; an end to cutbacks, slowdowns, closures and redundancies from public spending cuts.

The Tories will try to bring legislation to prevent the GLC elections being held next year. The people of London must have a forum for expressing their point of view, perhaps through a referendum on exactly the same day that the GLC elections would have been held.

STUDENTS MOBILISE AGAINST REAGAN

Students at South Bank Poly are taking issue with CND National Council for their tardiness in organising an anti-Reagan demonstration when the American president visits Britain for the World Economic Summit in early June. They are calling on CND, London Region CND and London Student CND to get together and organise a massive reception for Saturday 3 June, and to link up with the labour movement to do it. The occasion of Reagan's visit is bound to see protests against Euro-missiles and US policy in Central America. It looks as if students will be leading the way.



Building the new El Salvador. Peasants making land mines and weapons (left and above right), tilling the land (above) and at an infants school (far right). Picture from The New El Salvador (Solidarity Publications).



Building Fr

EVERY DAY the media is full of stories of the war in El Salvador. But little is heard or seen of the work of construction in the zones controlled by the guerrillas of the FMLN. Here we reproduce an article from *Combate* a Latin American journal of the Fourth International, which describes the growth and role in the struggle played by the 'controlled zones'.

EL SALVADOR is not a country like Vietnam or some Latin American countries in which there are large areas of unpopulated jungle to serve as a base for guerrillas. With 5 million people living in an area of 400 square miles El Salvador has the highest population density in Latin America. So controlled zones depend not so much on geographical impregnability as the support of the civilian population.

In 1981 FDR leader Salvador Samayoa defined a controlled zone as one in which relatively stable FMLN/FDR military camps have been established and from which government troops have been driven out.

However government forces continue to maintain garrison posts on the borders of these areas, and often carry out incursions into them, usually supported by air attack.

Zones of control were established during the January 1981 FMLN offensive. By July 1983 there were

controlled zones in areas of the following provinces: Santa Ana, Chalatenango, San Salvador, La Libertad, San Vicente, Cabanas, Morazan, San Miguel, Usulután and La Unión. Throughout 1981 these areas of control were enlarged.

But the most dramatic expansion of the zones has occurred since the FMLN offensive beginning October 1982. For example, while in early 1982 the FMLN/FDR claimed control of about 90 settlements (45,000 inhabitants) in Chalatenango, by 1983 they controlled a reported 90 per cent of the province, with 150,000 inhabitants.

The FMLN/FDR has promoted the development of active self-government by the civilian population of the zones of control which is known as 'local popular power' (PPL). About 500 people participate in each PPL.

The general assembly elects members of the local community to the directorate (leadership) for a six month term. While the assembly decides overall policy, the directorate ensures it is carried out. In addition, there is an advisory council with representatives of the popular Church, popular organisations and FMLN militias.

Production and distribution

The stated goals of production in the zones are self-sufficiency and maximal use of local resources. Basic food crops are grown (grains, corn, beans, potatoes, carrots, etc.) and self-sufficiency in some areas has been achieved in corn in

Guazapa and beans in Morazan. Medicinal plants are grown in response to the scarcity of modern medicines. Root crops have been given a priority since they are more likely to survive government invasions into the zones.

Agriculture is carried out in small plots distributed throughout the zone, in order to minimise the damage from government bombings. It is mainly carried out on government property or lands abandoned by their owners; small landowners have been allowed to keep their plots. Agricultural work collectives are organised by type of crop and meet regularly to plan production and security measures.

All ages participate in agriculture — children, for example, help in carrying water or in harvesting. Occasionally 'Farabundista' days are set aside when everyone, both civilians and FMLN members, join in production.

Products are centralised in a common warehouse. Usually 50 per cent of produce is allocated to the civilian population, 30 per cent to the FMLN and 20 per cent stored. However, this proportion may vary according to the needs of each community.

Production is not limited to agriculture. Livestock abandoned by previous landowners are tended, in Chalatenango, work collectives breed poultry, pigs, rabbits and goats. Fishing collectives have been established along the Sumpul River in Chalatenango and along the Usulután coast.

Artisans' shops in the zones in-

clude tailors' shops and shoe manufacturing. Supplies are purchased and products sold through the collaboration of relatives who travel between the zones and the cities. Thus, shoppers in San Salvador's markets are able to find silk-screened t-shirts and decorated wooden boxes and crosses made by artisans in Chalatenango's zone of control. A small amount of trade between different zones of control has been carried out. In October 1982, after a government operation destroyed the harvest in Guazapa, the PPL's in Chalatenango sent corn to cover the loss.

Security and self-defense

The PPL's set up security and self-defense collectives to protect the hamlets and surrounding areas. Bomb shelters are built to protect civilians against shellings and bombings. People are trained and organised with the assistance of FMLN militia to evacuate the villages when threatened by a government incursion. Charlie Clements, a US physician who worked in the Guazapa zone of control noted the high level of organisation shown by the community: under instructions from the local defence committee and the FMLN, they made tortillas, hid livestock and produce, and carried the wounded and their medical supplies with them in a night-time evacuation.

Education and culture

The Secretary of Education searches out literate community members, who become 'popular

