

A Socialist ACTION

National demonstration

**No more Chiles —
hands off Central America!**

Sunday 11 September in London

**Defend the workers of
El Salvador and Chile!**

STOP WITCH HUNT



DEFEND UNIONS



Derek Robinson

I'M UTTERLY opposed to people being victimised for their views — whether I agree with their views is neither here nor there.
It will be a sad day in British industry when workers not only have to qualify to do a job, but have to qualify politically as well.

Peter Tatchell



THE TORY press is full of praise for East European regimes who victimise people because of their political beliefs.
This is precisely what is being done in Cowley. British Leyland and the popular press are effectively saying that trade union and political activists should be forbidden employment and the right to engage in trade union and political freedoms which are part and parcel of democratic society.
This is the thin end of the wedge. It's tantamount to denying

political activists the right to a job. If it's not resisted at Cowley it's likely to be taken up by other employers and it could lead to a West German-style *Berufsverbot*.

Help Fight Fleet Street

Right now Socialist Action is in the firing line. Our limited resources are being strained to the limit as we fight back against the employers' and Fleet Street's witch hunt.

Our phone bills are shooting up. Our costs are increasing as we use more cash sending our reporters to get the truth about Cowley. Of course there is no way we can possibly hope to match the lie machine at Fleet Street. But we do have to make an effort to get out the real facts and unless we have the money that is impossible.

And unless we can raise some extra money then the employers' press wins the day. That is why we are asking you to rush in a donation immediately.

We need every single reader to give us something and we need every penny they can afford.

All money and cash to Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N.1.

ALL THE LABOUR movement must oppose the sackings of 13 people in Cowley. It must stand up against the witch hunt of the media which is aimed against every socialist and union activist.

The press have written about 'plots' and 'moles' so that the management can sack people who are socialists and trade union supporters. This is what they did with Derek Robinson and Alan Thornett. The reason the 13 people were sacked is because they have strong socialist beliefs and want the trade unions to be independent of the companies.

Leyland is only the tip of the iceberg. Britain's firms — supported by the Tory government — use political tests on their workers and ban those with radical opinions.

Shell's personnel director admitted to the *Guardian* that: 'We are interested in identifying overt opponents of the system to which we are committed. The last thing we want to do is have political subversives on our pay roll or on sites in which we have an interest.' By political subversives this gentleman means anyone who is active in the labour movement.

Always the tactics are the same. Steph becomes 'Red Steph', Alan Thornett becomes 'The Mole' and Derek Robinson 'Red Robbo'. After the press smear, the firm claims its dismissals have nothing to do with politics, but are

necessary because these 'reds' have violated company rules. The press is always on hand to do the bosses' dirty work whether it be at Leyland or character assassination of Peter Tatchell in Bermondsey.

The present witch hunt is aimed at crushing democracy in every field — be it in the factories, the unions, the Labour Party or about social rights. The employers and their government want to crush all opposition to their scheme to make Britain safe for profit makers and their sights are set on all those socialists and union activists who oppose them. British Leyland is not just about 13 alleged 'Trots'.

It's about the right of anyone to oppose exploitation and oppression, without victimisation and sacking. The people who have given messages of support to the Cowley 13 understand this and their protests must be just the beginning of a campaign to roll back the witch hunt. Every Labour Party member and every trade unionist should stand up and be counted.

They should declare that the bosses and the press are not going to run the labour movement and hound those who dare fight back against them. Socialist Action asks its readers to support a campaign to defend the labour movement against the witch hunt.



Dennis Skinner MP

THE SACKINGS at BL are an industrial scandal. The 13 people must be defended, not just for their sakes, but

also because this is part and parcel of the bosses attacks on the unions as a whole.

Now Thatcher and Tebbit are able to use their friends in the media to do their dirty work for them. Jobs are no longer a right but a reward for bowing down to the management.

If BL are allowed to get away with this then the bosses and their friends will use this as a guideline to attack and defeat the workers.

People look to what's going on inside the LP and they say, well the LP won't put up with activists, why should we.

We must draw a halt to these witch hunts, defend the right of activists to work, and defend the organisations that truly represent the interests of the workers.

Defend the Cowley 13!

THE SACKING of the 13 workers at the BL Cowley Assembly plant is a major attack on the rights of all workers. PAT HICKEY explains.

The attack is aimed at further reducing trade union freedoms and at weakening the shop stewards organisations.

It forms part of Norman Tebbit's proposals to attack the links between the Labour Party and the unions and to cripple the ability of unions to defend their members on the shop floor. Yet again BL bosses are in the forefront of the employers offensive.

In 1979 BL sacked Derek Robinson for openly disagreeing with the Edwardes plan of massive redundancies and speed-ups. This opened the door for a series of victimisations and attacks on shop stewards organisations right across the country in the wake of Thatcher's first election victory.

In 1980 BL sacked 6 left wing shop stewards for alleged misconduct. Last year Alan Thornett was sacked on the flimsiest of pretexts.

In every case the sackings were carried out in the context of a wave of press attacks against the 'extremists'.

The latest victimisations represent both a continuation and a stepping up of the campaign by BL and other employers to smash up rank and file trade union organisation in industry.

They were made at a critical time for BL management. Despite repeated attacks on shop floor organisation, Cowley workers showed that they were ready to fight management through the 4½ week washing up strike.

Management were taken completely by surprise. They had thought that the failure of the trade union leadership to rally and fight the sacking of Thornett meant that they could press ahead unimpeded with the tightening up of the productivity screw.

But the so-called 'green workforce' recruited to the new Maestro line in the plant were organising to defend themselves. Among the 13 sacked were 4 who were elected as part of a number of new stewards on the Maestro line.

In particular a number of women workers had come to the fore as willing to build the union organisation in the plant.

It was in this context that management felt they had to act. Evidence of their intent is contained in the report of the joint management/union team set up to investigate the situation in the plant in the aftermath of the washing up strike.

The management complained against the workforce: 'The trade union structure and the way it operates in the plant does not allow for adequate communication to all employees, or representation of their views. The internal Trade Union organisation does not operate as a unified multi-union body, and there are clear signs that the political views of some of the stewards work against constitutional trade unionism in the plant.'

The tactics of the BL management are being copied faithfully by other employers. During the two-month long strike at the *Financial Times*, John McKay former right hand man to Sir Michael Edwardes, was identified as the *eminent* press used for management's moles behind FT's intransigent stand. The right wing press is the leading power behind the anti-BL campaign of screening, harassing and sacking shop stewards and other union activists.

The document which was sent to the sacking of the 13 workers at Cowley...

also shows that the trade union representatives on the team, Bill Lapworth, the Transport and General Workers Union, South Midland Divisional Officer, and Bill Jordan, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers Divisional Organiser in the West Midlands, were prepared to make concessions to the company on their complaints.

The report goes on to recommend that, 'There should be an urgent review of the trade union structure in the plant to resolve the problems identified in our finding above and reinforce effective trade unionism in the plant.'

What is meant by 'effective trade unionism' is left in no doubt in a finding responding to a complaint from the work force that 'management expects employees to work unreasonably hard'.

The finding states that 'The team is no doubt that Cowley needs to be internationally competitive and this must be understood by employees at all levels, and this will require continuous efficiency and productivity improvements.'

But the management couldn't wait. They went on the offensive against those in the plant, stewards and otherwise, whose political views were 'incompatible with constitutional trade unionism.'

They intend to follow the present sacking through with further victimisations and the wholesale reorganisation of the shop stewards' movement. They aim to have fewer stewards, less accountable and representative to the members, more susceptible to company pressure.

The company is also keen to gain the right to veto the election of shop stewards that they don't like. This is of course a necessary preliminary for an attack on the whole work force, to jack up productivity and further worsen conditions in Leyland work places.

The sacking of the 13 workers at Cowley on the same type of pretext used against Robinson and Thornett, came at the same time that the management were preparing the next major offensive against the workforce.

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Photo: GM COOKSON

Above: Stephanie Grant at a press conference organised by Socialist Action on Monday 15 August. Stephanie slammed the press/management campaign being waged against her and the other 12 people sacked at Cowley.

Later on that night she appeared on the BBC current affairs programme Newsnight. She told interviewer Peter Snow, 'I wasn't part of a conspiracy, it is British Leyland who are conspiring to destroy the unions.'

Below: a passage from the joint union management inquiry into the 4½ week washing up strike.

COMPLAINT 9

The Trade Union structure and the way it operates does not allow for adequate communication to all employees, or representation of their views. The internal Trade Union organisation does not operate as a unified multi-union body, and there are clear signs that the political views of some of the stewards work against constitutional trade unionism in the plant.

FINDINGS 9

The Trade Union organisation in the plant used to include 2 full time senior stewards and 12 full time deputy senior stewards. This allowed the seniors and their deputies to handle all problems personally. The deputies stopped operating in January 1982. Since then problems have not been effectively resolved at shop steward level, the level at which the majority of problems should be resolved.

The two Trade Unions operate separately so that in general on production sections where there are members of both Unions a shop steward will represent his members only. This, the absence of joint shop stewards meetings, and the absence of designated areas of responsibility above shop steward level reduces effective communication, works against the speedy settlement of grievances and results in a less than authoritative Trade Union structure in the plant.

The Trade Union movement at a senior level in the plant does not operate as a unified body. This reduces the effective working of constitutional Trade Union machinery in the plant.

the print unions in the FT dispute shows that these methods can be confronted and defeated.

The BL 13 must be defended in the most vigorous way through the shop floor movement. These acts of management are part of the...

The attacks on socialists in the unions are not an addition to Tebbit's proposals to destroy the power of the unions to defend their members — they are part of it.

The sacking of the 13 workers is a tremendous act of oppression within the labour movement and...

all those concerned with civil liberties, then the employers will have the green light for fresh attacks of these kinds.

It will be the first step in confronting the real conspiracy — that of the Tories and the employers against workers' hard-won rights.

Socialist League statement

The following press statement was released by the Socialist League (British section of the Fourth International) at 5.00pm on Monday 15 August.

BRITISH LEYLAND is a company with a long record of sacking workers for their political and trade union activities. The dismissal of Derek Robinson and Alan Thornett, senior and deputy senior shop stewards in the Longbridge and Cowley car plants are the most well known examples of such victimisation.

No one believes that Robinson and Thornett were sacked for the technical charges made against them. They were victimised for their political and trade union views and activities. And there have been numerous other less publicised sackings.

BL is lying when it says it does not dismiss workers on political grounds, or that it would hire workers in spite of their union record or socialist beliefs. Methods of political victimisation and exclusion are systematic in BL and large British companies.

This can be proved simply. If BL does not sack or prevent people from gaining employment for reasons of their political views or trade union activities why does it, like most large companies, operate a system of blacklists?

Why does it employ organisations to check the trade union and political backgrounds of its workers or those applying for jobs?

The use of such methods is known to all those involved in trade unions and industrial relations, and the press; if BL denies this state of affairs it is merely falsifying its own, and other companies', practices.

The facts are obvious. The BL management has not one single complaint against the work record of the thirteen dismissed during the entire time they were at Cowley. Everyone knows that the company would be taking no action against the thirteen if they were not suspected of having strong socialist views.

The real facts of the BL case were stated in the *Financial Times* on 13 August 1983. 'BL has been careful to stress officially the constitutionality of its procedure ... In effect however its central concern was their suspected revolutionary affiliations.'

Accusations of 'left wing conspiracy' are merely stupid. If BL did not victimise people for their political and trade union views in the first place none at all would bother to hide their views from the management.

BL in fact operates a political ban on recruitment to the company and that is the reason for the sackings. Accepting the

sacking of the thirteen workers in Cowley is to accept the right of managements to operate political bans on recruitment, to supervise the political views of workers, and to practice victimisation for political and trade union activities.

It should be opposed as such by the labour movement, the trade unions, and all those concerned in defending democratic rights.

The sackings should also be strongly opposed by the women's movement who will have seen the way in which the press particularly singled out for attack women workers at Cowley.

While parading women's bodies like meat on their inside pages *The Sun*, and other newspapers, particularly emphasise for attack women seeking to gain jobs normally 'reserved' for men.

The Socialist League supports, and will continue to support, all attempts by women to gain jobs on a basis of equality with men.

The charge that anyone with socialist views, can instigate workers to go on strike, or are 'infiltrating' the trade unions is a conscious invention by the press.

