

Socialist Organiser

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KICK OUT REAGAN'S TERROR BASES

WILL the US be satisfied with the blood-letting in Libya last week? Maybe not. There is now talk of a second strike at Libya.

Reagan's indiscriminate slaughter of women and babies from the air has not quelled the Libyan people or their leaders. It has merely angered and embittered them, and provoked them to vow to hit back with any weapon they can lay their hands on. So the US will have to choose either to back off or send in the bombers once more.

Reagan's 'war against terrorism' is in reality a war against the peoples of the Middle East and of the 'Third World' in general.

Reagan's murderous allies the Tories, and other European governments, are now looking for alternative, peaceful, and less provocative ways of punishing Libya. They have decided to hit at Libya through economic and other sanctions.

But if mad dog Reagan wants to blitz innocent civilians again - in Tripoli, or in Beirut - he can be sure that his British Tory stooges will still be willing to lend a helping hand.

US bases in Britain are part of the war machine of Western imperialism. The bombing of Libya puts the lie to the idea that US bases, or NATO as a whole, are merely 'defensive' and there to 'keep world peace'. NATO is a murderous military alliance whose most powerful section, the USA, is now led by people who are willing and able to unleash a foreign war in order to gain a political advantage at home.

The British government - and the British military - are as imperialist and bloodthirsty as the Americans, with a long history of colonialism behind them. The presence of US bases in Britain reflects the commitment of the Tories to NATO.

But who controls those bases? The Tories claim there is joint control. Don't believe them! In any serious war crisis the decision whether Britain would be at peace or war would be taken by the government in Washington.

The labour movement needs to campaign for the removal of all US bases from British soil, and for the complete withdrawal of Britain from NATO. Neil Kinnock has said that a future Labour government would evict the American bases 'within a month' of taking office. The labour movement must make sure that he keeps his word.



Just one of the arrests after police attacked last Saturday's demonstration against Reagan's attack on Libya. Photo: Ian Swindale.

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Happy Birthday Ma'am!



A Loyal Address from the editorial boards of Tribune, Marxism Today, and Socialist Organiser on the 60th birthday of our Sovereign Lady, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

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FACING
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HANDS OFF LIBYA! BRITAIN OUT OF NATO!

Long may she reign

A loyal address on the occasion of Her Majesty's 60th Birthday, issued jointly by Socialist Organiser, Marxism Today and the Tribune.

It is widely assumed that socialists are automatically opposed to the monarchy and in favour of a Republic. In view of the current celebrations of Her Majesty the Queen's 60th birthday, and the forthcoming wedding of Prince Andrew to Sarah Ferguson, we would like to take issue with the left wing 'common wisdom'.

The monarchy in fact is an entirely incidental feature of the British state. The call for the abolition of the monarchy rests on the assumption that the replacement of the Queen, or a future King, by a President, would make the slightest bit of difference to the working class in Britain and internationally. This is a demonstrably false assumption. Can anyone seriously suggest that President Reagan is preferable to the Queen? Would any of our 'socialist' Republicans like to argue that President Mitterrand in France has served the French workers better than Queen Elizabeth has served workers in Britain? Or President Gorbachev perhaps, or another of the miserable born-again upstarts who strangle the workers' movement in the Stalinist states?

It must be clear even to the crassest text book 'Trotskyist' that each and every President that you care to mention the world over is very considerably worse than the British monarchy.

To call for the abolition of the monarchy is thus to sow the most grotesque illusions in the 'Republican' bourgeoisie.

On the contrary, socialists should be the staunchest defenders of the monarchy.

The ruling class in Britain has proved able to manipulate the monarchy for its own ends ever since William of Orange in 1688. Ever since then, the Crown has been subject to the control of the bourgeoisie. But this is entirely the result of historically conditioned class forces.

It would be the worst form of fatalism to believe that the labour movement

could alter this balance of class forces and so wrest the monarchy from the control of the bourgeoisie.

Indeed we have a duty to do so. One of the ruling class's greatest strengths — and the product of its historical kidnap of the Crown — is that it is able to portray the Left as the enemies of the Queen. The extent to which the ruling class can do this is a disaster for the Left.

We need to contest that terrain with the bourgeoisie and prove to the working class that it is we and not the bourgeoisie, who are the real monarchists.

Doom

For socialists to stand in opposition to the monarchy is to doom us to irrelevance, and to destroy any hope of ever seeing socialism in Britain. But we should not merely give support to the monarchy out of opportunist tactical considerations. Nor should we abandon our commitment to the Crown after capitalism has been overthrown. Indeed, the Queen, or a future King, will be an invaluable ally of any post-revolutionary government. Look at the benefits Ken Livingstone got from inviting the Queen to open the Thames Barrier. Not only will the preservation of the monarchy help secure the popularity of the workers' government; there are sound economic considerations too.

A common argument of the Republican left is that the monarchy is a waste of money. But is it? In reality, the Queen and the rest of her family attract literally millions of pounds to these islands in the tourist trade. The economic advantages, which are in fact incalculable, far outweigh the costs.

Surely a socialist Britain will need to continue attracting rich foreigners to Britain to spend their money here? And surely, our Queen in one of our major attractions on this score.

In place of crude, knee-jerk Republicanism, therefore, the Left needs a far more radical strategy. Rather than 'abolish the monarchy' we should seek to *hegemonise* it. In place of the slogan 'Stuff the Wedding' our slogan should be 'God Save the Queen'.



S. Africa: Botha gets desperate

Clive Bradley reports

South African Prime Minister PW Botha has announced that one of the central pillars of South Africa's apartheid state is to be abolished. The Pass Laws which force blacks to carry internal passports are to be removed. All black prisoners held because of pass laws violations are to be released. There will be no more arrests under existing "influx control" legislation.

Pass laws

In place of the pass laws, the regime is to introduce a new identity document to be carried by all South Africans.

But this is not the apartheid state reforming itself out of existence. Botha and his Nationalist Party government are being forced, in the words of their own slogan, to 'adapt or die'. The pressure

of the mass revolt against white domination is enormous, and only the most short-sighted and rabid sections of the white population believe that the best response to it is repression and repression alone.

The pragmatists, like Botha, believe that the necessary response is repression plus guided reform. A central objective of the Botha regime and of South African monopoly capital is to find some settlement that could begin to buy off, or at least calm down, the urbanised blacks.

But the pace of their 'reformism' is not being set by their own self-seeking

intentions. Botha is having to go further than he would like. And he is going much further than many of his supporters want him to go. And that could spell big trouble for the apartheid system as the timid reformers get squeezed between the mass revolt of the black people on the one hand and the reactionary white backlash on the other.

These reformist gestures are unlikely to have much effect in dampening the struggle for liberation. Over the past period, every reform has rightly been taken to be a sign of weakness and therefore it has only stimulated the mass movement for democracy. The removal of

the vile pass law system will not buy the movement off now. It will be a tremendous encouragement to continue and step up the struggle.

And even if Botha's latest desperate move forestalls the threat made by COSATU — the giant independent union federation — to strike against pass laws, more political strikes are nevertheless on the horizon. A general strike in commemoration of the Soweto revolt of 1976 is planned for June. And stayaways are to be organised on May Day, next week.

Trouble

Botha's reforms will not get him, or the racist state, out of trouble. It will deeply upset some of his supporters and encourage the blacks.

Women's shadow elections

Rachel Lever of the Women's Action Committee reports on Labour women's 'shadow elections'

WHILE headlines focus on black sections and the Militant, Neil Kinnock and Labour's National Executive Committee are about to face an embarrassing challenge from another quarter: the Party's women's conference.