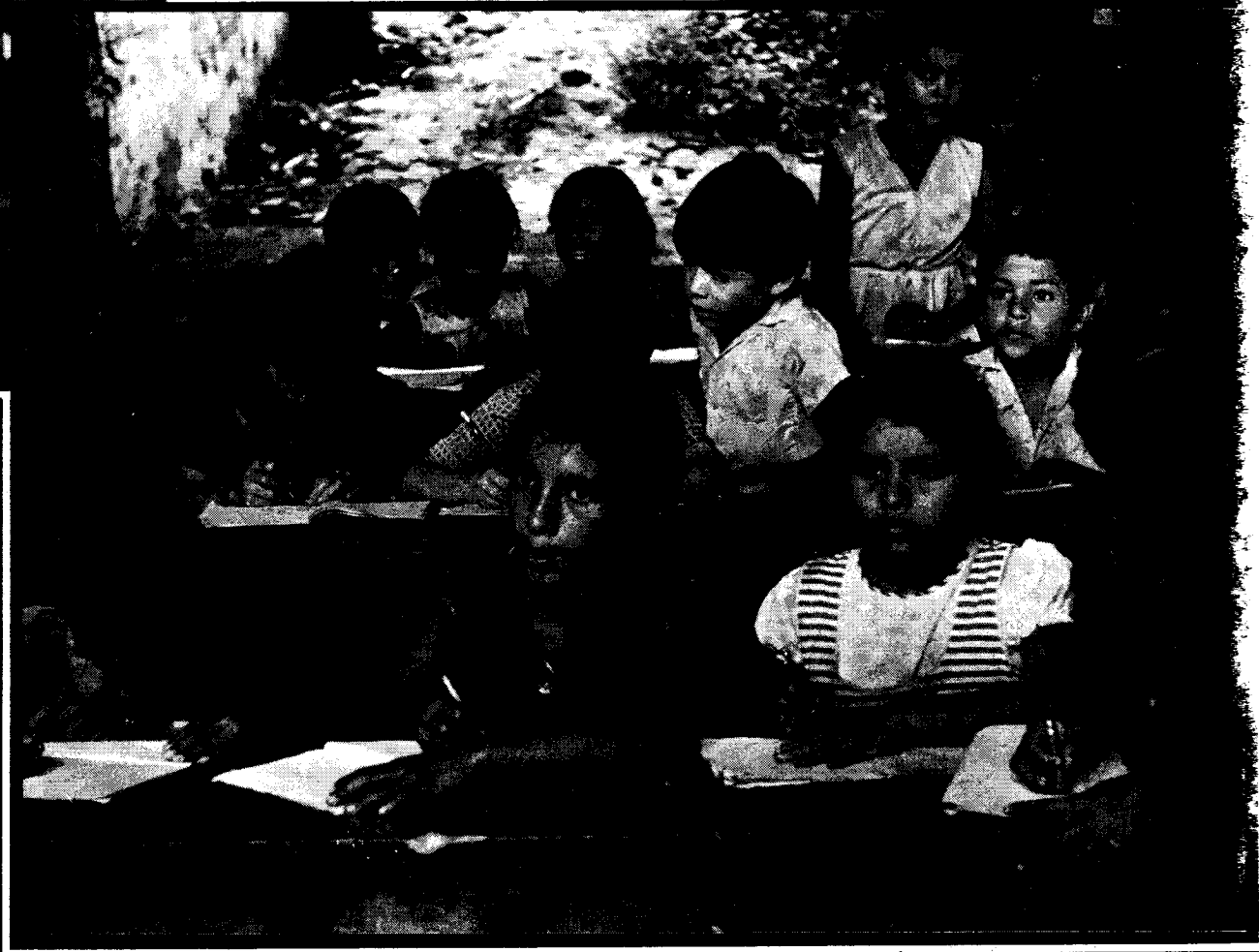
teachers' after a basic training. Since illiteracy is over 50 per cent among the Salvadorean population, the main educational emphasis is on basic reading, writing and mathematical notions. Reading and writing are taught as part of learning about Salvadorean history and current events. Vocabulary and sentence structure lessons are drawn from four basic subject areas: social sciences, history, science (such as health, agriculture and nutrition) and culture. Community responsibility and principles of democracy, justice, equality and solidarity are discussed.

Culture and education is also transmitted through short plays, written and performed by the students themselves. These not only portray social and political themes (such as repression by the paramilitary groups or the role of women in the revolution) but also promote education in subjects such as hygiene.

School facilities and equipment are non-existent. Classes for adults or children usually meet under a tree or at a particular spot in the village.

Health

Three types of medical facilities operate in the zones of control, general 'hospitals' where major surgery is performed, clinics which specialise in minor surgery, and health dispensaries which practice preventative medicine (such as vaccination campaigns) and first aid, diagnosis and treatment of general problems. Field hospitals are set up when the forces of the FMLN carry



Free El Salvador

out military actions.

Health brigades are trained to support the work of the doctors and medical students operating in the zones. Medicines are difficult to obtain, due to governmental pressures on the health profession. Charlie Clements described the government's definition as "subversive" of anyone carrying more than a day's supply of aspirin, antacid, pills, etc. Health workers in the zones have adopted the use of medicinal plants wherever possible: using willow bark for aspirin and eucalyptus leaves to relieve coughing.

Administration of justice

The PPL's oversee the development of social relations in the community and family life, with the goals of maintaining social harmony, promoting community over individual interests, and encouraging practices of cooperation rather than competition. Local tribunals have been set up in a number of communities to review disputes. Emphasis is placed on developing corrective rather than punitive measures.

The Future

The January 1981 offensive by the FMLN/FDR established FMLN/FDR military and political control over a number of populated areas in the country for the first time. While this was the first instance of FMLN military control of these areas, they had long been bases of support for the opposition — taking part in popular organisations in the late 1960s and 1970s, and providing

support and membership for the growing FMLN military forces in the 1980s. In many of these areas, Christian base communities played an important role in their political awakening and organisation, and the zones of control maintain a strong Christian character today.

More than the strictly military control of territory, the political

support and involvement of civilians in FMLN/FDR organisations has been the decisive factor in the development of the zones of control and their self-government structure. The present zones of control do not represent the only areas where popular organisations were strong in the 1970s, however some are presently areas of intense

conflict between the FMLN and the Salvadorean armed forces. Given the history of the development of existing zones of control, these areas may be seen as potential zones of military and political control by the FMLN/FDR.

Since 1981, the civilian population in the zones have openly established a political-

administrative structure to organise and govern their daily lives. These 'local popular powers' constitute an alternative government structure in El Salvador, functioning alongside the Salvadorean government and creating a situation of dual power which will only be resolved in the course of the war in El Salvador.

Trade unions — the price they pay

ON 19 JANUARY 1984, 52 delegates and international guests met in San Salvador for the fifth congress of the legally recognised Federation of Revolutionary Trade Unions.

Before they could begin, the National Police attacked the building, capturing all inside and injuring journalist Raul Beltran. After 8 hours of interrogation most were released.

By Celia Pugh

But 15 members, including the national officers of the union, did not emerge from the National Police headquarters. The authorities deny that the 15 were ever released — saying that the 15 were murdered. This is a common method for murdering by the regime.