Workers going on strike lose hundreds of pounds of their income and risk their jobs. They will not strike unless propelled to do so by deep seated and genuine grievances against the company. It is the activities of BL management, not any political group, which leads to workers striking in BL or in any other company.

As far as the trade unions are concerned the Socialist League has and will defend the right of all workers, whatever their political views, to stand for election in the trade unions and to elect whoever they wish as their union representatives. We fight for that ourselves and would defend it just as strongly for any members of a trade union whatever their political views.

In reality the stated motivations of both the press and the Conservative Party in their witch hunt show the real issues at stake in the sacking of the 13 Cowley workers.

The press consciously and clearly states that those with political views they disagree with should be excluded from employment in major companies and factories. They openly justify political victimisations and exclusions.

The exclusion of the thirteen workers from Cowley should be opposed by the entire labour, trade union and women's movement as an attempt by the company to enforce a political ban on recruitment and on employment.

If a policy of systematic exclusions from employment, and use of victimisation, by companies is continued and strengthened there will be a further major erosion of democratic rights to add to the many already carried out by this government and the BL management.

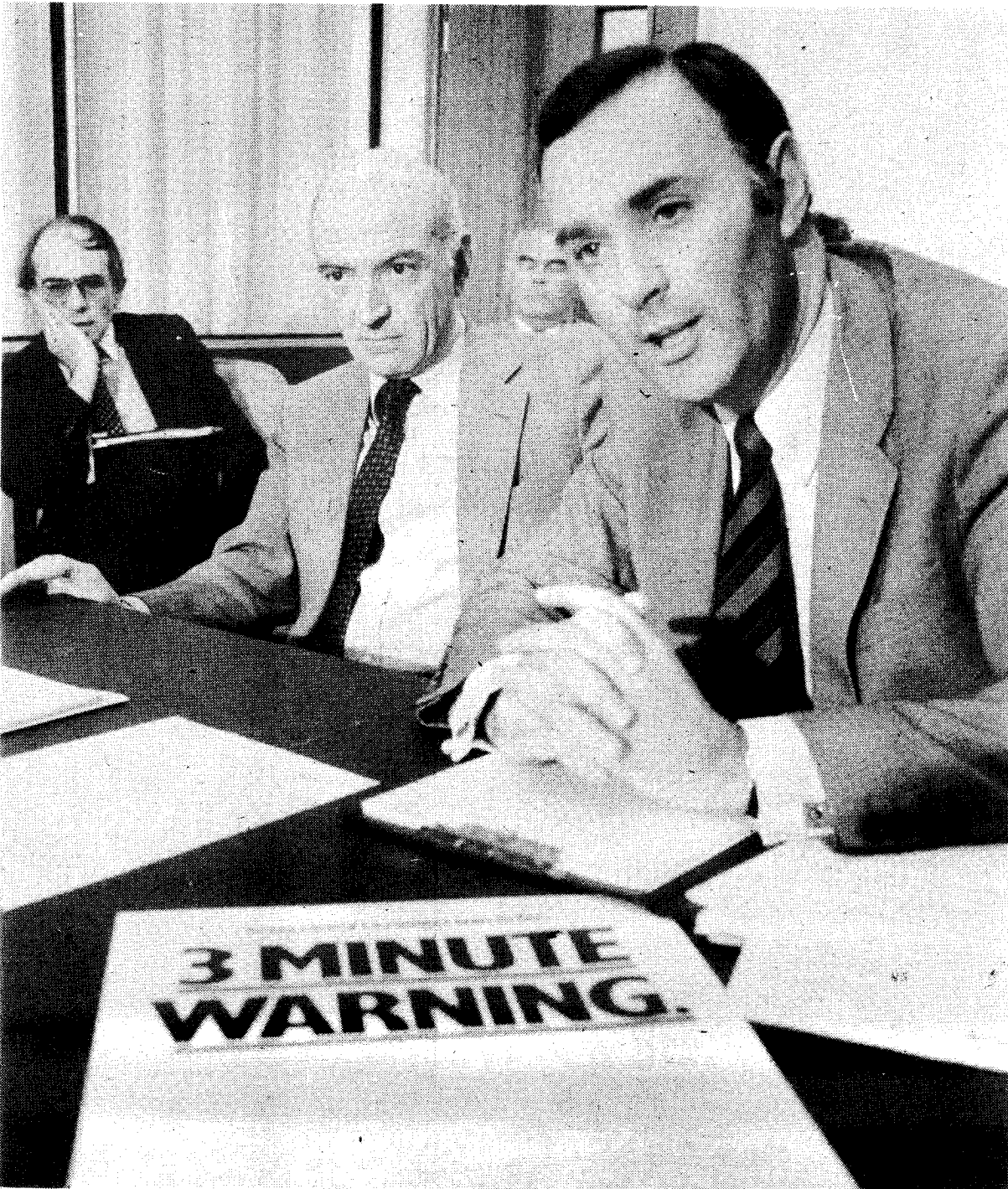


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

What is the Socialist League?

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE has been attacked and vilified in the press as an organisation 'hell-bent' on disrupting British industry and the union movement.

We asked STEVE POTTER, acting national secretary of the Socialist League, to explain briefly what the aims of his organisation really are.

"OUR organisation believes that a social system which put four million people on the scrap heap in Britain is rotten and must be replaced by a society which puts social need before private profit.

Such a society would be run on the principles of workers democracy, putting political power into the hands of the overwhelming majority. We are against the bureaucratic abominations which posture as socialism in such countries as Poland.

As for the press allegations they are ridiculous. We are not in favour of the

disruption of industry. On the contrary we believe that the anarchy of production for profit that characterises the British economy today should be replaced by a planned economy based on workers control over nationalised industry.

We believe that the trade unions will play a crucial role in the building of such a planned economy and we reject the charge too that we are out to disrupt the unions.

We support the unions against the assaults of Norman Tebbit and others. We also support the struggle of working

people everywhere from Poland to Central America.

We think that socialist revolution in the country will be in the interests not just of the industrial workers, but of women, black people and youth.

We are internationalists who believe that a nation that oppresses another will never be free itself. It's for this reason that we stand full square for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland and support the links being developed between the labour movement and the revolutionary nationalists of Ireland.

It is for these beliefs that the Tories, the employers and the press hate us. But we are confident that there are thousands of people who agree with us and will join us in the battle for socialism.

Paul Mackney

AS PRESIDENT of Birmingham Trades Council, representing a quarter of a million trade unionists, I condemn the suggestion by Dr Hawkins, the director of the West Midlands CBI that employers should 'be on their guard when recruiting new workers'.

People should be appointed on their ability to do a job or to be trained for a job; their political and trade union beliefs should not be a

consideration.

It is a sorry state of affairs when the regional director of the CBI implies that firms should politically vet applicants to exclude active trade unionists, socialists and Marxists.

Of course the practice is not new, but with the growing sophistication of computer technology there is a real danger of totalitarianism at work.

There are already a

number of outfits that keep computer files of socialists and provide firms with blacklists.

People rightly condemn these sort of practices when they occur in Czechoslovakia as an infringement of the freedoms of expression and association.

We don't want to see them here. Socialists have a right to work. We would be happy to debate this with Dr Hawkins.

The unacceptable face of BL management

Keith Lichman

(Secretary Labour against the Witch Hunt)

PEOPLE should have the right to a job whatever their political views. The trade union leadership must take this up.

They and all their members are at risk from what looks like the beginning of a witch hunt similar to the *Berufsverbot* in West Germany.

Les Huckfield

MY FEAR is that the Cowley issue will now be used as an excuse for tightening up on job applications throughout industry. It's tantamount to denying the civil and political rights of Leyland workers.

Phil Holt

(Post Office Engineering Union Executive, personal capacity)

IT'S AMAZING that when the US organises forces to intervene to undermine countries self-determination the gutter press rarely comments.

But when someone takes a job in industry and calls for the social ownership so that everyone can enjoy the fruits of that he or she has produced as a worker.

This is a sad reflection on the social ownership of the media.

Whose conspiracy at Cowley?

BRITISH LEYLAND management have denied in response to a Socialist League press statement (see opposite) that they were sacking the 13 workers at Cowley because of their political beliefs.

But the whole course of events in the last week proves that management colluded with their press to subject the 13 to trial by media on the charge of being revolutionary socialists.

Management gave out their first press release on Wednesday. Journalists contacting the firm were told that while the company was disciplining the 13 for falsifying their references.

But the company was also told 'off the record' that the 13 were members of the International Marxist Group (fore-runner of the Socialist League).

The press dutifully took up the story and the Thursday's press was replete with stories of the Marxist 'moles'.

The *Daily Telegraph* reported that the company had found out about the 13 by 'examining carefully all applications for jobs with the help of a firm of security specialists.' By the next day the management press campaign was in full swing.

The management was obviously aware of the repercussions of admitting that it screened its recruits with the assistance of security experts, had by time invented a story about one of the 13 'boasting to workmates' about how she got a job.

The idea of a worker 'supergrass' had some basis in reality with John Power, an ex-shop steward at the plant, denouncing extremists.

But the company was intent on concealing its policy of screening militants and operating a de facto black list.

Security

The attempt to divert attention to the 'supergrass angle' continued on Friday.

Stephanie Grant, one of the 13 sacked, had been set up by the press as the person who had bragged to other workmates. To provide the press with the pictures of Steph they needed to make the story stick, gate security men turned her away from the plant when she arrived to have her appeal heard.

Press photographers and TV film cameras quickly gathered to take the pictures of Steph that appeared the next day splashed under 'she-mole' head lines.

So the management's attempts to deny that the sackings were politically motivated were a fraud from beginning to end.

While using the technicality of the false references management were using the press to try the 13 for their beliefs and actions.

It was the same pattern when Alan Thornett was sacked on the technicality of the expiry of his commercial driving license, but branded by the press as an extremist.

There were signs however that the management were beginning to overreach themselves. By releasing the text of a 'Jobs Briefing' which management claimed had been issued by the Socialist League (although providing no proof of this) calls were taken up in the

Explosion

press and in the initial response of the Confederation of British Industry for a general witch hunt in industry.

Some sections of the press fearing an industrial relations explosion drew sharply back from this conclusion. The *Sunday Times* in an editorial on Sunday 14 August asked:

'Why did the 13 consider deception necessary in the first place? It can have only been because they expected to be

blackballed if they applied under their real identities.'

They expressed fears that 'the industrial imperative of modern Britain could be in danger of obliterating many other considerations, such as the right to work and the right to be a militant,' citing in particular the proud boast of the Ford director that they rejected people who



Alan Thornett

were unsuitable 'for any reason'.

The *Sunday Times* went on to ask: 'Who exactly are 'unsuitable'? Proven conspirators? Card-carrying Trots? Or 'Marxists'? Or perhaps straightforward activists as well? And where in the purge of the hard left, does the soft left begin?'

Reason

moved to get rid of her.

The reason that she had lied to the management on her application form was because of her fear that management would reject her application otherwise.

In an interview in the *Guardian* on Tuesday, she denied that she had in any way deceived her co-workers as to her political views. It was only management that she had been forced to deceive.

Trade union spokesmen spoke out for the right of the 13 sacked. David Buckle, the local TGWU official, responded by saying that 'with unemployment at its present level it is not surprising that in their desperation people give false information'.

Brian Mathers, TGWU regional organiser, stated that 'If political affiliations prevent individuals

Labour Conference Agenda



Labour debate

RECENT publications of the Labour Party conference booklet show that the debate on Ireland concentrates on debunking the myth of reformability of the Six County southern state.

Many of the 13 motions submitted draw attention to the loyalist veto. They try to show that commitment to a united Ireland and ending the war is incompatible with the guarantee given to the Loyalists by the British ruling class.

The idea of a 'majority' in the North that would permanently favour the British connection, was constructed by the makers of partition.

It was constructed to nurture the sash and the Lambey drums — symbols of a sectarian privilege that has largely been eroded with the collapse of the economic structure of the province, but nevertheless permanently divides Irish workers, North and South.

This majority sees its future in the embers of a decaying imperialist empire. Free reign to its frenzy can only increase bitterness and brutality of a police state whose emergency measures are the envy of repressive regimes throughout the world.