Shadow

To back its demands for the right to elect the women's section of the NEC, the women's conference overwhelmingly passed a motion last year, moved by health service union CoHSE, that this year's conference should hold 'shadow elections'.

That is, it would elect its own 'NEC women's section in exile', to undermine the claim of the official women's section to represent the party's women.

With the NEC refusing to organise these elections, the National Labour Women's Committee (NLWC) mounted a major operation to hold the

elections itself. Now the first stage has been completed and the success of the shadow elections is guaranteed.

At the close of nominations, 23 women are standing in these elections, nominated by 65 local women's sections and one national trade union.

Two sitting NEC members, Joan Maynard and Margaret Beckett, are on the list. There are three MPs in all (Clare Short is the third), one MEP, the leader of the ILEA, Frances Morrell, and a national committee member of Women Against Pit Closures (Margaret Hansforth).

Black

An array of grass-roots candidates includes women from all but three of the party's 11 regions, and features three black women — one of them, Diane Abbott, tops the list with 12 nominations.

Already, the point the

women's conference set out to prove has been illustrated. This list is about three times as big and immeasurably more varied than the handful of names (most of them MPs) that ever figure among the nominees for the official women's section.

Whatever the outcome of the shadow elections (which will take place at the women's conference at Rothesay in mid-May), they will put the NEC in a tight spot.

Above all, there is no way all this can be passed off as the work of some faction. The women's conference is fiercely independent and about half the women are trade union delegates. Militant, which in any case opposes the demand for more power for the women's conference and opposed the shadow elections, is a tiny and ineffectual minority.

And the National Labour Women's Committee, which had to resort to dramatic undercover methods to hold the shadow elections, at the committee member's own expense, still contains many respected elders of the women's organisation. This year's chair, who represented the party at the Women's TUC, is also among those nominated.

Nor will the shadow elections be the end of the matter: resolutions for the Rothesay conference insist that the Five elected there be promoted through press conferences and fringe meetings at Labour Party and TUC conferences.

The Women's Action Committee, which has campaigned since 1980 for the change of franchise, is asking its own members to decide who to support in the shadow elections.

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LIBYA YES, QADDAFI NO!

The US attacked Libya in the traditional style of brutal, bloody, arrogant imperialism. This was a savage act of superpower aggression in which the most powerful nation on earth attempted to flatten a small weak country of 3½ million.

The attitude of socialists towards such actions is one of outright opposition and implacable hostility to the US aggressors and to their Tory accomplices. We are opposed to all forms of domination of the weak by the strong and powerful. We are opposed to all political and military actions that deny or try to deny national rights. We are opposed in all conditions to the bombing of civilians. Against Reagan's air force, marines, army, or navy we are on the side of Libya.

But for many on the left this isn't enough. They feel that Reagan's attack obliged them to give *political* support to the military and Islamic Libyan police state headed by Muammar Qaddafi.

Take the Workers Press section of the WRP, for example. They have had to rethink a great deal since their split with Gerry Healy. We can be sure that, unlike Healy, they don't get money from Libya. Their support for the Libyan Jamahuriya is a little more moderate in tone than Healy's grovelling. But still, they sent Qaddafi a letter expressing their solidarity, and printed on their front page (Workers' Press, 19 April). It begins: "Dear Comrade," and ends "with warmest fraternal greetings."

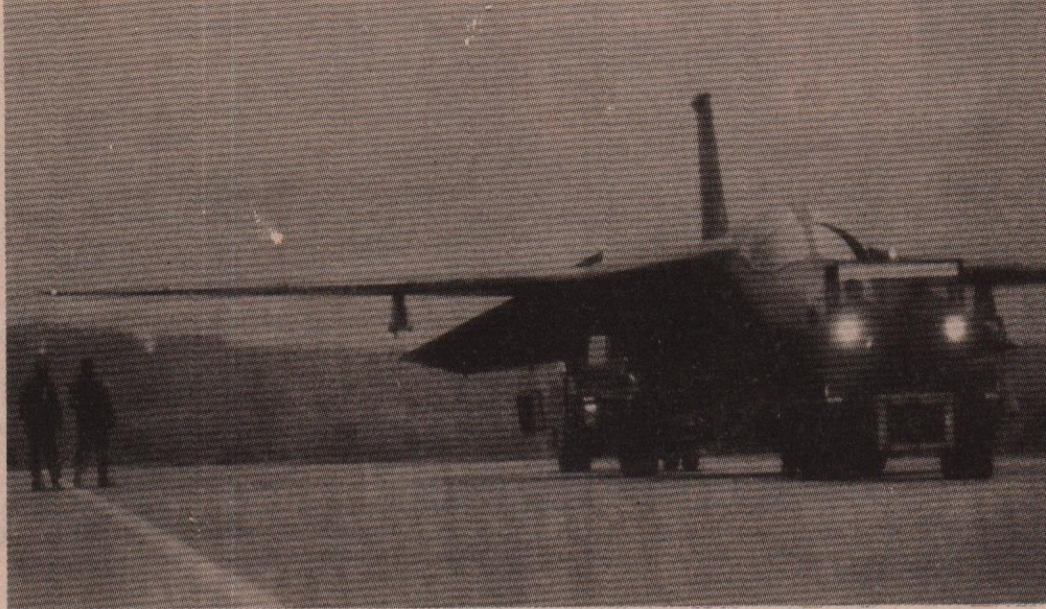
Revolution

They call not merely for the defence of Libya but for the defence of the "Libyan revolution" — that is of the Islamic police state leading the 'revolution' — what else can it be?

Qaddafi is still viewed as a revolutionary leader, even by those who have broken Healy's mercenary ties to Qaddafi. This is the deepest "Pabloite" confusion.

Worse still, Socialist Action, whose headlong drift into mainstream Stalinism continues, published attempts to argue on a basis of positive support for the regime in Libya, arguments which are typical of the attitudes of many on the would-be Trotskyist left.

Why did Reagan attack Libya? "The real reason for Washington's continued assault on Libya", SA explains "... (is) the fact that Libya follows policies that are opposed on many issues to those of US imperialism." (SA, 18 April). And even more forthrightly: "Qaddafi also opposed imperialist domination in the Middle East and North Africa. For instance he has backed forces in Chad that are fighting the French dominated gov-



ernment there." Indeed, after Qaddafi's seizure of power in 1969, "the main beneficiaries were the workers, peasants and sections of the middle class".

But the Libyan revolution was not a radical revolution in the style of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Qaddafi came to power via a military coup; and his regime is consciously modelled on the moderate state capitalist regime of Nasser in Egypt. It is a military regime, dominated by a small cabal at the top levels of the state, with all manner of pseudo-democratic 'popular revolutionary' paraphernalia to camouflage where real power lies.

As in Nasser's Egypt, there has been a good deal of social levelling — old ruling layers around the monarchy have been rooted out, and so on. And Libya's considerable oil wealth has enabled the regime to raise the standard of living of the average Libyan.

Bureaucrats

But to argue that the 'main beneficiaries' have been workers, peasants and sections of the middle class is ridiculous. The main beneficiaries have been the top level bureaucrats who run the Libyan state. The fortunes amassed from Libyan oil have not been mainly by workers or peasants. There is a wealthy capitalist class in Libya protected by the state, itself enlarged and enhanced from the hitherto vast income from oil exports.