This terror faces all trade unionists in El Salvador. In 1979 and 1980 working people took to the streets in an outburst of angry strikes and demonstrations. They

met severe repression. Between 1979 and 1981, 5123 union members were assassinated, 1875 'disappeared' and 539 were imprisoned. Another 793 were wounded when troops opened fire on union demonstrations.

Last September the general secretary of the United Trade Union Federation, FUSS was one of the 100 trade unionists kidnapped. On 7 October his body was found with its throat slit.

The regime is again stepping up the terror as unions pick themselves up from the setbacks of 1980. The suffocating economic situation is forcing thousands of the unemployed into the streets and into strikes against the regime. In 1980, 40 per cent of the economically active population did not receive sufficient income to buy the basic essentials for daily life.

Even right wing and government backed unions are demanding the repeal of the 1980 decrees against the unions. In September a new unity was achieved drawing

progressive and traditionally government backed unions. This Unitarian Movement of Salvadorean Trade Unions and Associations — MUSYGES — adopted a common platform for political and economic struggle, including the demand for US military advisers to be withdrawn from El Salvador.

Another sign of crumbling support for the regime was the 15,000 strong demonstration of farm workers organised by the Peoples Democratic Union last September.

The UPD has traditionally in-acted as well as the regime - Christian Democratic Party and the new movement by the CIA. The UPD has favoured a government dialogue with the FMLN-FDR, without conditions and the majority of the union's corrupt leaders have been expelled.

The latest round of terror is designed to crush this new wave of trade union organisation. International solidarity is vital.

● Send telegrams demanding the immediate release of the FSR leaders and guarantees of their safety to: President Magana, Presidential Palace, San Salvador, El Salvador.

Director General of the National Police, 6a Kiye Oriente San Salvador, El Salvador.

The FDR/FMLN desperately needs funds for the reconstruction work begun in the controlled zones. They need money for education, health, production, clothing, information and defence.

Help the Salvadorean people build a better future. You can send money which will find its way to El Salvador by sending a cheque/postal order to: Aid for a better future, 29 Islington Park St., London N1. Make out cheques to 'EL Salvador Fund Appeal'.



A democratic and active LPYS can grow

LPYS clear up

WITHOUT wishing to debate the future of the CLPD which you commented on (SA 40), we would like to correct a few points of confusion about our motion on the LPYS.

The proposals for reform were as follows — the inclusion of the trade union youth at LPYS annual conference, as in the Party and Women's conferences; the election of YS National Committee at YS conference — not Party conference as you said — rather than at regional conference; delegation to YS conference on the basis of the size of YS branch

membership, rather than a statutory number for every branch.

These reforms have in the past won support not only from Clause 4, but also from the predecessors of *Socialist Organiser*, who were involved in the campaign for YS democracy, of which the above reforms were key demands. Indeed, in 1967, even *Militant* argued that 'the NC must be elected by the members themselves at YS conference'.

Given the breadth of support for such elementary political and democratic initiatives, we would have expected YS

activists supporting Socialist Action to support us too.

A democratic and active LPYS would be far more capable of recruiting young people to Labour and healthy enough to fend off attempts to close the YS down.

OWEN TUDOR, GWILYM BURY, London

● We accept the points made about YS democracy but Owen and Gwilym miss the point of the article in SA 40 which was to criticise the resolution for failing to defend Militant against the witch hunt. Ed.

**KLMNOPQRSTU
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Nixon and the Korean spy-plane

I READ with great interest the article in SA 40, 'The American spy-plane' about the shooting down of the South Korean airliner by the Soviet Union last September.

According to the West German magazine *Quick*, former US president Richard Nixon cancelled a flight reservation on the KAL 007 flight. Nixon had reserved seat B2 in the front row, near the place occupied by representative L McDonald. Coincidence isn't it?

RICHARD STONE, Glossop, Derbyshire.

The writer leaves a ps — he is no relation of his namesake, Reagan's special adviser on Central America.



Nixon in the know?

Working class strength counts

I READ with interest the article *Explosion in the third world* in SA 40. While I agree with the proposition that a successful revolution can only occur when the ruling class is unable to continue its rule in the old way, I think the point should be made that this itself largely depends on the relative strength of the proletariat in a given society.

After all, if a particular order cannot continue in the old way, that ruling class may still maintain its dominance by substituting a slightly different manifestation of capitalist rule.

A prime example of this is Argentina, where the crisis ridden junta unable to rule in itself was replaced by the equally bourgeois Alfonsín government. The same thing may happen in Chile.

Clearly when a situation of this kind exists, what is vital is the undefeated strength of the working class.

It is this which determines whether or not the ruling class will be allowed

to install another puppet, or whether the people will seize power for themselves in a socialist revolution.

This is why we in Britain must now build support and leadership for the socialist revolution which must come when the bankruptcy of Thatcher's economic policies are realised. This too is why we must build a united revolutionary movement with strong links with workers in other countries.

This is why I support the Marxists in the Labour Party, which, reformist and bourgeois though its present aims and leaders are contains the grass roots support for the revolution.

Our job is now to build support for Marxist ideas and build a party which doesn't bleat on about 'winning elections' and reforming this, that and the other, only to turn on the working class again once elected but which stands for revolutionary socialism at home and abroad.

GLYN HOLROYD, Newcastle

Write to us!

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

Anti racist year?

SO LEN Murray's betrayal of the NGA made it black Monday, did it? And it was a black Christmas in Lebanon (SA 39). And Eric Heffer can write that the retreat of trade union leaders

'adds up to one of the blackest periods in the history of the trade union movement' (SA 39). Well, roll on 1984 as London's anti-racist year. **JEREMY HAWTHORN, Peckham CLP**

DIARY

(These listings are free for all major labour movement and campaign activities — up to maximum of 50 words. Semi-display advertisements cost 3p 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 Buildings, London EC1.
- No Intervention in Central America (NICA) is a broad based coalition of solidarity groups, human rights orgs, aid agencies and political parties. More details

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from NICA 20/21 Compton Terrace, London N1 01-226 6747.

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

zones, £3 from same address.