That the rank and file of the party 'has its heart in the right place', that it wants to break the chains of bi-partisanship cannot be doubted — it has reaffirmed its opposition to the Prevention of Terrorism Act and to plastic bullets.

But it is still trapped within the framework for reform put forward by the partitionists. It is a pernicious myth that must be destroyed. Labour's progressive act must be to withdraw.

The dialogue with Irish nationalists and the debate at this year's conference must push in this direction.

The Labour Committee on Ireland has marshalled model resolutions against the veto and Prior's assembly, which Labour leaders have uncritically accepted.

In Tony Benn's comments he speaks for the North Kensington Party on just such a resolution. Here we have a useful ally.

Crackpot schemes on United Nations peacekeeping apart, his presence on the conference floor with help to achieve the objective set out in his *Guardian* article which called for Ireland to come to the centre of the debate.

This August marked 14 years of army occupation. The political successes of Sinn Fein have undoubtedly contributed to a lifting of the wall of disinformation.

Let's use that to help, not hinder the cause of Irish freedom.



Photo: GM COOKSON

The left and Adams' visit

THE LEFT was not unanimous in extending the enthusiastic welcome to Gerry Adams that this paper has done.

The *Militant* have already said that they prefer Rees, Mason and Concannon organising in Belfast to Sinn Fein, and did everything they could to block the Adams visit.

Certainly their two 'Marxist' MPs did not think it worth turning up to the meeting in the House of Commons to hear what Adams had to say. But the reaction of *Socialist Worker* was more surprising.

Pat Stack told Adams at the London rally that he was wasting his time with the Labour Party because they would never do anything and suggested Sinn Fein waited until the SWP had rebuilt the shop stewards movement.

The following week, *Socialist Worker* announced that there was really no difference between Sinn Fein and the Labour Party.

The only reason Sinn Fein had got 102,000 votes, they said, was because they had offered to provide 'better housing' and 'this is no more revolutionary in Belfast than it is in Bermondsey'.

This will come as a revelation to *Militant* candidate Muriel Tang in East Belfast who did think 'better housing' was the key to winning votes and scored less than 600.

The Preliminary Resolutions for Labour's Annual Conference were published at the beginning of the month. We asked Greg Tucker, one of Vauxhall's CLP's Conference delegates to give us his impressions.

RATHER than opt for discussion on policy, it is obvious that this year local Labour parties want to discuss why we failed in the General Election. Over 60 resolutions directly refer to the election defeat. While the policies put forward in June are generally upheld, most resolutions are critical of the national organisation of the campaign.

Various remedies are suggested. Some, like that from the General, Municipal and Boilermakers Union want 'an urgent review of all aspects of party organisation', leading to such demands as 'more full time agents'. Others more realistically blame the failure of the NEC and PLP to promote party policy. But here again some answer this by merely calling for a better 'vision of the socialist future.'

However, the major emphasis, appearing time and again, is the need to turn the party outwards as a mass campaigning body. As the Sheffield Heely resolution puts it: '... if the outgoing NEC had spent last year organising demonstrations and campaigning against the Tories, instead of witch hunting socialists ... then the election could have been an overwhelming victory for Labour.'

On constitutional questions the drive by women for a greater say in the running of the Party continues with 20 resolutions on women's organisation, most of which call for the Womens' Conference to be able to choose the women's division of the NEC.

On the other hand, however, altering the balance of conference voting to favour constituency parties is put up by 9 constituency parties and, led by the EEPTU, 20 resolutions call for 'one member one vote' in electing the party leader. Two of these call for 'one man one vote' — so much for giving women a greater say! Disappointingly there is only one resolution to



Photo: LAURIE SPARHAM (JFL)

conference on gay and lesbian rights.

On the witch hunt, whilst many resolutions take it up in passing only 3 directly call for the reinstatement of the expelled *Militant* editors. Ten take up the CLPD 'nicer Register' option, but only 2 argued to ensure that the Greenwich amendment gets conference time.

Given Kinnock and Hattersley's commitment to the witch hunt, this presents problems for the left and the resolutions need backing up with a large number of amendments*, particularly taking up the threat of dissolution of local parties, and the recent NEC ban on sales of the *Militant* newspaper.

Drawing the lessons of the June defeat is also the theme of the policy section. Of the 400 resolutions there are few which argue for any significant change in the party's programme. As last year health and defence of the NHS is the most popular subject, with 'defence' second.

Of the 40 resolutions on the latter, only one, predictably from the AUEW Engineering section, calls for a reversal of policy to multilateralism. None, however, call for a change of policy on NATO, most restricting themselves to attempting to ensure that present policy is followed more vigorously in future.

As Doncaster Central quaintly put it: 'it was made clear during the recent election campaign that there is a need for ... party spokespeople at national level, to master the case of this policy...'

Making the Party act now is a frequent theme and there are strong sections calling for campaign around unemployment a devolved Scottish Assembly and in defence of local government. Here a significant proportion of the London parties considered it important to focus on the threat to the GLC and there are several calls for a nationally led campaign involving local

parties, trade unions and local authorities to safeguard local democracy.

Still trying to draw lessons from the election a large number of resolutions deal with the role of the media, with 26 supporting the call for a national Labour daily newspaper.

Low Pay is one area where policy may change, with the recent change of position by the Transport & General Workers Union meaning that some of the 14 resolutions on a minimum wage may get passed. The other key area where there is a call for change is on the EEC. Though as yet unprepared to come out in the open, there is a demand for so-called 'realism' — the old story of 'as long as we are in the Market we might as well try to get the best out of it'.

On international questions, for the first time for years there are sufficient resolutions to make a debate on Ireland almost certain. Many call on the Party to withdraw support

for the Northern Ireland Assembly and announce its opposition to the Unionist veto over moves to a United Ireland. Brent East adds a call to conference to 'welcome the election of Gerry Adams, and commit the next Labour Government to immediate withdrawal of British troops.'

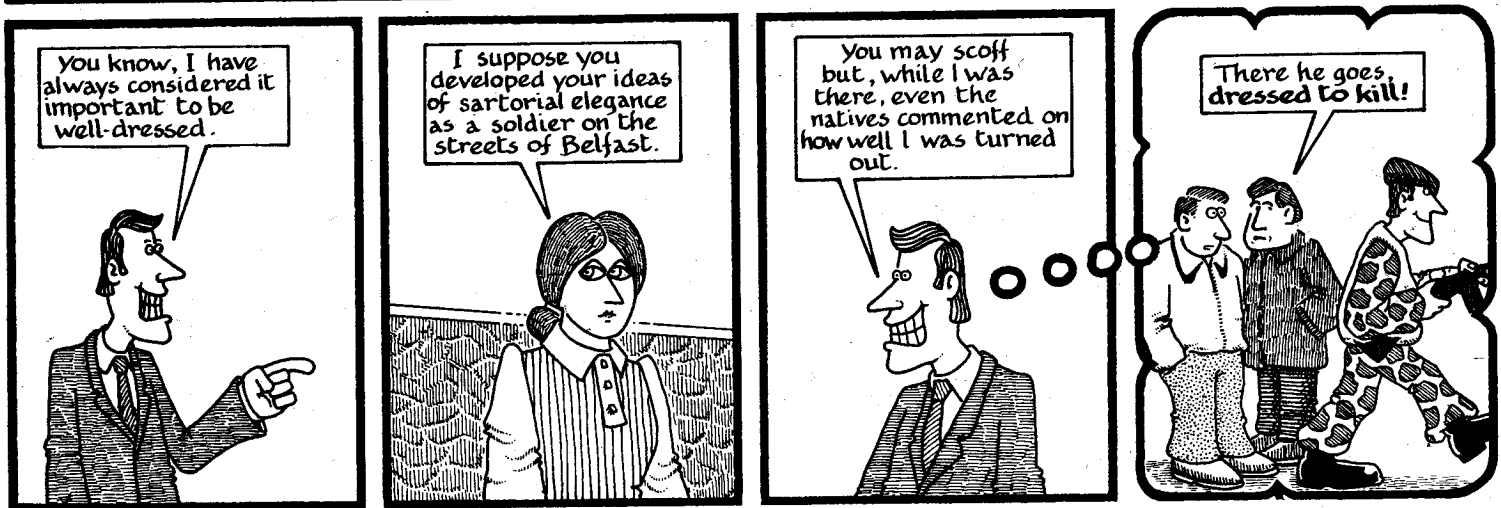
Given the importance of events in Central America it is surprising that only 2 resolutions appear on the agenda. Even then, one only calls for the present Government to seek peace and ask the US to withdraw from El Salvador. Not the most forthright position conference could take.

For there to be the debate Central America deserves there will have to be a campaign of emergency resolutions as was successfully mounted over the Lebanese massacres last year.

* Suggested amendments are available from Labour Against the Witchhunt (tel 01-802 1709) but have to be in by 26 August.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION

BY GORMAG #20 8/83



Fight the Police Bill

ABOUT 100 PEOPLE, representing a wide range of black groups, women's groups, gay organisations, union branches, Labour parties, NCCL and other progressive groups met formally last week to activate and consolidate the National Campaign Against the Police Bill.

The impressive feature of the meeting, apart from its size and the determination of delegates to oppose the Police Bill by any means necessary, was its unified and pre-emptive move before the Bill is brought before Parliament. Although the size of the Tory majority, especially with the pro-hangers determined to get their pound of flesh after losing the motion on capital punishment, will obviously be a formidable obstacle to the Bill actually being defeated.

By Unmesh Desai

What was recognised was that it is the political, social and economic framework of the bill that had to be challenged as well as the ideology behind it. A wide-ranging list of activities and meetings have already been arranged to get the Campaign off on a positive and offensive note.

Local groups are to be set up, a national speaking tour is to be organised, national and local sponsored walks based on the theme of 'The Struggle for Liberty' are to be held as well as a wide range of local, regional and national rallies.

A national march, probably timed to coincide with the introduction of the Bill, will also be held through Central London. Two decisions in particular, should help the Campaign to build a genuine mass base.

Bearing in mind that if the Campaign is to link

and relate to the increasing number of young people who face the direct brunt of police harassment and the need for more popular styles of campaigning, a national circuit of concerts on the lines of 'Rock Against the Bill' is to be arranged. To stress that what the Bill means in practice is cases like the Newham 8, Colin Roach, May 3rd Defence Campaign and the other numerous cases which the black and other communities have suffered for years now, the Campaign took the decision to build for and support the National March Against Racism and Racist Attacks called by the Newham 8 Defence Campaign for 24 September 1983.

With the wide support already given to the march and speakers already invited from local black struggles round the country with a view to having a united mass demonstration, the scene is set for the campaign to make its first national impact before the Bill comes up before Parliament.

Campaign

What socialists and trade union activists now need to start doing is to build local campaigns against the Bill. The importance of genuine mass local commitment and involvement and the necessity to develop these local campaigns into centres of resistance, if the Bill were to become law, cannot be overestimated. These groups should not only have the widest possible alliance of forces opposed to the Bill but should actively base themselves upon local campaigns against police harassment.

If the Campaign is to have any chance of success, however, opposition to the Bill will need to be based upon an understanding of the key, almost



A license for gorillas — that's why we need a Police Bill.

central role it plays in Tory ideology to police the increasingly rebellious unemployed and never employed and the politico-economic framework in which it is being introduced.

Parents

The Criminal Justice Act 1983, which among other things makes parents responsible for the fines of their children under 17, brings in policing through the family. Newman's neighbourhood watch schemes and the increasingly complicated forms of community policing now being developed throughout the country bring in policing through

the neighbours. The Police Bill, apart from giving unprecedented powers to the coercive agencies of the state, legitimises all the present police malpractices and brutality.

This process of legitimisation should be seen in the light of the criminalisation of a black community which has always had to live with a 'police bill'. The Bill represents an attempt by British capitalism to cope with the social consequences of restructuring its economic base. In particular, to cope with the effects of mass unemployment. The importance of this Bill to Tory policies

makes it imperative that a national campaign is built.

Moral

The first step towards this starts with the national march against racism and racial attacks on 24 September.

National March Against Racism and Racist Attacks called by the Newham 8 Defence Campaign and supported by the National Campaign Against the Police Bill, Saturday, 24 September. Assemble 1pm, Plashet Park, East Ham, London E6.

Conference: Racism, the Police and Education, 1 October. Credentials from Newham Monitoring Project, 285 Romford Road, London E7 9HJ.