This state it is true has been aggressively nationalistic in regional affairs. It is aggressively Islamic, too. Qaddafi is notorious in the West for the backing that he has given to 'terrorists' of various sorts.

But aggressive nationalism is not necessarily 'anti-imperialism'. As Socialist Action note, his deal with King Hassan of Morocco resulted in a severe setback for the Polisario freedom fighters in the Western Sahara that Qaddafi had previously backed.

More than that. Until well into the '70s Qaddafi was considered their man by the CIA. They helped him survive and they trained the original network of operators used by Qaddafi in his international adventures. Qaddafi's 'anti-communism' was seen by the CIA as a great asset — for example in 1971 Qaddafi forced down a plane in which were fleeing the leaders of the Sudanese CP after a failed coup. He then handed the CP leaders over to Numeiri who hanged them.

And Qaddafi's support for the Palestinians has been a mixed blessing. Of course, like every Arab leader, Qaddafi is loud in his opposition to Israel. But noises in this direction are largely weapons in inter-Arab power politics.

Qaddafi now gives his financial support to factions outside the mainstream Palestinian resistance, indeed to the most chauvinistic and ultra-nationalist groups like Abu Nidal's group, notorious for its assassinations of rival Palestinian nationalists.

The method of struggle given most support by Qaddafi is that of bomb attacks on civilians, like the recent attack in Berlin. There is nothing 'anti-imperialist' in such action. The narrow-minded nationalism that cannot distinguish between US imperialism and US citizens at airports, discoteques and so on, is reactionary chauvinism — in many cases it is also Islamic cultural and religious chauvinism.

Qaddafi's nationalism is a populist Arab chauvinism rather than a progressive anti-imperialism.

Qaddafi's purpose has been to manipulate internal disputes in the Palestinian Resistance for his own ends: that is for the interests of the Libyan regime, rather than the interests of the Palestinian people.

Qaddafi's helpful suggestion to the PLO fighters trapped in the Israeli siege of Beirut in 1982 was typical: he called upon them all to commit suicide in an anti-imperialist gesture.

Chad

Libya's activity in Chad, which SA refer to, was not to "fight French imperialism". It was to seize territory for Libya. The reality behind the 'anti-imperialist' rhetoric was the aggrandisement of the Libyan state.

Libya is not a genuinely progressive force internationally. More than that and worse for those socialists with a hankering to see Libya in a good light, it is extremely undemocratic internally: a military police state. There are no independent trade unions, no free workers' organisations; indeed there is no right to assembly or freedom of speech outside of the so-called 'people's organisations'. Qaddafi is brutal in his repression of political opponents — and not all of these are merely monarchists.

Qaddafi is a maverick irritant to US policy in the region, but he is hardly a serious threat.

The underlying reasons for the US attack lie elsewhere. At the same time as Reagan is mounting assaults on Libya, he is having difficulty winning support for his aggressive policy in Central America. Whipping up hostility to Qaddafi can help build support for a wider, jingoistic militarism towards 'troublesome' 'pro-Soviet' regimes in the Third World.

Nationalistic support for a heavy policy towards Qaddafi can pave the way for a heavier policy towards Nicaragua.

Palestine

Indeed, even representatives of the American ruling class have objected that Reagan is so motivated by internal political considerations — i.e. getting his way in Congress in future — that he has sacrificed long term US interests in the Middle East. This view is shared by pro-US British politicians like Denis Healey.

Palestine does lie at the root of the problem in an important sense. Terroristic attacks by Palestinian groups will probably continue until real progress is made towards fulfilling Palestinian demands for their own state. The heart of the problem of this terrorism is the monstrous injustice that has been done to the Palestinian people.

Socialists should fight imperialism — and we should defend Libya from imperialist attack.

But we should also tell the truth about the world as it really is. The knee-jerk 'anti-imperialism' of Socialist Action and others like them in fact leads them to tell lies — in the first place probably to themselves — about Qaddafi, and to give political credit where none is due.

*For the defence of Libya against Reagan and Thatcher — Yes!

*For Qaddafi's police-state, Islamic-chauvinist regime — No!

They've gone too far

I'M NOT at all surprised at Reagan's attack on Libya. I'm surprised that Thatcher went so far as to give him permission to launch it from this country.

I think the reaction, not just from miners but from people right across the spectrum, is that they've gone too far. On the door-knockers for the local elections round here, it's not so much an anti-Conservative vote that we're seeing, it's an anti-Thatcher vote. Tories are saying that she has gone too far.

Cotton

I don't know how long it is going to be before the Tories cotton on, but I don't think the Tories will dare risk the country with Thatcher at their head. I've got a strong feeling that Thatcher will go and someone will be put in her place as the acceptable face of Conservatism.

I think that the commitment from Labour to get rid of nuclear bases has got to be underlined, and that we have got to have hard and fast guarantees that, come the Labour government, they will go.

We'll have to watch Kinnock — watch the new Labour administration — and if there is any attempt to duck or bob or swerve, then we've got to come down on his head like a ton of bricks.

I think the printworkers have got to be careful. Having committed themselves and got this far, they want to go flat out for victory.

Commitment from miners to printworkers is there without question. It needs to be mobilised into solid support by getting miners down on the picket lines. I'm sure that if the call comes out many miners will willingly go there.

We've heard Peter Heathfield and Arthur Scargill urge

miners with their banners to be down on the picket lines.

On 1 May we're in the courts on several issues. One of them is the National Reference Tribunal ruling on recognition of the NUM in Notts. I'm not putting any faith in the courts, but I'm hoping that the whole issue is going to get raised at that level.

Whetton's diary

My own tribunal on my sacking is, I'm told, sometime in the middle of June, and we're hoping that is going to raise the issue about branch officials being allowed to carry out branch duties in the Nottinghamshire coalfield.

Once we take those steps, then I think we're really going to nail the UDM for once and for all.

One other thing: we ought to comment on the Queen's Birthday. I'm absolutely sick and tired of it.

Throughout the problems that we've been having, people have been pointing the finger at Thatcher, but they want to remember that every time that the police go steaming in, and every act that Thatcher has done, has been done in the name of the Crown.

Elizabeth Windsor is just as much responsible for the activities that have affected working-class lives as Margaret Thatcher is.

60 years is a nice birthday when you're in that position, but many working-class people dread the thought of approaching 60 because of the fact that they're not going to be able to maintain any sort of decent standard of living. That underlines the vast gulf between the classes in this country.



Legal murder

Amnesty International monitored more than 1,000 executions around the world in 1985, but these, says Amnesty, were only part of a much larger unknown total.

Amnesty counted only those state killings on which it had individual details. From Iraq for instance — where hundreds of people were reported to have been put to death for criminal or political offences — only 19 executions confirmed by the government were included in the figures published today.

The document totals for China (135) and Iran (470) were believed to be far lower than the real number of people executed in those countries, often behind prison walls or in areas from which news does not reach the outside world.

Many governments fail to announce or deliberately hide executions of prisoners.

Executions were reported in 1985 from 44 countries and death sentences from 61 countries. The figures issued today include only cases in which some form of trial and sentence were believed or claimed to have taken place. They exclude summary killings of prisoners reported from a number of countries. But 1985 also produced gains for the movement to abolish the death penalty. Australia became the 28th country to have totally abolished the penalty when the state of New South Wales joined the rest of the country in aboli-

tion. Eighteen other countries have abolished the death penalty for all but extraordinary offences such as certain war-time crimes, and about 50 countries have not carried out any executions since 1980, although their legislation retains it.