● Central America and the Caribbean A series of open educational with videos and speakers at Peckham Labour Club, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5: 7 Feb Evening of Central American culture. Admission £1/UB40 free. Organised by Sth London Central American Group, contact Edwin 01-733 7706 for details.

● Chilean art 10 years of struggle. Exhibition at Pentonville Gallery, 47 Lambs Conduit St, Holborn

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

Articles reprinted from Socialist Action and *International* — John Ross, British politics in the 1980's; Alan Freeman, How Labour Can Win; Steve Marks, the 1983 Election; John Ross, Facing 1984; Alan Freeman, Rebuilding the Labour Party. Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1, price 35p.

London WC1, 25 Jan-18 Feb, 11-6.30.

● El Salvador Benefit for East London ELSSOC, Mon 6 Feb, 8.30. Acts include See You in Vegas, Mark Miwurdz and Wild Girls. Crown and Castle, Dalston Junction. £1.50 unwaged.

25 Years of the Cuban Revolution

● Britain-Cuba Resource Centre Information about activities, subs to Granma weekly review and newsletters from 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

● Womens study tour of Cuba 4-20 April, information from BCRC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

Ireland

● Labour and Ireland day school for budding writers, workshops with trained journalists. London, Feb or March, £1. Write to Labour and Ireland, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

● The Cause of Ireland film showing at Rio Cinema, 107 Kingsland High St, Hackney E8, £2 and £1 (UB40 and OAP), Thur 2 Feb, 7.30.

Miscellaneous

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

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Please write giving full details to: 20 Pamela House, Haggerston Road, London E8

● Theatre workshops at the Drill Hall, 16 Chenties St, London WC1, led by actress Effie Arestides. Start Fri 20 Jan, 6.30-8.30pm. Every Friday until September 1984. Booking tel: 01-387 9639.

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.

Lesbian & Gay Liberation

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

● London Labour

Campaign for Gay Rights new office at 39 Chippenham Rd, W9 2AH 01-286 9692, open Tues-Thur 11am-7pm. (Westbourne Grove tube. Bad access, help available).

● Labour Movement Lesbians is a new organisation of lesbians in the labour movement to support each other and organise initiatives on issues

that affect lesbians. Further information from Sarah c/o Feminist Library, Hungerford House, Victoria Embk, London WC2.

● Raffle result Bristol Socialist Action. 1. C Starks 34, 2. R Simon 1300, 3. H McDonald 1214, 4. D Berry 684, 5. H Holden 1979, 6. A Radford 359.

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November-December 1983 Volume 8 No 5 75p

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The 'supergrass' trials scandal



Irish women demonstrate against Long Kesh internment camp

Left gains at LPYS conference

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists' southern region conference was held in Brighton last weekend under the tight control of Militant supporters. But opposition led by Oxford East and West made a big impact, reflected by David Shepherd's election to the southern region committee.

Militant's positions were passed on all major debates. The need for 'class unity as an alternative to the Orange and Green bigots' and a fight for a 'trade-union based on the party of labour' was their solution for Ireland.

Women

Gay rights got only a passing nod. But the Oxford East resolution on women attracted the biggest opposition vote of conference. The resolution — the only one on the agenda — called for support for women's rights in the Labour Party, and for a young

women's conference. Conference reaffirmed the call for police and army unionisation. But Oxford East's resolution — calling for emphasis on anti-recruitment and demanding the right to organise in the armed forces — was denounced as 'liberal pacifist nonsense' by the platform.

Racism

Racism turned needlessly into an argument against positive discrimination which was seen as patronising and fuelling racist attitudes. And 'waiting for socialism' was the way to stop nuclear war, when Oxford East's call for YS branches to 'actively support and build CND, YCND and their activities' was rejected.

No international solidarity was proposed — the problems of the working class and the oppressed would be solved by a 'socialist federation' of the Middle East and the world, the platform told conference.

Despite Militant's continued obstruction of

YS growth, by cutting it off from radicalising youth, a successful fringe meeting was held with speakers from *Labour Briefing*, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Women's Action Committee and David Shepherd from Oxford West LPYS.

After his election, David told Socialist Action:

'Before YS national conference in April, we have to concentrate on organising the YS minority in the different regions in order to make the biggest possible impact on the YS nationally. The YS is under threat from the party leadership. It's vital that those who believe the YS must turn outwards, linking up with all the struggles against the Tories, organise to get their views across. In southern region we are beginning to organise 'opposition' branches and members. Repeated round the country, this could be a real breakthrough for the 'left opposition' in the Young Socialists.'

DESMOND BRESLIN is serving six years in prison for alleged IRA membership and photographing an IRA roadblock. He was convicted entirely on the contradictory evidence of supergrass Christopher Black. His wife COLLETTE BRESLIN recently spoke at several meetings in the Midlands organised by the Campaign against the Show Trials. She talked to Anita Richards and Bob Whitehead from Socialist Action.

Why is your husband in prison?

My husband is involved in the Black trial. We call people like Black 'paid perjurers'. Black admitted in court that he had perjured himself in a murder trial some years ago and he also admitted taking money from the RUC.

He said that previously he had perjured himself because he couldn't face prison. But now, apparently he could — knowing full well that this time he had immunity from the court.

He couldn't even remember his children's birthdays in court. Yet he could give exact dates when he was with alleged IRA members. He was obviously 'programmed' by the RUC, and so was the judge.

At the committal proceedings he just glanced at the bill of indictment and returned 38 people for trial without hearing any evidence. The trial lasted eight months from December 1981. All the defendants had to sit in the same places throughout. When asked to identify people Black just said 'second from said 'second from the right' or

the right' or something like that, without looking up.

The judge found all 38 defendants guilty. twenty-one were jailed — those who refused to sign statements in Castlereagh interrogation centre. My husband told the court that he was told by the RUC that if he pleaded guilty to taking photos of an illegal road block for *Republican News* he would walk out of court, but if he didn't they would pin an IRA membership charge on him.

They asked him about photography and if he supported the hunger strikes, and then — according to the transcript of the interview they talked about Communism. My husband said the British were responsible for the famine of 1864 and their attitude hadn't changed since then. But this didn't make him a communist.

We don't know if he is in prison for being a communist or for being in the IRA — it doesn't make much difference!