National Mass Picket of Snaresbrook Crown Court, 24 October to coincide with the start of the Newham 8 Case.

Newham 8 support grows in Brum

By Bob Smith

A SUPPORT group for the Newham Eight Defence Campaign has been set up in Birmingham. The Newham Eight defended black youth when they were attacked by white racists on their way home from school. They are being charged with conspiracy to assault persons unknown.

Following on from the successful campaigns launched against police harassment in the West Midlands to defend Pino Khan, the Singh brothers and the Smethwick Three the climate here for mobilising in defence of the black and Asian communities is excellent.

With the Tory government pressing ahead with the Police Bill next year, defence campaigns of this sort will have a much bigger battle on their hands if they are to successfully fight back against state racism.

A national perspective is becoming more and more vital. The first initiative of the new Birmingham group will be a public meeting on Sunday 4 September at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham at 2pm. Speakers include Unmesh Desai, Newham 8, Tariq M. Ali, Bradford 12 defendant and Cecil Gutmores, secretary of the National Campaign Against the Police Bill.

The second event will be the national demonstration taking place in Newham on Saturday 24 September. Three coaches have been booked to bring the Birmingham contingent to London.

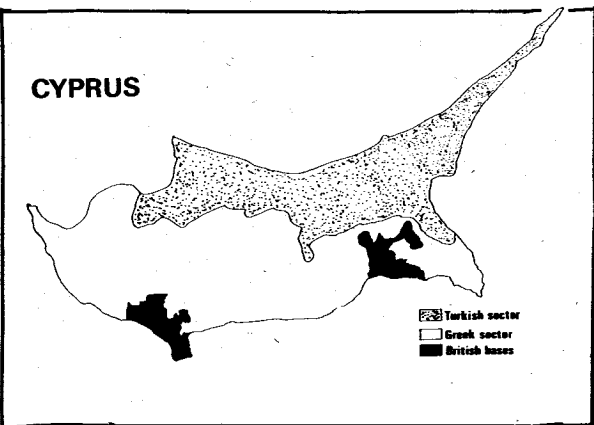
Defend Cypriot refugees

AFTER THE Greek junta-backed coup and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, many Cypriots escaped to Britain.

Despite the fact that Britain had ruled Cyprus for years it failed to give any lasting welcome to these refugees. The Home Office refused to grant Cypriots refugee status as defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention. They were only allowed to stay under 'special concessions'.

About 10,000 refugees came to Britain, some from the Greek community, some from the Turkish community. Now there are about 2000 to 3000 still here. By 1981 the Home Office was getting tough and starting to refuse to renew permits and demanded that many of the refugees and their families go back to Cyprus.

Over 60 people were deported that year. After protests the Home Office



Britain — providing the Home Office accepted they were displaced persons. This new measure still failed to give refugee status to many people.

Since 1982, 42 Cypriots have been deported, others have had to go back. If they are Greek they go to the Greek-controlled south of Cyprus and if they are Turkish they go to the Turkish-controlled north. Many of them live in a different part of the island before they and their children

have never lived anywhere but Britain.

The Cypriot Community Workers Action Group is fighting the deportation of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. You can help this humanitarian and non-sectarian campaign by contacting the CCWAG at 26 Crowndale Road, London NW1.

Get your organisation to write to the Home Office insisting that these refugees have the right to stay in Britain.

Irish referendum on abortion

ON 7 September a referendum on the 'right to life' of the unborn will take place in the 26 Counties.

Unfortunately, the view in Ireland is that despite winning widespread support for a 'no' vote — to the extent of provoking a major crisis in Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Labour Party — the pro-lifers will probably just manage to win.

The die-hards in the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child see themselves making a clear break with the 'rolling liberalism' that has affected the 26 Counties over the last decade.

If they win they will continue with guerrilla actions against every shred of control that 26 County women have over their fertility.

In a country that can already imprison women for having abortions this means campaigning against Family Planning Clinics, demanding a ban on the use of the IUD and undermining state funding for organisations like CHERISH who service single mothers.

This is why the size of the 'no' vote is so important. The opinions of many people have changed in the course of this campaign 'vote no' action groups have been set up in every major town.

But despite backing from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions among other organisations, the pro-lifers are more than likely to support.

Unfortunately this also applies to Sinn Fein who, despite positive



steps on the front of some feminist issues, have not chosen to break with their past on this issue. They have used the excuse that it is a 26 County campaign to back down from any real involvement.

But some on the left wing of the anti-amendment campaign, while mobilising all the forces who will vote no around a new campaign with a real chance of success.

(Valerie Coultas and Ann Speed)

● Anti-Amendment Campaign Social Lasers, 9pm-2pm, 23 August, Green Lanes, London N8. Tickets £1 unwaged, £2.25 waged. Available from Sister-write or ring Irish Women's Centre on 01-251 4500

Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday a week prior to publication.

SRI LANKA

THE FOLLOWING articles both came from Colombo and give dramatic descriptions of the reign of racist terror that swept Sri Lanka.

The articles make it very clear that the hand of the government lies behind the violence and show the way in which the police and the army openly sided with the pogrom.

Background to the riots

ALL OF JULY there have been problems in Trincomalee in the Eastern province. There have been attacks on Tamil speaking people by Sinhalese thugs egged on by the UNP and tolerated by the police and the army.

The army in particular has suffered a number of casualties in the North and Vavuniya and they have been bitter about the restraints placed on them by the government. Some 100 soldiers had deserted because the officers had not permitted them to make indiscriminate retaliatory attacks on Tamil speaking people in the north.

The government is having a very bad response from aid donors. The International Monetary Fund insists that the government must devalue again and put right the yawning gap in the balance of payments. It is not possible for the government to impose import controls because that would undermine their whole economic policy and their political line.

After much huffing and puffing the government devalues the Rupee again on 17 July. Immediately some prices go up and whole set of others are poised for price rises — fuel, transport, fares, food, etc.

The government seeks to divert the attention of the people from these problems by talking about the 'terrorist' menace. Announces that it would take decisive steps to stamp out terrorism whatever other parties may say or do in relation to the 'All-party Conference' called by the government to discuss 'terrorist' menace.

All the opposition parties including Mrs Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Tamil United Liberation Front refuse to participate in the Conference (a) because it is only about terrorism and does not resolve the problems in the North and (b) according to the interview President J R Jayawardene had given to the *Telegraph* in London he would take whatever steps necessary whatever other parties may do in relation to the Conference. In an interview in *Rivirasa* Mrs Bandaranaike of the SLFP stated that Mr Jayawardene wanted to obtain the approval (rubber stamp) for the actions the government wanted to implement.

The Tamil United Liberation Front decides to boycott the parliament or more precisely not to participate in it. All the major newspapers have various stories about 'terrorists' and the clamour for Eelam (separate state).

The first meeting of the 'All-party conference' is a flop. Only the UNP and Ceylon Workers Congress (both government parties) attend. Further meetings are postponed to 27 July and the government promises to enlarge the scope of the all-party conference. SLFP still refuses to participate because the government is 'merely trying to use the SLFP to further their ends'.

Students resist UNP thugs in the Peradeniya campus. A mass movement of students stage protests and calls for the withdrawal of suspension notices on students barred by the Vice Chancellor etc. After a week of struggle and the taking of a hostage (Head of the Arts Faculty) by the students, the University authorities give in and sign an agreement with students.

On the following day the government states that it will not honour it because it was obtained by duress. But the students disprove the claims of the University and offer written documents in evidence to the newspapers and the government imposes a press censorship on 19 July. Two days later the censorship is extended to cover all 'terrorist' incidents in the north.

The 1982 current account balance of payments deficit ran to some \$490m and was attributed to sluggish exports and a rise in imports. Total external debt at January 1983 stood at \$1.7bn.

THE ENTIRE POPULATION is supposed to be confined to their homes. Since 2pm yesterday (25 July) till 5am tomorrow (27 July) a curfew is in operation. Armed forces are on the streets. The whole country is tense.

Winds of racism have demolished buildings and houses big and small. Arson and looting have become the order of the day. I can still see through the window of my home smoke reaching up to the sky.

I hear now they are attacking the Hindu temple by the sea. Sinhala 'patriots' have performed 'heroic' deeds over the past two days.

I went to Fort around 10am. When the bus drove into Fort, I saw large crowds of people running all over. The traffic was in disorder. I got off the bus and witnessed the 'scenario'. A group of people were attacking Ambal Cafe (a Tamil cafe) with stones.

Some were breaking the doors with iron rods and there were armed police looking on. The attacks in Colombo started in Borella — (see other report).

I was an eye witness to many attacks in Fort, Pettah, Main Street, Olcott Mawatha, Malwatta Road and Bankshall Street (the Bazaar area with shops owned mainly by the Tamil community). I was furious. Some things I just could not bear to look at. I think I was the only person who did not sympathise with these dastardly acts by Sinhala 'heroes'.

Large numbers of people watching these atrocities gave them their passive support. Some people even joined the attackers. Others said — I heard, because I was walking all over and

listening to what people were saying — 'If the government cannot solve this problem, let the people solve it'.

Some men were shouting racist slogans such as — 'Defend the Sinhala race'. It was a mood of mass hysteria.

Some of the attackers were looting goods. Others were grabbing the goods from looters piled them on the streets on the streets and set them on fire. Soldiers in civilian clothes also actively participated or rather initiated the attacks. Kandiah's fire works shop in Pettah was broken open and crackers were lit on the streets in celebration of the 'heroic' deeds.

I felt I was in a funeral house but that I was the only mourner while the others were merry making. There were many armed units cordoning off the crowds from the racist attackers! They didn't do anything else.

Soldiers passing in vans, lorries and jeeps were cheered by the crowds! And they were waving with smiles on their faces! Fort and Pettah were a red hot blaze (the main commercial centres of the capital about three square miles in area).

Criminal

The fire brigades arrived but they were turned away by both the armed personnel and the attackers. Maharaja Organisation (a large Tamil business establishment) was broken into and smashed. Tamil shops along main street were demolished and textiles looted (Main St. is a textile sales centre — the majority of traders being Tamil). Some of the loot was being put in taxis and taken away.

The police were mere onlookers! I saw a man holding a Sinhala national flag being carried on the shoulders of a group of persons and Buddhist monks too were encouraging them. One

English speaking man; well dressed and carrying a briefcase caught a looter taking away some textiles and told him in Sinhala — 'Shame on you! Don't take that loot away, put it in the fire, burn it!' And he put some items into the fire.

I saw a Tamil burnt to death and left lying on the road and one other on the road by the Pettah Central Bus Stand hacked to death. Another a few yards away from him was dying. Two cars and a Hiace van were burnt before me. All this happened between 10.30am and 1.30pm on 25 July in Fort and Pettah and curfew was imposed only from 2.00pm.

Looters

As there was no transport, I began walking home from Fort. On my way I saw houses in Kottahena and Hettiyawatte in flames. Thugs were stopping looters on the streets and demanding a share of the loot and only then allowed them to proceed. Men, women, young and old, everybody was carrying at least a packet of biscuits to their homes.

Similar attacks have taken place in Mutuwal, Mattakkuliya, Wattala, Jaela, Kandy, Wellawatte, Ratmalana and in areas all over the country. This time I am sure the race riots have escalated and spread to a much greater and worse extent than in 1958 with the passive support of the government and the active incitement of the armed forces and are even worse than the riots of 1981.

The police and the army have the authority to shoot looters after a warning but they don't shoot the looters. They use their bullets to open gates and doors of Tamil shops and homes that cannot be opened by sticks or iron rods.

Colombo burns

ON 24 JULY news trickled in to Colombo about a big death toll amongst army personnel in the north as a result of 'terrorist' attacks. Armed youth in the north had set off a remote controlled bomb whilst an army convoy was passing and then shot practically every soldier that alighted from the vehicles.

According to the figures released by the government 13 persons were dead including the lieutenant that commanded the unit and two others were seriously injured. Unconfirmed reports say that the two injured soldiers had also died.

On Sunday night preparations began. Several persons boarded public and private buses and began to make racist and provocative remarks designed to whip up racial hatred. Meanwhile the government had made arrangements to bury the dead soldiers — it appears without giving relatives an opportunity to take the dead bodies to their homes. The burials were to take place at Borella (Kanatte Cemetery). Some mishap had occurred and the burials did not take place. The result was people who had been waiting to use the whole incident to launch a racial pogrom went ahead with their plans despite the fact that the dead bodies did not arrive at Borella.