An international treaty prohibiting the death penalty in peacetime came into force in Western Europe after it was ratified by five countries (Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, Spain and Sweden, since joined by France). Nine other countries have signed the treaty but not yet ratified it.

Countries still putting people to death in 1985 included South Africa (137 confirmed executions), Saudi Arabia (at least 45) and Pakistan (at least 57).

In the United States, 18 people were put to death and the number awaiting execution on "death row" continued to grow, reaching more than 1,600 by the end of the year. One prisoner was executed for a crime committed when he was 17, contrary to internationally agreed standards.

In China, where over 40 offences carry the death penalty, people were executed for forming a "reactionary secret society" and "exploiting feudal superstitions". Three people were shot after being convicted of holding "dance and sex parties".

Gay Labour?

A commitment to lesbian and gay rights in Labour's election manifesto: that is the target of Labour's lesbian and gay activists. The recent Annual General Meeting of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) decided on a major campaign to consolidate and deepen the victory won on this issue at the 1985 Labour conference.

Against National Executive Committee opposition, Labour's 1985 Conference carried a comprehensive les-

bian and gay rights policy. "But," warns campaign coordinator Peter Purton, "unless we win a two-thirds majority we won't even be considered for the Labour manifesto. So in 1986 we are going back with resolutions insisting that the existing policy is implemented, and that the Party gives a clear commitment that the next Labour government will legislate to decriminalise homosexuality and prevent all discrimination against lesbians and gay men."



Vote Waldheim

Why all this stupid fuss about Kurt Waldheim's past associations with the Nazis and with the German army of occupation in Greece during the second world war? If this man wasn't barred from being secretary general of the UN by his past why should it stand in the way of his becoming president of a piddling little unused-remnant of a state like Austria now?

He's obviously a very talented man and it would be a shame to let him go to waste. After all, who's opposing Waldheim? The reds. The Austrian Socialist Party.

The good thing in this story is that the allegations about Waldheim haven't swayed the sober-minded conservative voters of Austria. Waldheim is still ahead in the opinion polls. Many of the voters may even think it a positive

recommendation that he may have 'a past' like this.

Obviously the Austrian conservative voters have learned from other countries not to get too excited about a little thing like allegations of involvement in mass murder.

They know that the only reason some Nazis were tried and some hanged after the war was that they had fallen into the hands of their enemies. And what a waste of good devoted talent that was!

Together with US President Richard Nixon Henry Kissinger tried to bomb Cambodia and North Vietnam out of existence. He was only doing his duty as he saw it at the time.

Suppose Kissinger had fallen into the hands of the Vietnamese or Cambodians and been tried and hanged as a war criminal? Think what a loss to international statesmanship, to diplomacy, to the higher academia that would have been!

But we do things better nowadays. Perhaps because we have the UN. Not only did the UN give Waldheim a job, it still preserves a seat for Pol Pot, the Cambodian Hitler, another candidate for the hangman's rope in the bad old days.

If I were an Austrian Kurt would get my vote, that's for sure.

Henry Kissinger

Capital punishment for Labour's left and the critics of Pink Ken?

"The left hasn't been marginalised, it's marginalised itself. The left could have been the driving force, but in the aftermath of '83 they're looking for traitors and betrayals, someone to blame.

They've revelled in being unacceptable and repellent. If I went on telly now and said Kinnock's a scab and Healey should be deselected, everyone in London Labour Briefing would give me a big kiss, and it would no doubt knock two or three points off our standing in the polls. Can you imagine what Lenin or Mao would have done with those sort of self-indulgent creatures? Killed them. And whilst I'm opposed to capital punishment I can see why."

Ken Livingstone, in an interview in City Limits, 3 April 1986

We love you too, Ken.

Letters

Not a war of independence

John O'Mahoney's articles on the Left and anti-semitism have so far been very good; and I agree with much that he has to say on the formula of the 'secular democratic state'.

But at the risk of nit-picking I want to object to the description of the war in 1948 that led to the foundation of Israel as 'the Israeli War of Independence'. (SO 266, p.5).

It was not a war of independence: it was a war of expulsion and subjugation. Its objectives and consequences were reactionary; and they lie at the heart of the problem now. Socialists in 1947-8

should have been opposed to the Zionist war, and not given it credence by dubbing it a war of 'independence'.

Of course, that political judgement does not sanctify the Arab war effort; nor does it imply that because the war that created the Israeli nation was reactionary that that nation has no right to exist.

But I think we should be careful about the terms we use to describe moments in Middle Eastern history. All terms are ideologically loaded; and we should avoid lining up with one side's ideologically loaded terms.

Bill Clove

Wrongfooted

You've got to admire Paul Foot for straight talking in his column in Socialist Worker.

Last week he wrote about the "astonishing decline in Labour politics" concluding that, "The sooner the activists realise they are fighting a losing battle and join a fighting party [the SWP?] the better" — all because Joe Ashton wouldn't buy him a pint!

Foot's complaint was that in the '70s he debated with Ashton in Workshop and it was "a friendly affair and Joe bought me a drink in the pub across the road". While two weeks ago when they were both billed to speak at a Workshop Trades Council rally

Ashton refused to speak alongside him because "it is being used as a platform to attack Labour Party leaders".

Unfortunately, Foot gives himself, and the SWP, away in the article... "In the event... the hardest hitting attack came from a lifelong Labour Party member, Paul Whetton, who criticised the proposed expulsions as the acts of splitters".

The SWP do like sitting on the sidelines, pint in hand, telling the real activists that we are fighting a losing battle. Even though Paul Foot once bought me a drink, I'd rather read Paul Whetton's column in Socialist Organiser!

Nik Barstow, Islington

Unfair to Pink Ken

Last week's SO (no. 267) carried an article on Red Ken Livingstone that I feel went a bit over the top. The author of the article 'Pink Ken changes' in the 'Graffiti' column compared him to Konrad Adenauer 'who made a good career as the Catholic mahor of Cologne under the Nazis and lived to be Germany's post war 'liberal democratic' Chancellor'.

The basis for this charge is Livingstone's opportunism on the issue of Zionism: he will do what he has to to further his career.

I certainly have no sympathy for Livingstone. And I applaud SO's break with the anti-imperialism of idiots — the crude, latently, potentially and sometimes actually anti-semitic logic to much of what has passed as anti-Zionism. People like Livingstone, who have indulged in 'world Zionist conspiracy' arguments, deserve to have their faces rubbed in the dirt.

But however crass, careerist, and offensive Livingstone is, he is not a Nazi nor a Nazi collaborator.

Such charges are very serious and should never be made lightly. The imagery of the Second World War does much to obscure issues, and the endless desire of socialists to call their opponents 'Nazis' is deeply unhealthy. It is to substitute name calling for political argument.

Edward Ellis, Deptford

Reply

Edward Ellis has simply got

hold of the wrong end of the stick here. The graffiti piece didn't say Livingstone is a 'Nazi', or an anti-semitite. It said, precisely the opposite — that he is not an anti-semitite and that he was not deluded into sincerely believing the anti-semitite ravings of Gerry Healy, which he associated himself with and publicly endorsed. That's the point!

He went along with it because he thought it was to his advantage to do so. He was the man who "didn't notice" the "normal philistine citizen" with no convictions of his own who says what is expected of him (as when he chattily told Healy's Newsline yes, the BBC's allegations that the WRP gets Libyan money does look like a Zionist job on the WRP) and who tolerates anything from those people he expects benefit or favour from. And who can switch his line as casually as he changes his shirt when he things that it's to his advantage.