They also said that in refusing to answer questions he was acting according to IRA policy. But Father Faul has leafleted the nationalist areas to remind people of their right to silence.

What evidence did they have against your husband?

Only Black's words. The RUC said they found a camera in our house, but when the judge asked for it they said they had 'misplaced it'. They said they had found 'subversive films' — Mickey Mouse cartoons and Superman films which Desmond shows the children.

This is what he was doing when he was supposed to be photographing

the road block, but the judge said that he could have left the film running and gone out. The people who were supposed to have been stopped at the road block didn't see anyone with a camera.

Would they let people watch these trials?

Not at first, but now you can. Some Labour MPs and Lord Gifford have been over. That's really good because without watching it you can't really believe what's going on with these 'supergrass' trials.

How is the RUC's supergrass campaign going?

They are having setbacks with supergrasses spontaneously retracting their evidence. The only way we can stop these show trials is by MPs and ordinary people putting pressure on the British government — from abroad as well.

How can anything be justice with only one judge, and no jury, dealing with 38 people in one trial? How could one person take in all the evidence.

All 38 from the Black trial have appealed. I hear that the judge, Basil Kelly, has been made an appeal judge. There is a newspaper picture of him with an orange sash. All the senior judges are members of the Orange Order.

How is your tour of Britain going?

Great. I just want people to know what's going on. Me, Desmond, people like us, we're all working class. If they do this to political people in Ireland, what's to stop them eventually doing it in Britain? They try these things out in Ireland. But eventually it'll come over here.

Salvadorean unionists tour

GIFTS, CHEERS and tears have greeted Salvadorean trade unionists Rosa Rivas and Gerardo Anaya on their tour of Britain. More importantly acts of solidarity have come for their sister and brother trade unionists in El Salvador.

While Gerardo talked with officers at the National Union of Mineworkers in Sheffield a message came through that his union congress in San Salvador had been smashed up by the National Police and his fellow leaders detained. Fearing for their lives Gerardo immediately began to gather messages and telegrams from the British labour movement to secure the release of the FSR leaders.

By Celia Pugh

Thousands of pounds have been collected at meetings in factories, canteens, shop stewards committees, public rallies and at all the major national trade union offices. The rally of 250 trade unionists at County Hall in London on 23 January raised £600 after solidarity speeches from miners leader Arthur Scargill, Fire Brigade general secretary Ken Cameron, the NGA and the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The funds collected will cover the costs of bringing Rosa and Gerardo from El Salvador. The rest will be sent back to El Salvador to aid the work of the mass movement in the cities and zones controlled by the popular forces.

Their message of defiance and solidarity was communicated to Labour leader Neil Kinnock and

out I was persecuted and forced to leave my home, family and four children.

'We know we are confronting an enemy that is extremely powerful and an enemy that receives aid from the United States.

'But we know equally that the workers of El Salvador are not alone. We will carry on and with the solidarity that is given us by workers of the world we will win'.

This stirring message of defiance and hope was echoed by Rosa who has also experienced the repression. 'The general secretary of my union was kidnapped, 13 days after, he was found decapitated and cruelly killed.

'After this I was followed a lot and they intended to kill me as well.

So my colleagues got me out of the country and I had to leave behind my children.

'Because of this repression we are asking that this government in Britain does not send observers to the Salvador elections. This will make legitimate the fraud perpetrated in El Salvador. We ask you to send letters to Reagan demanding that the US get their bases out of Honduras and leave El Salvador to decide its own future.

'We will go back and be able to tell our people about the wonderful solidarity you have given. We know that with the help of people throughout the world who love world peace we will win.'



Scargill speaks at solidarity rally

Act now to defend abortion rights

THE NATIONAL Abortion Campaign has made an urgent appeal for action to defend abortion rights. Anti-abortionists have 22 Members of Parliament fronting renewed attempts to limit abortion.

Past efforts to restrict abortion through new laws have failed and now they are looking to existing legislation — the Infant Life Preservation Act of 1929.

Led by Sir Bernard Braine, the MPs have tabled a Commons motion demanding that the government circulate all maternity hospitals to implement this law, which makes illegal abortion of a foetus which can be born alive.

Doctors performing abortion after 20 weeks could face the intimidation of the doctor who was dragged through the courts last year on a charge of murder.

By Celia Pugh

The anti-abortionists hope to strike terror into women seeking abortion and doctors who perform it and at the same time aid anti-abortion doctors and consultants. Recent press scares about late abortion make the anti-abortionists' job easier.

In reality, 98.5 per cent of abortions take place before the 20th week. Only 0.1 per cent of abortions are performed after the 25th week. But anti-abortion consultants and doctors hide behind 'viability' scares and use delaying tactics in the hope that women will drop the idea of abortion.

and cuts in the NHS forced these women to have late abortions. Countless others just give up trying, weighted down by consultants' prejudice and the uncertainty caused by delay.

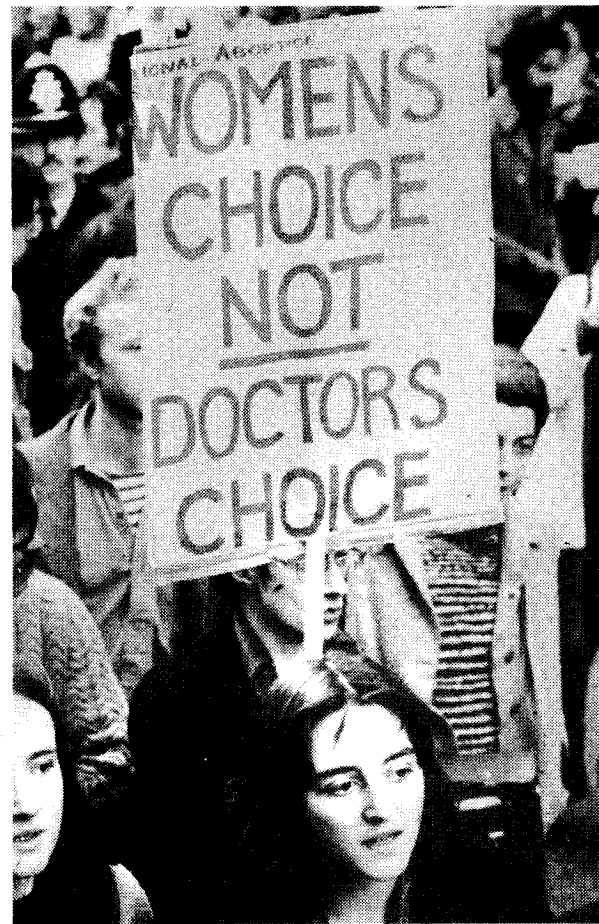
Young women get the worse deal with women under 20 making up more than 40 per cent of late abortions and 50 per cent of abortions after 25 weeks.