That Sunday night shops belonging to Tamil traders were burnt and some people were beaten and killed. The troubles spread quickly. The police and the army egged them on. And by Monday morning attacks had spread to Narahenpita, Nugegoda, Kotte, Maradana, Pettah, Fort, Wellawatte, Mount Lavinia, Moratuwa, Jaela,

Wattala etc.

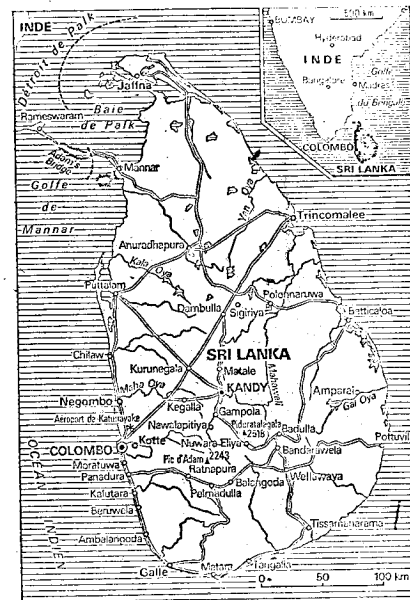
Many criminal types took the opportunity to loot. But on this occasion the attacks were more political — many attackers did not take any loot. They set fire to shops and their contents and even tried to prevent people from taking the loot. But in many places there were people who were only after the loot.

On Monday morning I witnessed several incidents. Many Tamil shops were being broken into and goods looted and then shops were set on fire. The people were in a different mood from the 1977 and 1981 attacks. Even the by-standers were approving the attacks and stating that the 'Tigers' (reference to armed groups in the Tamil speaking North) should be taught a lesson. Amongst them were soldiers and policemen.

Pogrom

As I walked towards the Lake House building and then to the Government Clerical Service Union headquarters near the Lake House book shop I saw a new stage in the pogrom — groups of thugs were stopping vehicles and beating up Tamil people. They were setting fire to cars and robbing them of all their possessions. And the soldiers in army trucks that passed the place were waving at them and encouraging them and the thugs were shouting 'victory' (Jayawewa) to the soldiers. Only the police made any attempt to save one or two people. When they left the place the trouble began anew.

I went up to the GCSU and spoke to several officers and were told that



were streaming in to the streets and offices had been closed. The government had meanwhile imposed a curfew to begin at 2pm and closed all schools and government offices. But there were no buses — most of them were being taken to bus depots. Some private buses operated but they were crowded.

I tried to telephone Father Caspersz several times but it was impossible to get through. I also tried to get through to Mirje office, that too was difficult. I left the GCSU at about 12.30pm. Massive fires were burning everywhere and the whole of Colombo was engulfed in a thick cloud of dark smoke, overturned and burnt. One area where there was no sign of any trouble was

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there is a very large concentration of Tamils and they have a tradition of being very violent. This was the only area which was quiet. As I came to the Alu mawatha Road people were gathering outside their houses. Others — main groups of youth were running in search of their next target of attack.

Race riots inspired by state

Sri Lanka...
"Paradise." Mark Twain.



... on Earth from US\$8 a day

to India, Singapore or
individual fare, you can now
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Isle of Sri Lanka
for travellers
Introduction
Sri Lanka is now

Curfew made little difference at all to the activities of the thugs largely because the army encouraged these men of violence. The fires continued and even small houses were attacked. Their belongings looted or taken out and set on fire. These activities went on till about 11pm before the police came

around and asked people to get inside their houses and that too very gently. Earlier the army encouraged people and even assisted them and the police ignored people — mobs — marching through with offensive weapons.

Although the government announced on the radio that looters will be shot

and that the punishment for looting is death, people did not take much notice

At the GCSU I met many who had come from different parts of the city and all of them said the same story — looting, burning and harassment of Tamils.

Some killed and even worse people



in general had become affected by racial hysteria. It was pretty sickening. I felt very depressed because I felt I was powerless to do anything.

However, I realised that there was no point in being depressed. I came back to Fort and the streets were now crowded with people who were trying to somehow get home before the 2pm curfew. I walked up to a bus stand and there were no buses. I decided to walk with many others who were doing the same thing.

Dastardly

On the way I saw looters carrying their loot — bales of textiles, bottles of brandy, whisky and beer, rice and sugar etc and they were forcibly stopping lorries and compelling them to take them.

Everywhere it was the same — houses being looted and burnt, cars of it because they knew that neither the police nor the army were going to implement such decisions.

In order to justify these dastardly acts people now began to make stories about the houses that they looted — stories were made up to say that they had found boxes of bullets and ammunition inside these houses or that the army had captured to 'Tiger' leaders. When they were closely questioned they were stories they had heard second or third hand.

The time now is 9am on Tuesday 27 July. Just now I have seen a big warehouse factory and a house burning. Although last night the government declared that there would be a curfew all day today people are roaming round the streets. They don't have transport and that is why they only walk around their locality.

The situation may turn much worse. Although the government itself seems to have engineered this situation they may not be able to control matters if these developments continue. People are now saying that the government did not act decisively and therefore the people took things into their hands.

We are too few to have a massive effect on the people. Although we explain things to people and show the futility of these actions, we can reach only more sensible people. We can only hope that things will die down and humanity and sense will return.

But that is anybody's guess. What will happen today? tonight? tomorrow? One thing is clear; very few Tamils would stay in the South after this. There will be another mass exodus. I will try to send further reports as soon as possible.

1. Father Caspersz is a Jesuit priest who leads the Movement for Inter-racial Justice and Equality.

(This report was sent to us by a Sinhalese in Colombo and reached London on 5 August)

FIFTY TWO KEY Tamil militants, including Kuttimani and Jegan, detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the maximum security prison at Welikada were massacred in two separate 'prison riots'.

Rampaging Sinhala prisoners are alleged to have attacked them. Nonsense! The attacks were planned, we reliably understand, by the army.

A radio broadcast by the President on the 28 July did not condemn the arson, looting and murder. Instead he said '... the time has come to accede to the clamour and natural request of the Sinhala people.

It appears the desire of the Sinhala people is that the country cannot be divided. Legislation has since been enacted making it illegal to call for a separate state and thus the Tamil United Liberation Front has been proscribed.

Constitutional cover has been obtained to 'eliminate political terrorism'. Martial law may well be declared in the north and east and thus a de facto separate state created.

Witch hunt against the left

THE GOVERNMENT is now trying to implicate the left as having conspired to overthrow it in the process of a three-stage revolution.

The violence has been blamed on the left and the Communist Party, the People's Liberation Front (JVP) and the New Socialist Party (NSSP) have been proscribed and their presses sealed.

Left activists are being rounded up. We believe the government is trying to break up left parties and launch a mopping up campaign of all leftist elements. Without doing this the government cannot hope to maintain its 'stability' and continue to rule. Particularly in the face of the chaotic situation of the economic, social and political structure of the state.

If oppositional groups were left to freely operate in such a climate the relationship of forces may well have shifted against the government.

SOCIALIST ACTION urges its readers to protest at the attacks on the Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

We ask you to get your organisations to call for the restoration of democratic rights in Sri Lanka and for the lifting of the ban on those parties supporting Tamil self determination and also the parties of the left.

All protests should be addressed to the President, Janadhipathi Mandiraya, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka.

If your organisation wants a speaker on the situation in Sri Lanka please contact Sri Lanka Research and Information Group, 9 Grafs Inn Buildings, London EC1.

A state visit to Britain by President J.R. Jayawardene is planned for October. Get your organisation to insist that this visit is cancelled. Also get it to demand that Britain does not sell any military equipment to the Sri Lanka government.

Chile's 'peaceful' road

FROM 1970 UNTIL 1973 a Popular Unity Government in Chile led by Salvador Allende was conducting 'the great experiment in democratic socialism.'

Chile was going to be the supreme example of how a peaceful non-violent road to socialism could succeed. By September 1973 'the parliamentary road to socialism' lay in ruins.

Allende himself had been killed defending the Presidential Palace. The Santiago Football Stadium had been turned into a concentration camp for the left: many of whom were to disappear for ever — their bodies broken and crushed by torture.

Capitalism in Chile like its counterpart in Germany 40 years before had shown that it would drown in blood any attempt to wrest away its power and wealth. Once again the peaceful road to socialism had been shown as a one-way path to the graveyard for the working class.

This week Socialist Action begins a series of three articles on the Chilean events. The articles are written by Chilean revolutionary Marxists.

IN 1968 THE Chilean Christian Democrats won the presidential election getting 56 per cent of the vote. They had used an audacious programme called *Revolution in Liberty*.

Their campaign called for the recuperation of the mining enterprises from US hands, wide agrarian reform, an economic policy of import substitution which would create the conditions to further industrialise the country, and the national organisation of the 'marginals' such as peasants, shanty-town dwellers, women, youth etc.

Model

This was a model Alliance-for-Progress programme which had the full support of the American Government and was a means whereby this bourgeois reformist party was able to outflank the workers' parties.

This astute tactic by the capitalist class momentarily held back the motor forces of the revolution but it did not mean their social defeat. Aided by the fact that the workers' parties had only come forward with a mild programme of reforms in the elections — the programme of the united slate of the Socialist and Communist parties could hardly be described as being to the left of the Christian Democrats — the ruling class had been able to retard the mass movement.

By 1970 none of the problems which the Christian Democrats had set themselves the task of solving were anywhere near a solution. The country was even more deeply in debt. Inflation was higher. Industrial production had sharply declined.

Both unemployment and underemployment had risen. The



Workers occupied factories demanding Allende's Government nationalised bosses' property.

country had a huge balance of payments problems and social inequalities had worsened mainly as a result of growing monopolisation and the increasing trend towards foreign ownership. The workers and peasants had pressed their demands harder than ever.

The workers' movement — including many Christian Democrat workers — fought for the economic and social demands by strikes, land and factory occupations and by street demonstrations which invariably ended in clashes with the police. By 1970 the Government had logged up a record of repression against whole sections of the population.

In a climate of economic, social and political crisis the 1970 elections approached. The bourgeoisie and imperialism knew this was going to be a crucial year.

In the elections Salvador Allende represented Popular Unity, which was a coalition consisting of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, MAPU — a split off from the Christian Democrats — The Radical Party and two small parties, the API and the PSD, which were small and essentially rested on the petty bourgeoisie of the lesser provincial towns.

Allende won the elections getting 36.2 per cent of the vote. Alessandri of the National Party got 34.9 and Tomic of the Christian Democrats got 27.8 per cent. Immediately a situation of dual power was opened up.

Lever

However the most effective political lever of the capitalist state apparatus, the executive branch, was not under the workers' control. The workers and peasants attacked the property owners by taking over their landed or industrial possessions thus expressing this duality of power. But they did not set up organisations that gave material reality to this situation.

The ruling class meanwhile was in retreat and unable to fight back. It was also divided as to the best strategy and tactics to use in this new situation.

A minority with US support tried to stage a coup with the aim of

preventing Allende taking office. This ended disastrously for the plotters when the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces was killed resisting his kidnapers. The extreme right were then thrown into disarray and for the time being neutralised.

The most far-sighted section of the bourgeoisie understood that Chilean society was in a period of major social confrontation and that a showdown between the classes was inevitable in the near future. They also knew that it was not Popular Unity that was the major enemy.

Led

They recognised the real enemy was the mass movement of workers and peasants which Popular Unity led. They knew that they had to break up the mass movement and that the relationship of forces in Chile in 1970 prevented them doing that. As a result their tactics aimed to limit the freedom of the Government's actions whilst at the same time forcing the Government to limit the objectives of the mass movement and forcing it to restrict the extent and scope of the mass mobilisations.

Everything was done to try and keep the mass actions within the strait-jacket of bourgeois legality. The Christian Democrats who led this section of the bourgeoisie did not have to press too hard to get the leaders of Popular Unity to the negotiating table to sign a Statute of Constitutional Guarantees in exchange for their votes confirming Allende as President.