Konrad Adenauer was no Nazi. He was one of a vast number who tolerated and went along with the Hitler regime when it was in his interest to do so — and then became a new-fledged post-war democrat when it was in his interest to do that. The point is that such people made the crimes of the Nazis possible either by their collaboration or by their passivity. Of course the Konrad Adenauers risked getting shot or jailed. What did Livingstone risk?



Left to right: Rudolf Klement; Leon Trotsky; Yvan Craipeau; Jeanne Martin; Sara Weber. Jean van Heijenoort is at the front. Rudolf Klement was secretary of the international Trotskyist movement. He was murdered by Stalin's agents in 1938.

According to a report in Workers Press, Jean Van Heijenoort, Trotsky's principal secretary for most of the 1930s, has been murdered in France. Apparently, he was shot by his wife who then turned the gun on herself. He was 76.

For seven years Van Heijenoort shared Trotsky's personal fate, joining him first in the early '30s when he was in exile on the Turkish

island of Prinkipo.

In the early '40s, based in New York, Van Heijenoort was an important leader of the Trotskyist movement under the nom de guerre "Logan".

In the mid '40s he moved away from what was to become mainstream Trotskyism — led by Cannon, Pablo, and Mandel. Among other things he insisted against them that the USSR's post-

war expansion into Eastern Europe, Iran (until 1946), and North Korea was imperialism. He wrote about the emergence of "bureaucratic imperialism". But he soon abandoned revolutionary politics and spent the last three decades in France as a professor of philosophy. In the '70s he brought out a book containing his memories of Trotsky.

The Six County Protestant revolt against the Anglo-Irish Agreement increasingly tends to become a revolt against British rule itself. The logic of this revolt points inescapably towards the separation of "Protestant Ulster" from Britain — that is towards some sort of independence for Northern Ireland, or part of it.

The legal Protestant paramilitary organisation, the UDA, advocates an independent Northern Ireland to be achieved by way of negotiation. (So did Tony Benn in an article in the Guardian in 1983). How serious a prospect is an independent Northern Ireland?

In this excerpt from a forthcoming pamphlet on Northern Ireland after the Anglo-Irish Agreement John O'Mahony discusses the politics and economics of an independent Northern Ireland and discusses what likelihood there is of an Orange attempt to win independence.

John Hume and others warned in the House of Commons debate that the logical end of the road down which the Unionists' refusal to accept Parliament's endorsement of the Hillsborough agreement propels them is a Unilateral Declaration of Independence or anyway some form of an independent Northern Ireland. But reports based on the experience of election canvassers in the 'referendum' suggest that only a small minority of Protestants support an independent Northern Ireland. Most are thoroughly alarmed by the idea. An opinion poll published in February showed only 18% of Northern opponents of Hillsborough supporting an independent Northern Ireland.

The present Six Counties entity would split apart if it were 'independent'. An independent Protestant state of north-east Ulster could not come into existence without repartition, either repartition supervised from above by Britain and the 26 counties or repartition by way of civil war. Any unilateral declaration of independence by a provisional government in Belfast would — if they could make it good against the British government and its army — inevitably involve repartition by civil war.

Just as there are Provisional IRA/Sinn Fein supporters of a unitary 32-counties state who know it could only be achieved by way of bloody subjugation of the Protestants, so there are supporters of an 'independent Ulster' who would accept that it could only lie at the other side of bloody civil war and repartition. They would pay that price — if . . . If a Protestant state of north-east Ulster could be economically viable.

The fact is that it would not be viable at anything like its present economic and social level. Economically Northern Ireland is massively dependent on Britain — so much so that many Southern politicians now believe that the 26 Counties cannot afford unity with such an economically weak and feeble Northern Ireland. There has been a dramatic reversal in the relative economic position of the Six and the 26 Counties. The facts and figures speak for themselves.

Stark

In 1911 the contrast was stark between the industrialised north-east and the underdeveloped, mostly rural, South. Ulster had 48% of all Ireland's industrial workers and Belfast alone, 21%. Only 14% of the workforce in the 26 counties was in industry or commerce.

By 1961 40% of the 26 Counties workforce was in industry and commerce, and 25% in industry alone. The South had become a predominantly urban, industrial economy. Since the 1960s manufacturing for export has increased sharply in the South. The 26 Counties are now more industrial than the Six Counties: 29% of civilian employment in the South is in industry, as against 27% in the North. And the South's industries are generally more advanced.



Thatcher and FitzGerald sign the deal. Photo: Derek Spiers, Report.

TOWARDS ORANGE UDI?

A full 40% of manufacturing jobs have gone from Northern Ireland since 1970. Unemployment is now 22%. Since Protestants had more jobs to start with they have been worse hit, but still unemployment is twice as high for Catholics as for Protestants. 25 years ago living standards in the South were on average scarcely half those in the North; now EEC figures reckon the purchasing power of income per head in the South at only 2% less than the North.

Take what has happened to Derry and Carrickfergus. Carrickfergus is a town of 30,000 people, mostly Protestant, not far from Belfast. In the past it has been one of the islands in the Protestant archipelago of industry and comparative prosperity within the long-depressed economy of Northern Ireland. But it has been devastated by the slump. The synthetic fibre plants owned by Courtaulds and ICI have been closed, wiping out 5000 jobs.

Reversal

In parts of Derry unemployment among heads of households is 70%. Derry's shirt factories for long employed women and girls, produc-

Because of the volume of material for our AGM next weekend, we've had to postpone Part 3 of John O'Mahony's series on 'The Left, Israel, and Anti-Semitism' again. It will appear next week.

ing a substantial role reversal because there were many more men than women unemployed and the men looked after the house and children. Now even the shirt factories have closed. Courtaulds abandoned Derry in 1981, wiping out over 1000 jobs.

Over half the population of Northern Ireland is directly dependent on the British state for its income, either because they live on social security or because they work for the government. (25,000 of the new jobs created in the Six Counties since 1970 are in the police and military: this is a large factor in the maintenance of the Catholic-Protestant unemployment differential). Northern Ireland receives a net subsidy from Britain of about £1.5 billion a year — a quarter of Northern Ireland's total income. Without this subsidy Northern Ireland's living standards would plummet.

And the position from which Northern Ireland would plummet is that of being the area with the worst poverty in the EEC, except only Calabria in southern Italy. About a third of households in Northern Ireland have a weekly income of less than £75.

After a civil war in which there would be forced population movements, communal slaughter, and the hiving off of some Catholic areas to the Republic, there would almost certainly be a Protestant-controlled area in north-east Ulster in which an independent Orange state would be viable politically,

culturally, and in having a common agreed national identity. But unless it could still keep British subsidies, or find alternative subsidies, it would have regressed socially and economically below the worst level in Western Europe. According to economist Norman Gibson, writing in 'Fortnight' magazine, living standards would be cut by 25 to 50 per cent.

Facts

Those are the hard economic facts that inhibit the growth of support for independence among the Six Counties Unionists, alienated though they now are from Westminster. They want a return to Protestant-majority rule within the UK such as there was up to March 1972, not independence.

Nevertheless the logical trajectory of what the Unionists are now doing to resist and overcome the decisions of the British parliament does point towards independence. Some MPs like Harold McCusker of the OUP say they would choose independence rather than the Anglo-Irish agreement or any form of united Ireland, but that assertion for now is a weapon in the battle to destroy Hillsborough. The OUP's favoured alternative is integration with Britain.