Promotion of the Infant Life Preservation Act will intimidate women and encourage anti-abortion consultants to delay things further.

The National Abortion Campaign is counter-attacking with the demand for no legal and medical restrictions on a woman's right and access to abortion. A conference in London on 25 February will discuss the issues and prepare the fightback.

● Abortion rights and facilities — what future? University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1.

25 February, 10am-5pm. Information from NAC, 47 Waldrum Park Rd, London SE23.



Women march for abortion rights

Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

Southwark social workers expose police raid

ON 27 OCTOBER last year the Southwark Labour council organised a police raid on The Hollies children's home, evicting the children and staff and vandalising the buildings. This extraordinary event which happened at the height of the residential social workers strike, was exposed last week in a special report produced by Southwark NALGO. Sixty workers from The Hollies complex are still being given no work by the council.

The incidents at The Hollies occurred against the background of increasing bitterness in last year's residential social workers strike. Between September and December 25,000 social workers were in dispute with local authority employers, demanding the settlement of a five-year dispute for higher pay and 'unsocial hours' payments.

weekends not covered by social workers. The children were given instructions about where to find social workers on site if needed (many of the children were in fact in their teens).

By Paul Lawson

On the morning of 27 October the Southwark Labour group met and decided to close the homes, where over 60 children lived.

Having failed to persuade many of the children to leave the council called in the Instant Response Unit (SPG) who at 10pm attacked the premises, dragging children away, smashing down doors, removing social workers from the site. A 15-year old girl was assaulted by up to a dozen council officials during the fracas, while many children fled from the site.

At 4am the next morning council vans arrived and began removing carpets and other effects from the site and ripping out fire alarms. During the whole operation many per-



Residential social workers picket negotiations

sonal belongings were damaged or lost. The homes were made uninhabitable.

The children at The Hollies were all orphans or from 'broken' homes. Many of them had lived at the complex together for more than eight years. Now they have been dispersed. When one child asked a policeman what right he had to throw her out of her home, he replied 'because you are Southwark property'.

It is clear that the raid on The Hollies was planned well in advance. The Labour council took advantage of the dispute to carry out their long term plans to close down The Hollies, using gestapo-style tactics.

Few Labour councils come out of the residential social workers strike with any credit. Most of them acted like any other employer, faced with an insubordinate workforce. Even in 'left' Labour councils, the social workers' claim was de-

nounced as excessive and unreasonable.

Faced with rate-capping and the all-out offensive of the Tories against local government, only a fight back in alliance with council workers' unions is going to win.

Unfortunately only too many council workers face Labour councils as 'tough' employers, not allies. The whole labour movement needs an answer from Southwark Labour council about its inhuman and anti-working class actions.

Photo: NALGO NEWS



A change of line

HAVE any of you stopped to think just why the clergy decided to change their line on letting Steve Rigby get married in Church?

Because Steve is disabled and confined to a wheelchair, he and his fiancée were banned from marrying in the local church. Why? Because Steve is paralysed from the waist down. Say no more.

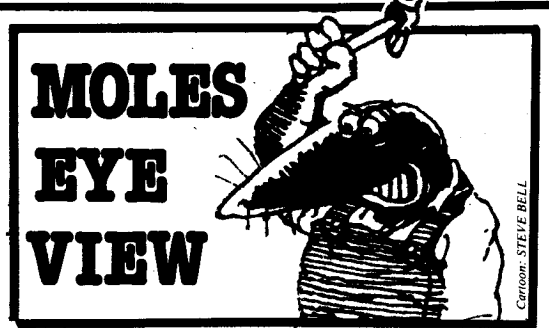
What followed was a deluge of publicity as the concerned campaigning conservative press took up the ban and exposed it as being very un-British and not nice. 'Aha!' you're thinking. It must have been the press coverage that embarrassed God's representatives on earth. But that's not the answer.

Here's a clue. A Bishop overruled his fellow men of God after hearing 'medical evidence'.

'Medical evidence' covers a multitude of sins, but we can only guess that a kindly doctor took pity on the ignorant priests and informed them of the wonders of modern science in relation to artificial insemination.

There are only two conclusions to be drawn from this farce. One is that religion is not a principled question.

The second is that marriage is no more about loving, honouring and obeying than the Tory party. It's about reproducing wage slaves. And if you can't do that, don't bother to apply!



Up for sale?

SOCIALIST ACTION contacted its favourite KGB colonel to find out what the Russians think about the Tories ban on trade unionism at the Cheltenham spy-centre.

She told us: 'We are not very keen on our agents getting mixed up with trade unions and we certainly don't want them going to left caucuses and meeting a

load of Trots. Burgess and MacLean were never active in the unions. In fact, they never joined one but they did a very good job for us.'

She said she was pleased that a number of people had accepted the government's £1000 cash payment to leave the unions because 'this makes it easier for us to find out who is up for sale'.

Tory scrounger

MR MATTHEW PARRIS is one of those Tory MPs who is worried that people on social security get paid too much so they don't go out looking for work.

Followed by a *World in Action* camera he set off to live in a Newcastle flat on £26.80 a week. This was going to be the great lesson for all those feckless people scrounging away on the state and throwing their money away on unnecessary things like food and heating.

And I did see his point on how to save

money. On Sunday night he went to a local club for a few beers. Then came the object lesson on how to survive. He let one person pay his admission and then for three hours he never stuck his hand in his pocket once to buy the ale.

So all you lot living on the SS need do is find some kind person to keep you in fags and booze and then you'll get by just like Mr Parris.

Unfortunately they don't supply these kind benefactors at the DHSS.