The Statutes committed the Government to maintain intact the bourgeois institutions — judiciary, civil service, parliament and especially the armed services. Private property would remain the dominant sector in the economy. These concessions to the capitalists were not made because of the strength of the ruling class. They were made because the strategy of Popular Unity called for an understanding with the 'progressive sector of the bourgeoisie' which in Popular Unity's eyes was represented by the Christian Democrats.

This strategy more than allowed the ruling class to regather its disorientated forces in order to resist

the relentless thrusts of the masses. And relentless they were. For the masses could not wait to get their hands on what they saw as their rights.

As early as December 1970 the Mapuche Indians in the south began to occupy the land. From then on a pattern was established. The masses would press the Government to nationalise and expropriate certain capitalist property which was already in the hands of the workers after an occupation. Time and time again the masses were going far beyond Popular Unity's economic and social programme.

With the relationship of forces so heavily in their favour the Government had no difficulty carrying out popular measures like the nationalisation of all the copper mines in US hands, nitrate mines, iron, most of the private banks and the sales of copper abroad. They eliminated the big landed estates virtually finishing off the latifundia system. Wages were increased by 100 per cent and at the same time prices were frozen. The standard of living improved as never before.

Won

In the Municipal Elections held in April 1971 Popular Unity won 50.9 per cent of the vote. This showed that the fractures inflicted on the workers' movement by the previous administration were being healed. Later that month 80 priests from working class areas declared their support for Popular Unity.

In May Allende in his first 'State of the Nation' address promised to lay the basis for the transition to socialism within the existing legal framework. In August that year the movement of the Christian Left split from the Christian Democracy and joined Popular Unity.

But most important of all the workers had reasserted themselves as the new power in society that everyone had to take into account. The same applied to the peasants who did not wait for Presidential decrees before taking over the land and expelling the landowners.

Allende only kept pace with developments by sanctioning the *de*

facto take-overs and making them legal. In the south the landowners responded by setting up armed vigilante groups. It was becoming obvious that the 'peaceful road to socialism' did not include using the power of the masses as the strength of the Government.

Their compromises with the Christian Democrats meant just the opposite, because Popular Unity dissolved thousands of Popular Unity Committees which had been set up for the 1970 election campaign. When the President of the Supreme Court attacked a proposal to set up popular neighbourhood tribunals, the idea was dropped.

Popular Unity's tactic concerning the army was to try and buy over the officer class which simply increased the power of the officers and increased their hold and influence over the rank and file.

The 51 per cent vote was interpreted as a vindication of the cautious legalistic gradualistic path. So the pledges to change the two chamber legislature to a single chamber Assembly of the People and to formulate a new Socialist Constitution were postponed to an indefinite future.

The bourgeoisie knew by the middle of 1971 the electoral results were not in their favour. They proceeded to reorganise their forces knowing too well that the government was unwilling to go beyond bourgeois legality and had shied away from all the decisive political confrontations of the class struggle between 1970-1971 despite all the advantages it then had.

Besides, the capitalists knew they had the help of imperialism in the form of foreign credit restrictions and the economic blockade that Chile was subject to from the moment Allende came to office, along with covert actions and activities. Not surprising, a scarcity of essential consumer goods and the black market made its appearance.

Allowed

The combination of the government's political timidity and the beginnings of economic difficulties allowed the ruling classes to stage an impressive march of the empty pots which coincided with Fidel Castro's one month visit to Chile on December 1971. It was quite symbolic. The Chilean masses who strongly identified themselves with revolutionary Cuba came onto the streets by the hundreds of thousands; the Chilean old order was also on the streets defending itself tooth and nail against the proletarian assault they were under.

If not before, by the end of 1971 it became evident almost to everyone that the class struggle had taken an unusual turn, it had become class war. A decisive social test of strength of historic significance was on the agenda. Very soon bourgeois democratic legality would become an objective constraint to both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Either of them had to impose its will on the other and to do that they had to exceed the limitations set by bourgeois democracy.

The Communist and Socialist parties were the products of that very form of bourgeois rule, and therefore as far as their political programmes, psychology, methods of struggle and perception was concerned could not lead to its overcoming unless they transformed themselves into revolutionary organisations. That was out of the question.

The bourgeois political leaderships would be much less scrupulous with political forms which no longer guaranteed the capitalists 'normal' way of ruling and would therefore strive to destroy without remorse.



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Michael Foot speaking at a Tribune rally against the Market in 1975.

Know-nothing chauvinism?

THE WHOLE page devoted by John Ross (SA 29 July) to the issue of the attitudes of socialists to withdrawal from the EEC begged far more questions than it answered.

More seriously, behind the smokescreen of an attack of those in the Labour Party with illusions in the Common Market and EEC institutions, the line advanced by Ross represented a clear adaptation to the most backward and nationally blinkered sections of the British left at a moment when it has, at last, become possible to debate a serious working class and socialist strategy towards Europe.

Ross in effect says that the EEC represents the interests of European capitalists in a period of deepening trade and economic conflict with US capitalism, that

withdrawal from the EEC is some kind of socialist principle. He even concludes with the slogan (addressed towards whom — the Tory government?) 'British out of the EEC'.

Now if this a question of principle why does it not apply in the other EEC member states?

I have searched in vain through the sister publications of Socialist Action in other European countries to find similar calls for Belgian, French, Italian or West German withdrawal from the Common Market. Or does John Ross see something unique about Britain's circumstances that leads him to this conclusion (Britain's excess budget payments perhaps)?

Of course the policies and institutions of the EEC are incompatible with the actions which any serious socialist government would wish

to take. But elsewhere in Europe socialists put the horse of policies aimed at a united socialist states of Europe (nowhere advocated by John Ross) in front of the cart of EEC withdrawal.

In the first instance this means a determined campaign to orient the left and the wider labour movement towards a concrete European perspective for socialist action. Some model for this exists within the embryo European peace movement, but coordinated European action is needed in the struggle against unemployment, in defence of trade union and civil rights, in defence of migrants, women and oppressed minorities and — increasingly — in defence of welfare services.

For those Socialist Action supporters who are members of the British Labour Party this

presumably would have to have an application in the kind of platform you want Labour to adopt in the Labour parliamentary elections next year.

Of course a large chunk of the Labourist left — including ostensibly 'hard lefts' — will use a reappraisal of policy towards the EEC as a cover for their obvious and growing shift to the right.

But, written in the week when the Thatcher government announced opposition to the demand by the EEC that the Tories observe equal pay legislation, Ross's anti-EEC tirade panders to the latent know-nothing chauvinism peddled by the broad alliance which includes Douglas Jay, Peter Shore, John Silkin and the British CP.

JOHN PALMER, London.

Common Market debate

Downright prejudice

IT'S BEEN a long time since I last read quite such a farago of half-baked ideas, sweeping speculation, unproven assertions and downright prejudice in a left-wing publication, as John Ross displayed in his article 'The Bosses Market' (SA 29 July).

Not since around 1975, in fact, when people like comrade Ross were last scraping around for reasons to jump on the little England anti-market bandwagon.

Actually, most of Ross's article is not about the EEC at all but about the author's speculation on the build-up of a European military power in competition with America.

In fact such a development could take place quite independently of the EEC, which remains an economic unit, Ross's chosen example — Concorde — of the 'strengthening of Europe's military aircraft manufacturing capacity', was initiated long before Britain joined, and would have proceeded whether Britain was in or out.

And anyway, it is by no means clear that a

more integrated Europe, more independent of the US, would 'strengthen capitalism' overall, as Ross assumes.

It would actually be just as likely to *disrupt* the military, political and economic hegemony established by the US after World War 2. It would be a re-arrangement of existing capitalist forces, not an addition to them.

More fundamentally, socialists do not simply oppose what Ross calls 'the process of European capitalist coordination'.

We defend working class interests at every stage, but we recognise that to oppose the process itself is both reactionary and utopian — and can only mean retreating into an isolationist, little England position in practice.

Our aim is to seize the means of production, not to roll back capitalism to an earlier form, or to side with one capitalist bloc against another.

Similarly Ross completely fails to explain how getting out of the EEC would make one iota of difference to the *causes* of job loss in the steel

industry — 'the United States — putting the squeeze on the European capitalism'.

Surely, our answer must be to advocate the

could only detract from that.

Certainly any serious moves towards socialism and a working class planned economy in Britain, would involve breaking out of the EEC. But that would be the least of our problems, compared with the battle we'd face with the ruling class, its army and police here in Britain.

Fortunately, many serious socialists in the Labour Party are now coming to see the fallacy of the 'get Britain out' cause — which is why opportunists like Kinnock, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee people and the 'Euro-communists' are deserting it as well.

Sadly 'internationalists like John Ross remain determined to dress the anti-market cause up in the socialist colours it never deserved. Real international socialists should welcome the demise of this nationalist diversion.

JACKIE McDONOUGH, Birmingham.

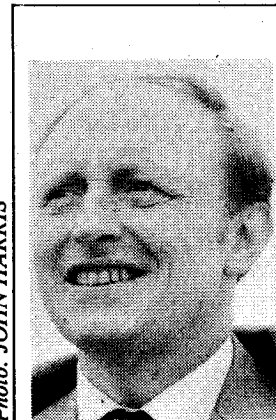


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

'Fortunately, many serious socialists in the Labour Party are coming to see the fallacy of the "get Britain out" cause — which is why Kinnock is deserting it as well' — says Jackie McDonough

development of international combine committees and international workers' alternative plans — and the 'get Britain out' line

No sexual innuendo!

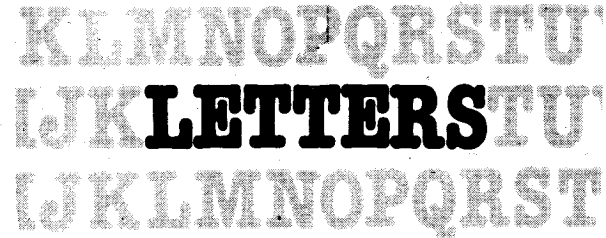
SO A BIT of sexual innuendo about women is OK as long as they're agents of the state is it? Totally lacking in sympathy for the police though we are, be they women or men, we fail to appreciate the story in Worms Eye View (SA 22 July).

Surely it's more to the point to attack the police and their procedures than to attempt to inject a bit of Sun-type titillation in

order to brighten up an article, i.e. 'luring in the punters' etc.

If you think this is yet more humourless feminists, sorry but we don't find sexism even in the guise of tongue-in-cheek humour amusing. And by the way — we're not all 'lads'.

HELEN MACDONALD, SUE MACDONALD, KATH SHAWCROSS, London



Whoops!

SOCIALIST ACTION should be more careful about the letters it publishes!

SA 22 July included one from Albert Elder of Eastbourne stating that racism should have been made an election issue.

Mr Elder would indeed think this, being a former member of the National Front Constitutional Movement and well-known South Coast racist!

The play of sending such 'leading' letters to the press is one used in the past by the NF to encourage racial prejudice — it is up to us to expose and challenge them whenever this occurs. K. FLACK, East Lewisham CLP.



Photo: DAVE HAMPSHIRE

Heath has a message for Thatcher, but they both agree on the EEC

We didn't side with the right

ARE Davy Jones and myself really on the same Labour Party GMC? I began to doubt it after reading his article last week on South Islington's policy on the EEC.

In 200 words he managed to twist the facts, in order to take a swipe at Socialist Organiser, so that I could scarcely recognise the meeting I was at.

He claims that our GMC carried, and that Socialist Organiser supporters backed, a 'pro-EEC' resolution. This is nonsense. We backed a call to scrap Labour's policy for quitting the NEC. That doesn't mean we're for it, it means we think 'getting out' is a nationalist diversion from fighting the bosses — and whether they are British or European bosses is neither here nor there.

Davy makes out that the decision was part of a straightforward left-right debate, and that Socialist Organiser ganged up with the right. The real world was not that simple.

The right wing, of course argued that Labour's policies were too left wing and should be scrapped to win back votes. Unfortunately, many on the left fell into the trap of defending 'the policies' and complaining that they weren't explained well enough.

Socialist Organiser supporters, among others, were more honest. We argued that the

central points of Labour's 'left wing' policies: the Alternative Economic

Strategy, import controls and quitting the Common Market, are rotten policies. They are all useless plans for reforming capitalism that will do nothing to save jobs, protect living standards or change society.