Whether the Protestants who talk of an independent Northern Ireland are serious about it or would ever rationally choose independence will not be decisive. Events can take their own logic. For example, pressure will mount

in the months ahead for the rump exclusively-Unionist assembly at Stormont to act as a government or to declare itself the provisional government representing the majority of the Six Counties. One of the questions giving the British and 26 Counties governments great anxiety must be how reliable the RUC and UDR will be in clashes with the Protestants. It so happens that the first state officer killed in the present 'troubles' was an RUC policeman who died in a gun battle with Orangemen on the Shankill Road in October 1969. But the social pressure from their own community on the RUC is now immense. They are caught between their much-prized jobs in a half-dead economy and that pressure. It is surely very likely that should the Unionists in the Assembly assume the authority of a government they could expect the loyalty of a sizeable chunk of the Six Counties state apparatus. Britain's 'Ulsterisation' policy of the last decade would jackknife in its hands.

UDI

As far as can be foreseen now, UDI is unlikely. But the possibility is built in to the basic structure of the conflict, and the Hillsborough agreement accentuates it. It all depends on how far the Orange mobilisations go, and whether or not leaders like Paisley and Molyneux can keep the movement in check while continuing to talk down fire and brimstone on Hillsborough.

THE TASKS FA

The last Labour government, 1974-9, started off with some quite significant concessions to the working class and a big wages surge. In summer 1975 it put the gears into reverse and imposed wage controls. In early 1976 these were followed by public spending cuts, enforced as part of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund. Dennis Healey as Chancellor pioneered monetarism.

According to Labour's present leaders, the mistake was not the crackdown in 1975-6 but the concessions in 1974-5. They want to start the next Labour government off from the point that Wilson and Healey reached in summer 1975 - or that Mitterrand reached in early 1983. Roy Hattersley condemns the "old days when we were weak-minded" and reinforces the point by bemoaning the "over-ambitious" initial policy of France's left government after 1981.

France's experience tells us the probable consequences of such an approach: demoralisation in the working class, increased unemployment and poverty, recruits for the extreme right and for racism. The policy of being 'moderate' to win the next general election at all costs may well not win the election (why

The first part of this discussion paper for SO's AGM appeared last week. It looked at the chaos of world capitalism and the labour movement's search for an answer. This week Martin Thomas discusses the prospects for a Labour government in Britain and the state of the left.

vote for a second-rate SDP when you can vote for the real thing?) - but in any case it will pave the way for a disaster for the labour movement at the next turn. It is utterly and ruinously short-sighted.

These facts mean that the Marxist left has two unavoidable duties.

*Labour's leaders see that their traditional policy of '1945 socialism' has collapsed - and opt instead for capitalism with accompanying music by Billy Bragg. We

must explain the working class socialist alternative. We must try to make the broader left lift its vision beyond immediate campaigns, and to tackle the job of debating and advocating a new system of society.

*We must try to prepare workers for the inevitably necessary fight against a Kinnock/Hattersley government, so that this fight can be carried through successfully and without demoralisation.

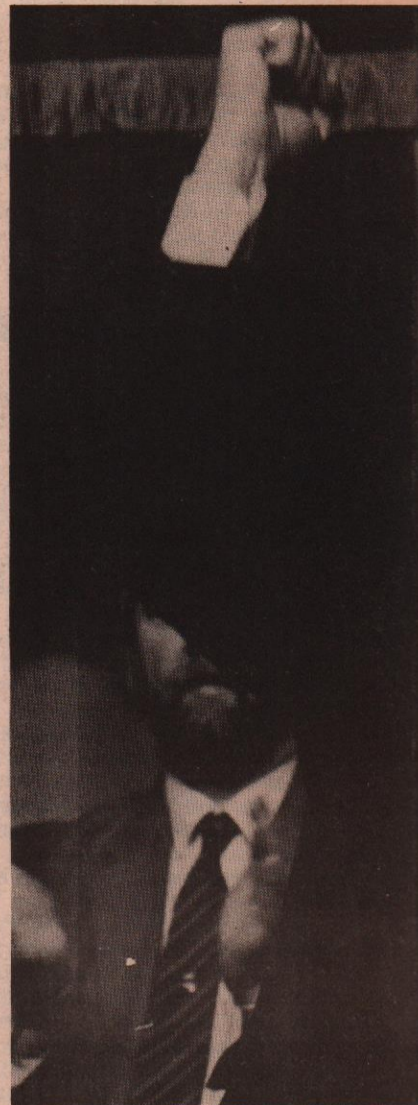
The current low level of confid-

ence among workers, and the strong feeling that nothing much matters except getting rid of the Tories, will make it difficult to get these arguments heard beyond a minority. That minority is very important. At the same time, however, we (and that minority, so far as we influence it) must try to relate to the broader majority of workers.

We must work for a Labour government, even under Kinnock (and against any coalition). We must fight to make the Labour leaders keep their remaining progressive promises.

For the present, whether we like it or not, politics is largely parliamentary politics; and if working class people give up on politics, demoralised, then the Tories will have their way and things will get worse and worse.

A Labour government is subject to the pressure of organised working class opinion through the Labour Party and trade unions. Out of a fight to get a Labour government, together with the debate and discussion within the labour movement about Labour policies, can come a working class movement confident enough to change society. Out of demoralisation can come nothing.



Kinnock triumphant; but what would... Photo: Andrew Ward, Report.

over-ambitious expansion had to be reversed. [All that 'over-ambitious expansion, ever did was to slow down the increase in French unemployment to a slower rise than other countries...]

"And we must learn from the past experience of this country... Under the next Labour government there will be no dash for growth. There will be a cautious but sustained boost to the whole economy".

Hattersley spelled it out further to the London Business School (Financial Times, 31.1.86). "Mr Hattersley was at pains to reassure the City - and warn the unions - that Labour would not allow its plans for reflating the economy and reducing unemployment to trigger a fresh burst of inflation.

"... we will only proceed as quickly as the inflation constraints allow", he said".

If higher profits are the lynchpin of the whole policy, then what about wages? They will have to be kept down. Hattersley denies any intention of an incomes policy enforced by law, but insists on an incomes policy of some sort. "The figure of money wages is the first part of the national economic assessment... There has got to be a norm". (Guardian, 18.6.85).

Forum

Neil Kinnock has put it like this: "Pay bargaining would take place in the 'central forum' of the economy, though this would not rule out additional workplace bargaining... He insisted that any such new deal would have to take closer account of market forces than previous Labour-Union agreements. "We are going to some extent to have to plan with the market, rather than against the market."

PUTTING PROFITS FIRST

The Labour leaders' economic policy was set out in "A New Partnership, A New Britain", published in July 1985, and the details have been filled out in speeches since then.

The document promises that a Labour government "will hold early discussions with trade unions and employers at a special meeting - in effect a National Economic Summit - to draw up a wide-ranging agreement... the National Economic Assessment..."

This would include "an immediate and substantial programme of public investment and repair" and expansion by local authorities.

Bank

"The next Labour government", it continues, "will support industrial change by opening up new channels of finance and ending the waste of Britain's resources... A Labour government would, for example, establish a National Investment Bank - with resources coming both from private institutions and from Government. Such measures would need to be backed by effective exchange controls and changes in fiscal arrangements".

Loopholes

The "changes in fiscal arrangements" are not spelled out in "A New Partnership", but Roy Hattersley has said that tax penalties would be used to force pension funds and similar institutions to withdraw money from abroad and put it in the NIB. In the November 1985 'Monthly Investment Report' a City expert identified "ample scope to develop loopholes in any new legislation" on such lines.