Two lost lads

IT'S NOT just Mrs Thatcher's lad that gets lost. David Owen and Roy Jenkins got back to the House of Commons after a late dinner party and joined the lobby of Labour MPs voting

against the government's EEC policy whilst their colleagues were in the right lobby with the Tories.

Is Dr Owen getting foud of claret?



Photo: NEWSLINE

Dagenham workers leave mass meeting.

Ford: Stand-off on jobs fight

SEVENTEEN THOUSAND Ford Dagenham workers have voted to suspend their strike action against the closure of the Thames foundry and the consequent loss of 2000 jobs.

This decision was taken at a mass meeting of about 8000 workers on Sunday 29 January which mandated union officials to talk with the company on 22 February about the future of Ford UK's manufacturing activities. The meeting also agreed to re-impose strike action if the foundry closure is not withdrawn at those talks.

Chief union negotiator Ron Todd told the mass meeting, 'If the 22 February meeting doesn't discuss the foundry as well as the future of the whole of Ford UK it will have been a failure.'

'We will be coming back to you, the members, to say that now is the time to fight for your jobs'. Despite Todd's fine words, the decisions of the mass meeting are a step back from confrontation with Ford and give the union officials greater control over the course of events.

In gaining this control, the officials have been able to utilise the hesitancy of sections of the Dagenham workforce about strike action, particularly in the assembly plant. These workers have seen 8000 jobs disappear in the last four years with little or no union opposition.

They have also been transferred from plant to plant as the foundry and engine plants have been rundown. Yet it wasn't until the morning of Sunday's mass meeting that the majority of workers received a national joint

union leaflet called *The Need to Strike*.

**By Mick Drake
(Ford Dagenham)**

This explains how the foundry closure fits into the general rundown of Dagenham and Ford UK and threatens their own jobs. Most immediately, half the engine plant's 3500 workforce is threatened by the loss of the OHC — overhead camshaft — replacement engine to Germany, the press shop could be reduced to three stamping lines compared with twelve at present and the wheel plant and group tooling operations look destined to go abroad.

These developments would put the future of Ford plants in Croydon, Langley, Leamington and Woolwich at risk. This is why convenors pushed union officials into calling national strike action against the foundry closure — a decision endorsed by an eight to one majority of foundry workers themselves.



Ron Todd

In the coming three weeks these convenors, backed by their shop stewards committees, will have to fight for control over the dispute by setting a firm date for strike action if the 22 February meeting proves futile.

In the plants we need more national union and shop stewards bulletins explaining why we should strike, backed up by shop and section meetings to keep everyone informed and win over the doubting Toms.

Ford workers have the power to stop the foundry closure and win job security for 17,000 at Dagenham

and 43,000 workers nationally. Ford UK is the company's biggest source of profits.

It is the £960 million gold mine which has bailed out its bankrupt American parent in the past few years. Its market leadership in Britain is the backbone of Ford's European operations. And workers here can stop the whole of Ford Europe stone-dead through strike action.

This is what we must prepare for up to 22 February, while winning support from other unions, workplaces and the Labour Party to ensure our success.

Newham 4: Self defence is still no offence

TWO HUNDRED hours' community service is all the state got from the five-week trial of the Newham 8. The convicted four were sentenced to 50 hours each when they appeared on 20 January. The convictions were a blow. But behind the results one can see how much trouble the authorities took to win the case. This is a tribute not to the establishment's sense of justice, but the strength of the defence campaign. The charges were altered before trial.

The most serious conspiracy charge, which usually fails in political cases because the prosecution goes over the top, was dropped. Instead the main charge was the ill-defined 'affray' (unlawful fighting in public).

The court venue was moved from Snaresbrook in East London to the Old Bailey. This may have appeared a clampdown, in fact it was the opposite. It took place because demonstrations outside the court were expected, and the defence had examined the role of potential jurors at both courts.

Snaresbrook had only a few Asian names, the Bailey had five per cent. The transfer forestalled a defence application and avoided public debate on racially balanced juries. The final jury had five black people.

The defence campaign mounted a picket outside the court throughout the trial. No arrests were attempted. Even the large demonstrations of school students on the first day passed without incident.

At the trial, the prosecution had their work cut out. Their identification evidence was tested; their witnesses were grilled and ridiculed in cross examination.

The judge allowed the defence to use 'background information' on racial attacks and police racism. Defence

witnesses could speak about their own experience. The general secretary of the Sikh temple was a key witness. He described how he had driven attackers from his shop by drawing his ceremonial sword and, when he reported the incident to the police, he was almost charged with having an offensive weapon. He repeatedly described police-community relations as window dressing.

**By Jeremy Hawthorn
(Peckham Labour Party)**

Despite this, the four defendants were convicted. But that wasn't the end. In passing sentence the judge expressed concern about racial attacks on the Asian community. No mention of police racism, of course, but neither did he praise police devotion to duty. All this was unusual.

The state could not afford an outcry by goading the four. The judge offered a 'community service order' which requires the defendant's consent. It was accepted with the guarantee that the service would be for the benefit of the Asian community. It is unique for the defence to put conditions on accepting a sentence. It was a final mark of how careful the authorities had to be.

Taking the case as a whole, one can draw the following conclusions.

- Having lost in Bradford the state was desperate to reestablish the principle that communities should not defend themselves. It succeeded, charging affray rather than conspiracy. The legal definition of justifiable self-defence is still too narrow to be relied on.

- Defence campaigns are essential. The state would never have made so many concessions without a defence campaign firmly based in the community. Nor could the defence have made headway without the evidence on National Front and police harassment. The campaign transformed the Newham 8 case into a national issue, despite a virtually silent press.

- Racial stereotypes must go. The view that only West Indians complain about police treatment while Asians are generally passive is still widespread, even in the much-acclaimed Police Studies Institute report on police racism. Newham 8 has shown this is a myth.

- Struggles must be linked. The court picket had regular support from other campaigns. 'Newham 8. Colin Roach — one struggle one fight' was one of the main chants. The campaign against the Police Bill is an example of this kind of solidarity, drawing together a wide range of groups in struggle, up to and including the Labour Party left.

- Lastly and most impressively, the eight defendants showed an impressive degree of solidarity. They weren't prepared to run individual defences; they did not apologise for what they had done. Immediately afterwards they said if the need arises they will do the same again. They will deserve our support then too.