We used a debate, that the right wing wants too, in order to put forward *our* politics — working class politics

based on workers needs and struggles. We are not ashamed of that. We've said what we think of Labour's Common Market policy loud and clear since before the Referendum in 1975, when we said 'Bosses' Britain, Bosses' Market, No Choice'.

I suspect the thing that really peeves Davy is that now a lot more activists in the movement agree with us.

NIK BARSTOW, member of Islington South Labour Party

DAVY JONE'S report (SA 29 July) on the EEC debate in Islington South Labour Party is a bit inexact.

The resolution was not 'to support the EEC'. It declared that to call for withdrawal from the EEC was an 'empty gesture', and proposed instead Europe-wide workers' solidarity for socialist policies.

A 'major right-wing offensive'? The EEC debate followed on from a long discussion on Labour's election defeat in which practically every speaker favoured sticking by existing Labour policy or shifting to more left-wing perspectives.

If a motion to drop unilateralism had been put down at that meeting, it would hardly have got a single vote.

The vote on the EEC was 34-25. There were four Socialist Organiser supporters at the meeting, and there are certainly not 30 right-wingers in Islington South GC.

No: the vote against EEC withdrawal represented a section of the Labour Left moving away from the diversionary nationalist gimmicks which have long befuddled its thinking. (And it was in those terms that the motion was moved — by a left-winger who is not an SO supporter).

Socialist Action comrades should ask themselves why they are taking the role of the last of the Mohicans of Labour left nationalism.

MARTIN THOMAS, Socialist Organiser

DIARY

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

- **National Abortion Campaign** conference is on Oct 1-2nd. For details please contact NAC at 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Tel. 01-278 0153.
- **Release Nelson Mandela! Victory to the ANC!** Weekly picket of South Africa House, Trafalgar Square 5.30-7.30, Fridays. Called by City Anti-Apartheid Group.
- **Binlids and Barricades** a 75-panel exhibition on women and the war in Ireland, produced by the Armagh Coordinating Committee. Available for hire from the Armagh Cttee, 374 Grays Inn Road London WC1.
- **Forest Peace Festival 1983** a major folk and jazz festival Sat 10 Sept, noon to 7pm, Friends Meeting House, Bush Road, Leytonstone, London E11. £1/50p unwaged/children free. Organised by Waltham Forest CND.
- **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.
- **Glasgow Polish Solidarity Cttee** Conference 17/18 September. For details contact Gordon Morgan, 59 Durward Ave, Glasgow 041-649 8958
- **Ethnic Switchboard** — a new telephone service offering information and advice on health services; a referral agency; translation and interpreting facilities in Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Urdu. From 9am-5pm phone 01-933 6119.
- **Leggin' it for peace** East London Youth CND March, 17/18 September from Kelvedon Hatch Civil Defence HQ to London Fields, Hackney. For details contact East London YCND, 39 Albion Road, London E17.
- **Free Nelson Mandela Campaign** can be contacted c/o 13 Selous St, London NW1. 01-387 7966.
- **Hounslow Youth CND March: Stop Cruise!** March from Greenham Common to Greenham Fields, Hounslow, August bank holiday 27-29th. Details from Hounslow YCND, 42 Wellington Rd North, Hounslow, Middx.
- **HOMES wanted for very cute socialist kittens.** Phone Sue 01-359 8288 (day), 01-806 9181 (eves).

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- **Lesbians in the Labour Party** We exist! And it's about time the Labour Party campaigned on our issues too! National meeting for Labour Party lesbians. Sun 4 Sept. 1 pm County Hall, South Bank, London. Nr. Waterloo. Creche available.
- **Socialist Bookfair 1983** Covent Garden, London WC2. 4-5 November. Enquiries to Bookmarks, (SBF), 265, Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DE. 01-802 6145.
- **Oxford Claimants Defence Committee** One day conference on Sat 3 Sept 1983. Discussion of 'operation Major' the police and the DHSS swoop on homeless and unemployed in Sept '82. Speakers and workshops, bar available. Fee only £1.50, unwaged pay less. Information and registration papers contact CDC, 44b Princes Street, Oxford.
- **History Workshop 17 Manchester 1983** Industrialisation and after. Manchester Polytechnic, All Saints, Manchester 15. 11-13 November. Registration and enquiries to: History Workshop 17, 47 Albany Road, Manchester 21. Full fee £7, Students and low wage £3.50, unemployed and OAPs free. Cheques payable to 'History Workshop 17'.

SA FORUMS

EDINBURGH Socialist Action readers forum is on the last Thursday of every month. Phone 031-667 9630 for further information and details of venue.

NORTHERN COLLEGE TELEVISION AND RADIO STUDIO PART-TIME TECHNICIAN

In January 1983, Northern College, a residential college for adults, began the development of both practical and academic courses in Media Studies, assisted by a Tutorship from the British Film Institute. A small television and radio studio is now being established, and the College is creating a new, part-time, post, in October 1983, for a technician. The post is open to men and women.

The technician will be required to manage our studio, and audio-visual services throughout the College. He or she will: 1. Service and maintain all audio-visual equipment in the College; 2. Co-ordinate the availability of audio-visual equipment; 3. Demonstrate the operation of television and radio equipment; 4. Assist the Tutor in Media Studies in the teaching of practical classes and the production of student programmes.

We are looking for someone who combines technical expertise with an interest in media education. Experience of using television and radio equipment of all kinds is required, and an ability to work co-operatively with mature students is essential. Knowledge of photography and/or graphics would be an advantage.

Interviews will take place in September. For further details, please write to:
 The Registrar, Northern College, Wentworth Castle, Stainborough, Barnsley, S. Yorks. S75 3ET Tel: (0226) 85426

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 Campaign Against the Police Bill,
 50, Rectory Road, London N16.
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Wandsworth workers strike

WANDSWORTH refuse collectors and gardeners are on strike against private contractors who are attacking their pay and conditions.

Wandsworth council workers warned against the council selling direct labour jobs last year to private sharks.

They said this would lead to an assault on the unions, jobs and conditions of workers.

How right they were. Pritchard Industrial Cleaning Services offered to do gardening jobs cheaper than direct labour and the Tory council jumped at the chance.

This price cutting operation means no contract of employment, no protective clothing, no mess room or wash facilities, no paid holidays, no sick pay, no pension, introduction of

a piece rate system and £30 less than council wages.

Soon after the strike began of the 38 Pritchards gardeners, 100 Wandsworth refuse collectors walked out on strike.

Their work had been sold off to the private firm, Grandmet who refuse to implement a pay award made by the central arbitration committee and who will not recognise the refuse collectors' General and Municipal trade union.

● For information and solidarity messages contact: NUPE London Division, c/o Junction Resource Centre, 248 Lavender Hill, London SW11 and GMBATU Southern Region, Cooper House, 205 Hook Rd, Chessington, Surrey.



Glass workers resist closure

ON 15 JULY United Glass in Castleford, Yorkshire announced plans to close the plant of 590 workers and transfer production to Scotland and Essex.

The workers responded swiftly with a mass meeting which decided total opposition. Transport union branch secretary, Dick Roberts explained, 'The workforce are together, which is a real strength and they have told us, fight it. We will resist closure by all means available'.

If the company goes ahead with closure unionists at other United Glass plants will be asked not to do Castleford work.

Castleford workers will not cooperate with the transfer of equipment and technical resources to other plants.

An appeal has also been sent to trade unionists in Holland, where management intends to transfer some of the Castleford work.

The joint union committee made up of the Transport, Engineering and Electrical unions and the Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staffs, has proposed a demonstration to build support on 24 September.

● For messages and information contact: Joint Union Committee, United Glass Containers Ltd, Albion St, Castleford, West Yorkshire. WF10 1Q7. (Mathew Creighton)

Sandhar and Kang strike again

A YEAR AGO a union recognition dispute at Sandhar and Kang in Birmingham was resolved after five weeks.

Management accepted the right of the Transport and General Workers Union to negotiate and allowed the appointment of a convener. Proper wage rates and working conditions were agreed.

Now S and K want to transfer the convener, Marcharan Rar to a company that does not really exist. They are also using the excuse that the despatch department may close to make redundant TGWU members with long service, while they retain recently recruited scabs.

But the 23 asian workers at S and K are solid behind their union and have set up a militant, round the clock picket. They remember too well the pre-union wages and conditions and don't want their return.

Delivery drivers and local small businesses are respecting the picket line and S and K cash and carry warehouse trade has been decimated.

S and K takings are £500,000 a week and the company has other warehouses in Coventry and Wolverhampton.

Management is determined to break the strike with courts, police, security firms and scab labour.

They have even got local Labour MP and contender for the Labour Party leadership, Roy Hattersley to mediate.

When it comes to defending working class asians Hattersley is sure to echo his calous disinterest during the Muhammad Idrish defence campaign.

His record of support for redundancy and recognition struggles in his constituency leave little room for confidence.

● Messages and support to: S and K Fund, TGWU, 211 Broad Street, Birmingham 15 (Bob Smith)

Socialist Action

Join the fight for socialism

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Save Marylebone Campaign off to a flying start

A PUBLIC meeting of 200 people endorsed a call to establish a Save Marylebone Campaign, at the end of last month. The meeting had been organised by a joint rail unions committee comprising of the four affected National Union of Railwaymen branches and the train drivers union, ASLEF at Marylebone. It was addressed by Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the NUR, Tony Benn from the Labour Party and Neil Milligan from ASLEF.

A statement launching the campaign declared 'its wholehearted opposition to the closure of Marylebone... closing Marylebone is the Serpell Report through the back door... the British Rail Board (should instead) invest in the station, lines, signalling and rolling stock to secure jobs and provide an efficient, safe, comfortable and regular service for passengers'.

While BR has been at great pain to deny there has been any decision taken on the future of Marylebone, the *Guardian* (4 August) stated:

'Marylebone Station to go in the first stage of loss of 2000 miles of line'.

This headline was the result of a meeting between the Board and the unions and confirmed not only the suspicion that Marylebone is under threat, but that this is only the beginning of many

more cuts and closures as the Tories prepare the rail industry for privatisation of the profitable parts and shut down of much of the rest.

The closure of Marylebone will mean more than an inferior service for commuters. It will inevitably lead to job loss.

Already 55 members of Marylebone NUR have been given redundancy notices. They work for Grand Metropolitan Hotels which runs the catering department for British Rail headquarters. When the old HQ moves out of Marylebone there

By an NUR member

will be no work for these members.

But 25 Grand Met workers at Rail House, Euston have also been threatened with redundancies, thus strengthening the rumour that Grand Met is about to lose its contract with British Rail.

If this happens it is likely that future catering workers will not be members of the NUR and will not be eligible for privileged travelling facilities.

Privatisation is not new to British Rail and shows how it can be used to weaken the union organisation in the workplace — the 55 Marylebone members represent nearly 25 per cent of the branch.

But the campaign to save Marylebone, jobs and services has got off to a strong start. Those at the public meeting represented many rail union branches,



Railworkers say fight closures and Serpell

Labour parties, the local trades council and community and passengers.

Speakers from the Post Office Engineering Union stressed the common struggle we have against privatisation.

Locally, ASLEF and the NUR are working together in a joint coordinating committee.

This is in response to a new development nationally of building the Rail Federation. Both unions were represented on the platform of the public meeting.

The Campaign was endorsed by both speakers but solid support has to be forthcoming from the national leaderships of the

rail unions if Marylebone is to be saved.

More than that, as the NUR leadership's dithering on calling for national action to defend the British Rail Engineering Limited workshops has shown, losing one battle may well mean the long slippery slope to the implementation of the

Serpell Report and the decimation of the nationalised railway industry.

That is why the Save Marylebone Campaign has been established. Saving Marylebone could well become a key part of the fight to save the industry, our jobs and the services we provide.

Certainly without such a fight it would be letting Serpell in by the front door.

● The importance of the national leadership of the rail unions making each and every threat of closure, job loss, productivity deals and rationalisation a national campaign has been highlighted by workers in one of the threatened BREL workshops — Temple Mills — voting to cooperate with the closure.

For too long members of the NUR have been without a lead from the people they vote into office to do precisely that. Demoralisation and the belief that the union is not prepared to fight for their jobs has resulted in such a vote.

What the NUR leadership is now proposing is too little, much too late. Other than a lobby of parliament the only proposal for national action emanating from NUR headquarters in a circular dated 29 July 1983. Redundancy notices were issued on 1 August 1983.