But the National Investment Bank would be in any case a "market-oriented institution".

"Will we ever have the courage to say that this attempt to hold an



Kinnock and Hattersley have rejected the kind of working class economics represented by the miners' demand for no pit closures. Photo: John Harris.

industry has failed and we must therefore abandon it?" Roy Hattersley asked rhetorically in an interview with the Financial Times (19.2.86). "We have learned that being tough on questions of this sort is essential for the economic survival of the country and the political survival of the Labour government.

"We cannot go back to the old days when we were weak-minded on these things - we can't do it on pay, we can't do it on investment, we can't do it on public spending".

Hattersley does see a role for a new 'National Enterprise Board' or 'British Enterprise' to make non-commercial investments for reasons

of "national necessity". But both he and others indicate that such activity will be very secondary.

Trade and Industry front bench John Smith: "Although the public sector may itself embark upon a programme... it is the private sector which must provide the bulk of the investment required."

Profits

The Guardian (11.2.86) reports further: "Part of the power for Britain's industrial growth, he confirmed, must come from a repatriation of overseas financial assets, or through the withdrawal of tax benefits from these investments.

"He emphasised that this regained source of funding will be put to work under Labour to fuel

domestic demand by raising the utilisation of industrial capacity. This, of necessity, said Mr Smith, would mean greater private sector profitability".

The same line from Roy Hattersley: the Labour leaders' plan for economic revival is based on nothing more radical than schemes to get more credit to private industry and make it more profitable. "Although the government will not listen to industry, Labour will..." (Guardian 26.10.85).

"Mr Hattersley reasserted his belief in the 'importance of high profits and the need to make those profits more acceptable'. He argued: 'We must all learn from the experience of France, where an

CING THE LEFT



Kinnockite Labour government be like?

It looks as if a Kinnock/Hattersley government's main move "against the market" would be not anything anti-capitalist but wage control. "We stand and we face the fact squarely that it goes with the job of government to have deliberate policies for earnings and spending."

"We are not therefore in this movement faced by the question of whether the Labour government will have such a policy. It goes with Government, no more, no less".

If the Kinnock/Hattersley programme were really based on expanding the public sector — as it seems to be at first sight — then of course renationalisation of what the Tories have privatised would be crucial. But since private expansion for profit is in fact their chief aim (with public spending only as a secondary stimulus) it is entirely logical that Kinnock relegates renationalisation to a distant future.

"A future Labour Government . . . would be able to take these (privatised) companies back into public ownership only 'ultimately', after first introducing policies to improve the economy and reduce unemployment . . ." "Any programme to renationalise state assets which had been privatised 'cannot take priority, when we will have a nation requiring emergency attention . . ." (Financial Times, 16.12.85 and 30.12.85).

Other aspects of the Labour leaders' plans are tailored to fit their central economic policy. Neil Kinnock has said nothing much about Labour's policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament, except to hint at a meeting in Vienna in October 1985 that perhaps a freeze on nuclear weapons would be a better 'first step'. He has stayed

silent while Dennis Healey argues that Polaris should not in fact be scrapped immediately. The one thing about the Labour leaders' military policy which is entirely clear is their insistence that any money saved by cutting nuclear weapons would be fully balanced by increased spending on conventional armaments.

Frills

Radicalism is left to the trimmings and frills. The GLC's Greater London Enterprise Board, for example, is heavily boosted as a radical initiative which would fit into a future Labour government's economic policy. In vain do the GLC leaders themselves point out that small-scale financial aid to small and medium local enterprises — whatever its merits — is no cornerstone for a national jobs policy.

And in October 1985 Roy Hattersley tried to give a retreat from nationalisation a radical edge by talking of other 'forms of social ownership' — in fact, employee shareownership. "He stressed that the central state monopoly was the right form of social ownership only for public utilities" (Financial Times 17.10.85).

The Financial Times headlined its editorial appropriately "Labour turns to capital". "Mr Roy Hattersley . . . finally scrambled aboard a fast-moving bus, the front seats of which are already occupied by Mrs Margaret Thatcher . . . and Dr. David Owen . . . wider share-ownership . . . The sight of all three main parties gathering behind the banner of wider share ownership . . . is a sign that the political and economic differences of the parties are perhaps not quite as great as is sometimes pretended."

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The Labour and trade union left is at a low ebb. There is no denying the evidence.

*Kinnock and Hattersley have been able to push their pro-capitalist economic policy with very little protest.

*The miners have suffered great job losses since their strike. The printworkers are hard pressed in their struggle with Murdoch (and the other Fleet Street bosses). The print union leaders are fighting not to win but to lose gracefully.

*The Labour leaders are pushing through their witch-hunt against Militant with much less protest than in 1983. Formerly left-wing unions like NUPE have been swung behind the witch-hunt.

*Important union elections in the TGWU and AUEW have been won by the right wing.

*Strike figures are low. Apart from the miners' strike there were about 2.5 million striker-days in 1985 — fewer even than in 1976.

*Labour local authorities have abandoned even gestures of defiance against the government.

How permanent are the setbacks? What counter-tendencies are there within the general trend? What can we do to promote them?

The Tories are not all that

strong. They have begun to raise profit rates quite significantly, but their economic success (for capitalism) is very limited. They are torn internally: the Westland and British Leyland affairs indicate some serious tensions within their ranks over a US alignment versus an EEC alignment. (British capitalism has a unique middle position. Increasingly integrated into EEC trade, it still has much more US-owned business on its territory than any other European country, and it has much more invested in the US than the others).

There is working class demoralisation after the miners' defeat, but no great shift of mass opinion to the right. The unions' tremendous victories in the political fund ballots testify to that. Many workers radicalised and educated by the miners' strike may be demoralised and discouraged now. They are not necessarily de-radicalised and de-educated.

Lose ground

But the Labour left began to lose ground as long ago as 1982.

The modern Labour left dates from the early 1970s. Then it moved in the shadow of the big industrial struggles against the Tories. But the 1973 Labour conference was more left wing than for very many years. It voted for sweeping nationalisations. The struggle for mandatory re-selection of MPs and other democratic reforms began.

Though at first stunned and passive as the 1974-9 Labour government turned right, the Labour left did not stream out of the party as it had done after 1966. It gathered its forces and fought within the party. The 1978 Labour Party conference condemned the government's incomes policy.

After the Tories' general election victory in 1979, the Labour left quickly went onto the offensive under the slogan 'Never again!' The next Labour government should be accountable not to the bosses, the bankers, and the IMF, but to the labour movement.

In 1980 the broadest-ever alliance of the Labour left was formed (on our initiative) in the Rank and File Mobilising Committee. There were four main elements: the people round Tony Benn; the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy; the current of semi-revolutionary leftists who were beginning to gain prominence in Labour local government; and us.

In 1980-1 this alliance won important victories: mandatory re-selection, and election of the Labour leadership by the party as a whole. Labour was also committed unequivocally to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The momentum was broken by the Bishops Stortford agreement between the top trade union and Labour leaders in early 1982. Party constitutional reform was halted, and has since been subject to repeated (and partly successful) attempts to gut it. The party was swung into a witch-hunt against Militant. Though as late as 1983 the party leaders felt obliged to publish a fairly left-wing election



Broadwater Farm, Tottenham. Photo: Andrew Moore.

Continued page 8

THE TASKS FACING THE LEFT

Continued from page 7

manifesto, soon left-wing policies came under attack.