Prosecution witnesses were grilled and ridiculed:

'Why do you now say it was 100 Asians, when your quotes say 30?'
'I was dazed when I wrote my notes.'
'This statement is dated two months later. Were you dazed when you wrote that?'

Photo: JOHN HARRIS



Self defence is no offence

Socialist ACTION

Defend the Greenham women

Chesterfield: fight for Labour victory!

A MARPLAN poll in last Friday's *Guardian* reaffirmed Labour's new gain in popularity. 34 per cent of the sample said they'd be voting Labour in a general election, compared to 38 per cent Tory. Labour has cut the Tories' lead by 10 per cent since the general election.

Despite the poll, last week's New Whittington by-election in the Chesterfield constituency saw a Liberal returned for the first time in 25 years. In a high poll — 54 per cent compared to the usual 30 per cent — the Liberal won with 44 per cent of the vote, Labour had 39 per cent and the Tories 16 per cent.

The Liberal gained 19 per cent from the Tories, and 26 per cent from Labour, compared to last year's council results. The New Whittington result shows the type of anti-Labour coalition the

media is trying to put together for Chesterfield.

The Tories don't stand a chance of defeating Labour in the by-election. But a unified anti-Labour vote, with a collapse of the Tory poll, could let the Alliance in.

By Carol Turner

With speculation that early March is the likely date for Chesterfield's parliamentary by-election, Labour is gearing up for this crucial campaign. Labour chairperson Eric Heffer has already spoken at an early public meeting; and Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley, together with many of the shadow cabinet and prominent trade union leaders, will be speaking in support of candidate Tony Benn at the 17 public meetings already planned.

The Labour leadership must figure prominently in

Chesterfield. A Labour Party united around its candidate will be an important factor in the first by-election since the Tories came to power last June. Anything less opens the door to a Bermondsey-style smear campaign by the media, to drive waverers into the arms of the Alliance.

The campaign is off to an active start. Mass canvassing and leafletting have been organised for weekends. And Labour's committee rooms (Miners' Headquarters, Saltergate, Chesterfield) are open from 9am to 9pm each day.

Offers of help should be made to agent Peter Coleman, Labour's full-time regional organiser for the East Midlands. He is presently based in Chesterfield, and can be obtained at the above address or by phoning Chesterfield 78596.



Sound around Greenham demonstration

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Keep it coming!

THE NEWS that 11-year old Lesley Harrison nearly died from watching the television too closely came as no surprise to me. Although I don't have her habit of watching favourite programmes with my nose pressed against the screen, I did feel slightly queasy seeing Labour go down in the local Chesterfield by-election to a Liberal.

But the biggest shock of the week was undoubtedly seeing Home Secretary Leon Brittan interviewed by the ace crawler Jimmy Young. That much boot licking must be bad for the poor man's health, but he seems to thrive on it.

Possibly it is the high wages and balanced diet that keeps him looking so well. We've been doing a bit of balancing in the Socialist Action office as the fund drive column

revealed last week — strictly of the fiscal kind.

We are being so mean it's unbelievable. Not a penny goes out to anyone who cannot prove starvation or a willingness to sue. Fund drive money is still too slow in coming in if we are to keep our heads above water. Despite a mystery donation of £250 delivered with not even a postmark, the last two weeks have only brought in £2000.

If you are sitting and watching *Sergeant Bilko* as you read this, we have one message: Move away from that screen! Send off something for the fund drive it's really much better for you!

Ian Parker £5.00
M Silver 1.00
C Langford 5.00
C Potter 15.00

M Fuller	5.00
S Field	5.00
JBW	40.00
Anon	250.00
A Potter	2.00
Anon	7.00
G Carey	2.50
Anon	5.00
S Cass	15.00
Leamington	10.00
Southampton	65.00
Camden	300.00
South East London	259.00
Ealing	200.00
Nottingham	100.00
Liverpool	65.00
Leeds	50.00
Middlesborough	50.00
Cardiff	102.50
Hemel Hempstead	25.00
Coventry	40.00
South West London	200.00
Haringay	70.00
Swindon	35.00
Leicester	13.50
Islington	125.00
Birmingham	10.00
J Mathieson	1.00
D Draycott	1.00
J Boyle	10.00
P Stern	40.00
Total	£2129.50

By Anne Kane (Glasgow Women for Peace)

HAVING lost the propaganda war over the last year, the Tories are stepping up the police and court attacks on the Greenham peace women. Last Monday four more women from the camp were sent to jail. Twelve other women were fined up to £50 for criminal damage, resulting from the invasion of the camp at last December's 'Sound around Greenham'.

The court actions are just the tip of the iceberg of the attack on the peace women. Recently paratroopers at the base attacked women with electric cattle prods and broke women's fingers. Newbury council has employed two ex-bailiffs on huge salaries on the peace camp, to whom the police turn a blind eye. They are increasingly making life at the camp virtually impossible. The troops and police guarding the base make a point of shining search lights and making a clamour all night to make sleep impossible.

The same pattern of attacks and harassment is being repeated around the country.

close down the Greenham camp. If this happens then the whole peace movement and the labour movement must immediately respond with demonstrations to re-establish the camps.

Task

In the last few months, while the CND leadership has been putting the emphasis on a negotiated 'freeze' — despite the CND conference vote against it — the Greenham women have got on with the job of fighting for unilateralism and to remove the missiles.

The setting up of 102 peace camps in support of the women's move in taking Reagan to court in the US, and the huge turnout of 40,000 women at Greenham on 11 December, shows the immense support for the peace women that now exists.

This support must now be mobilised to prevent the legal assault and physical harassment of the women being successful.

● If you want to send donations for fines of women arrested make cheques payable to 'Greenham Women (Fines)' and send to 79, Petherton Road, London N5. Greenham Women Against Cruise plan to take action around the emergency service routes on 29 February. Ring 01-251 8046 for further details.

A national conference of Greenham Women in Newcastle last weekend decided to call for a week of regional women's actions around 24 May, International Women's Day for Disarmament. Northern women are already planning to meet to discuss this on 3 March. Ring Doreen Ward on Leeds 868489 for further details.

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