And aside from some proposals to black work there is no proposal for the union as a whole to take action. It is no good the new general secretary, Jimmy Knapp, blaming the membership.

After years of Sidney Weighell's betrayals, rail workers are looking for a lead that will unite all of us in the industry. That is why Knapp was elected. It's about time he got on with the job.

Anarchist Judge

CUSTOM AND practice generally makes the rules. So you can understand PC Christopher Goldbourn being surprised when Mr Justice Oliver Martin told a jury at the Old Bailey to toss out a case which was dependent on his and seven other officers' evidence.

The judge based this action on some silly rule which forbids coppers jointly preparing notes. Goldbourn and his seven mates had got together in the canteen to make sure that they all told the same story which was aimed at proving that four black men had conspired to cause grievous bodily harm to police officers.

Their evidence relied heavily on proving that the defendants had been seen in places where they hadn't been that night. How does the judge think the police can do an effective job of 'fitting' people up if they can't get their lies right?

This is where custom and practice comes in, because a bewildered Goldbourn bowed to the court that he had never heard of that regulation. He explain-

ed: 'In eight years of service I have always made up notes with other officers' and who's to doubt the lad? He might have added that he was taught this practice by coppers who had been around for a lot longer than eight years. Just imagine what would happen if all those cases were brought for re-trial where people had been convicted by police acting in lying collusion. The jails would be almost emptied and thousands of people would need a free pardon. The whole system of British justice would be brought crashing down — is this Justice Oliver Martin some crazy anarchist?

A reluctant star

THE GUATEMALAN army officer had just popped in the presidential palace to tell born-again Rios Montt that his number was up.

And nobody was happier about this than Major William Mercado, the US deputy military attache who purely by coincidence was hanging around the palace at the

No apartheid problem

ALL THAT stuff about South African apartheid is just not on.

At least Mr Rod Stewart who kicked off his musical career with Jeff Beck singing Rhythm and Blues — he didn't see 'any apartheid problems' when he was giving his concerts in South Africa. Although Mr Stewart just did not find the time to pop into the black townships nor did he get across to Roben Island — after all when you are a pop star busy making lots of bread you simply don't have the time to go

time, walkie talkie in hand.

After all the US administration had got their boy General Oscar Humberto Mejia into the top job and Mercado just couldn't resist giving the military envoy a big hand squeeze for work well done.

Then the TV cameras



around protesting apartheid.

He did admit though that 'there weren't many blacks in the audience', but as he said 'maybe they don't go for my sort of music'. Perhaps Mr Stewart's white South African friends keep the blacks out of the area where he had his con-

had to go and spoil it all by zoning in on Mercado right at that moment which meant he had to do a quick bunk behind a palace pillar. He might be a US diplomat and a stringer for the CIA but he had no ambition right then to be a TV star.

He was so upset with his new role that he described the TV crew as 'fucking reporters'. His

certs. And then again most blacks don't earn the kind of wage that lets them buy tickets for his expensive concerts.

With pop stars like Rod Stewart and cricketers like Geoff Boycott as friends, the South African blacks certainly don't need any enemies.

bosses in the US State Department were describing him it is said 'as that fucking Merdador who blew the show.'

Compiled by BOB PENNINGTON. Send contributions to Worm's Eye, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday



TWO HUNDRED workers at Britains Toys in Walthamstow, East London have gone on strike for shorter hours, without loss of pay.

The day shift begins at 7.45 in the morning and finishes at 6.15. Senior shop steward Liaquat Ali explains 'There are so many unemployed, yet we are forced to do a 50 hour week'.

The company is also notorious for its treatment of home workers who are paid 20 pence an hour to paint 100 soldiers.

A large picket is kept up in the day and lorry drivers are refusing to cross.

● Donations and messages of support to: Britains Toys stewards' committee, 205 Fore Street, Edmonstone, London N15

A Socialist ACTION

END BRITISH COMPLICITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

THE LION is out of the bag in Central America. On Monday 15 August United States President, Reagan announced to a rally of war veterans that he rejected the appeal of Mexican President, Miguel de la Madrid, to abandon military aggression in Central America and take initiatives for peace.

Reagan declared 'America is the lion's heart of democracy. We have an obligation to give that democracy a voice, even an occasional roar'.

Reagan's plans to maul the popular struggles of the workers and peasants of Central America and the Caribbean have the full backing of the Thatcher government.

A coordinating committee of solidarity groups, labour and political organisations has been set up in Britain to campaign against US aggression and British government complicity.

As the campaign prepares for a major solidarity demonstration on 11 September, the Scot-

tish Medical Aid Campaign has a delegation visiting Nicaragua.

In an interview with Brian Wilson, one of the delegation, the Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto explains 'The British Government is very, very alone in its attitude towards the Reagan administration.

'I don't think there is another Western government that has supported the naval manoeuvres, for example. I suppose this is their way of repaying America for support over the Falklands, but it is something that should concern the British people.'

No Intervention in Central America (NICA) is organising a series of activities in the coming months. These include:

- A national petition to be used in workplaces, unions and local communities to build up interest and support and material for the press.

The petition will be handed in to Thatcher on September 12th.

The petition can be us-

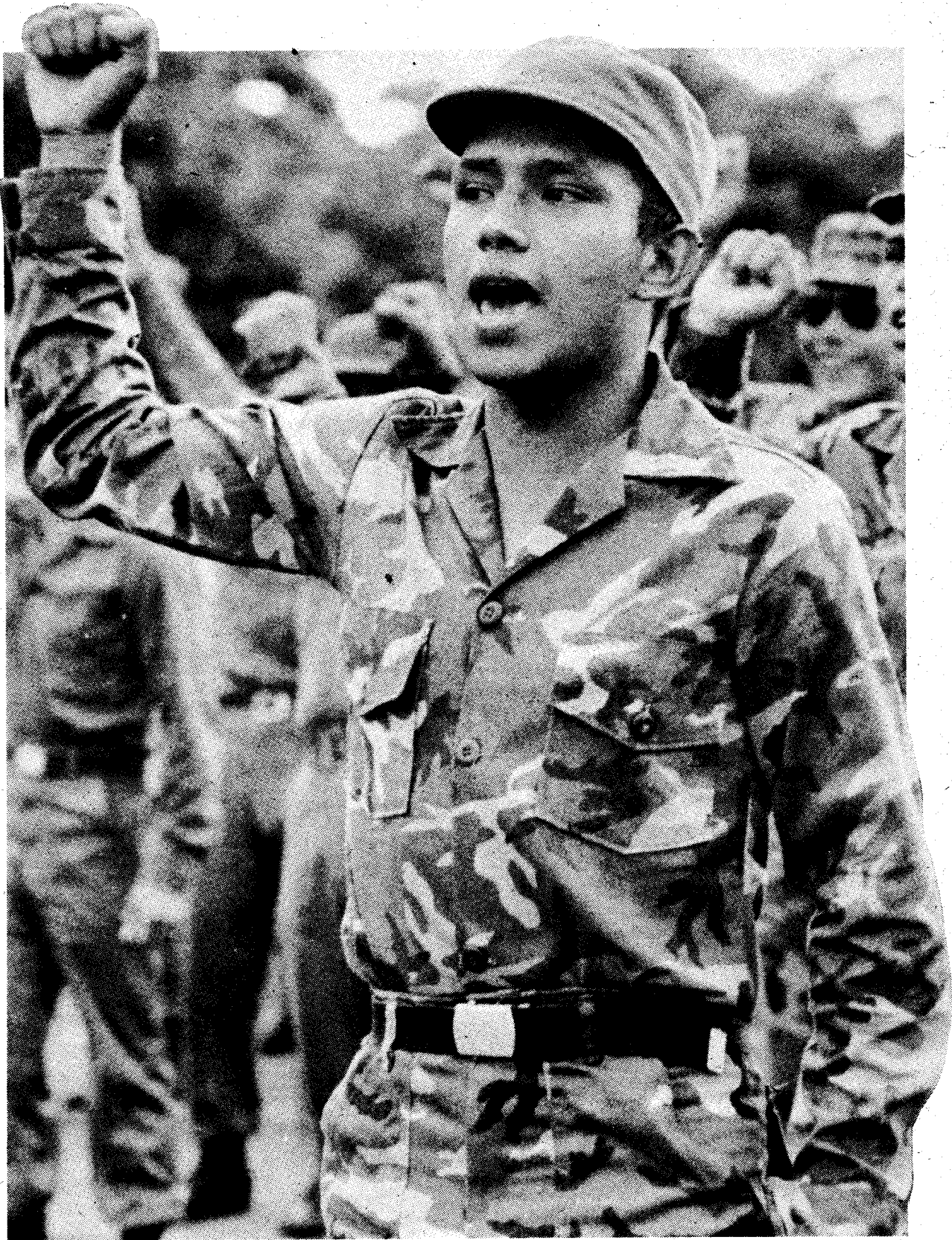
ed as the basis for resolutions from labour movement organisations and for requests that the TUC and Parliamentary Labour Party vigorously campaign against British government complicity in Reagan's new Vietnam.

- A daily vigil outside the United States Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London W1 from 9am to 7.30pm.

This continues until 11 September and trade union branches, trades councils, workplace organisations and CND's are encouraged to send delegations with banners.

- National demonstration on 11 September anniversary of the Chilean coup. Trade unions, Labour Parties and CND groups should be preparing now to take large contingents, transport and banners.

For details of all events, local contacts, copies of leaflets and petitions, contact NICA, 20-21 Compton Terrace London N1. 01-226-6747.



The people of Nicaragua volunteer willingly for the popular militias and Sandinista units to defend their revolution.

Hope for Nicaragua

JEREMY CORBYN, Labour MP for Islington North is a member of the Scottish Medical Aid Campaign delegation to Nicaragua. Here is a press release from the Nicaraguan capital Managua dated 10 August 1983.

THE DELEGATION of seven people from Scotland have been very well received by the Sandinistas and the country is festooned with posters saying 'Todas las armas al pueblo', the 4th anniversary slogan of the 1979 revolution.

Contra forces from Honduras have killed over 500 Nicaraguan defence forces in the past few months and the whole country is on a state of alert against the possibility of an American invasion.

Despite the American blockade of Nicaragua, there are amazing developments in housing and health care for the poorest people, including the introduction of minimum and maximum wages and the construction of a very large number of cheap houses for the homeless people. The Government is also attempting to develop thermal energy, and build railways from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast.

The Government of the country relies on a junta of three people, the nine commanders of the revolutionary forces and the Council of State of 51

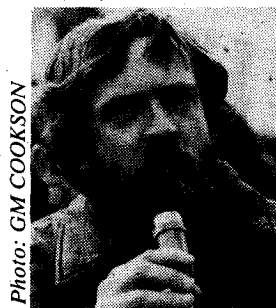


Photo: GM COOKSON

members, who represent the trade unions, women's organisations, youth, the churches and the private sector.

All proposals for future changes in the country have to go before the Council of State for discussion, including agreement of pluralism in elections as there are eleven political parties, six of whom fought the revolution.

There is now discussion on bringing in military service for the Nicaraguans, although the effect of this is nil as virtually all Nicaraguans are in local militia or in the army in some way.

Each local community has its own street committees which oversee public health, education, security

and defence against invasion.

The demands that are constantly expressed to us are for the Americans to lift their military and economic blockade and to withdraw the forces in Honduras and to send the American fleet home.

We have met the representatives of the Council of State and some

of the trade unionists who all expressed complete support for the revolution of 1979 and hatred of the Somoza dictatorship and the legacy of poverty and misery that has left.

Everyone we have met expresses hope for the future and a determination that there will be decent living standards for all as soon as possible.



What the NICA petition says:

To: THE RT. HON MARGARET THATCHER, PRIME MINISTER

We, the undersigned

— Consider that the stationing of United States warships off the coasts of Nicaragua and the participation of 4,000 US combat troops in military manoeuvres on the Honduran/Nicaraguan border are a serious escalation of efforts to destabilise the Nicaraguan government and a threat to peace in Central America,

— Call on the United States government immediately to withdraw these warships and troops from the region;

— Urge Her Majesty's Government to support the initiatives for peace proposed by the Nicaraguan government, and by the governments of Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama, and to recommend strongly to the United States that it halt military manoeuvres likely to jeopardise these initiatives.

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