In 1980 the left's offensive within the Labour Party went side-by-side with trade union militancy against the Tory government — the steel strike, TUC days of action. Then the steelworkers were led to defeat and decimation of their jobs, and the TUC decided on a policy of retreat. The rapid growth of unemployment to 3 or 4 million intimidated workers.

These industrial developments obviously affected the Labour left. But it was not all cut-and-dried. Big industrial struggles continued, like the NHS strike of 1982. And industrial militancy is influenced by the extent to which workers perceive a clear political alternative to the Tories. So the slipping-back of the Labour left was not just an effect of the industrial downturn, but partly a cause and partly an autonomous process.

Teachers

Today the teachers' dispute testifies to the continuing reserves of strength in the trade union movement. These are especially large in the public sector, where employment and union organisation are almost intact. Even in the private sector the unions have managed to keep wages generally ahead of inflation.

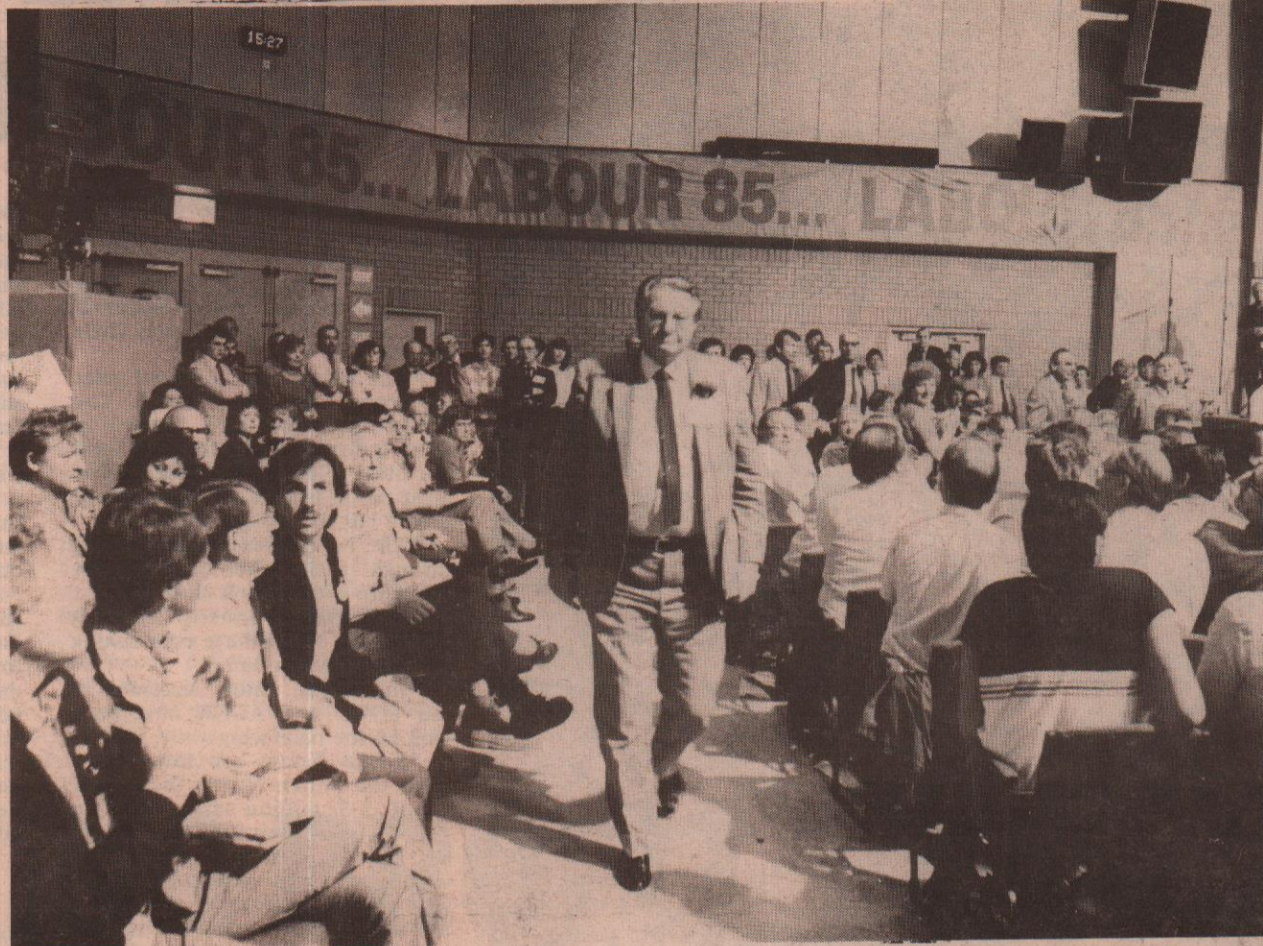
Broad Lefts

Trade union Broad Lefts are doing fairly well. The CPSA Broad Left has successfully resisted a soft left breakaway. The Socialist Teachers' Alliance did well at the Easter NUT conference. In the small NUR Broad Left, a move by our comrades to develop local groups and bulletins has brought very promising results.

And in the National Union of Students, the Trotskyist left, Socialist Students in NOLS, had resounding successes at the Easter conference.

The Labour left has slipped backwards since 1982 not so much through outside circumstances beyond its control as through its own inadequacies.

Its initial success was based on an alliance with the trade union leaders which was bound to be temporary. The union leaders voted



Eric Heffer walks out of Labour Party conference after Kinnock attacks Liverpool Council. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, Report.

for democratic reform in the Labour Party because they were angered by Callaghan's attempt to impose wage controls on them against their will in 1978-9. But the way they ran their own organisations showed they had no real commitment to labour democracy.

Extend

The left needed to organise in the unions, extend the struggle from Labour Party democracy to trade union democracy, and build a firmer alliance with the rank and file. It didn't.

Local government became a major school in reformism for the Labour left. Lacking coherent strategy and organisation, they did not 'take the power' when they got council positions: 'the power' took them. Their fiascos contributed in a major way to the downturn in industrial militancy. If in March 1985 the miners could have been confident that the council leaders spouting about confrontation with the Tories would actually do it, then the miners' strike would surely have continued, reinforced by a powerful second front.

Behind it all, the post-1979 Labour left lacked politics. It has never tackled the leadership on the central issue: what to do about capitalism and the working class.

The left has fought hard battles over party reform, nuclear disarmament, women's rights, support for the miners — and rightly so. But over the last few years the old Alternative Economic Strategy — a last gasp of '1945 socialism' — has been expiring. No-one supports it any longer except perhaps the Morning Star. The Labour leaders have their alternative. And the Labour left says nothing.

The publication of, and the debate around, Andrew Glyn's 'Million Jobs A Year' pamphlet, have been a step forward. But they underline the problem. Glyn's programme is no more than warmed-up 1945 socialism — nationalist, reformist, bureaucratic. But almost all the groups of the hard left have rallied to it uncritically.

Miners

The excellent activity of many local Labour Parties during the miners' strike indicates that, despite all this, the Labour left is not dead. It is discouraged and dispersed, and obviously quite a lot of individuals have moved irrevocably to the right; but new events could rally and reassemble it quite quickly.

For the present we are faced with a witch-hunt and no vigorous response from the left. How far will the witch-hunt go? More intelligent Kinnockites, like Larry Whitty, want a brisk, brief and limited purge at national level, backed up by piecemeal local action. Having once engaged on a witch-hunt, however, they are at the mercy of the media. After each expulsion the media can point to some other group of Militant supporters, or people 'as bad as Militant', and demand further action. The Labour leaders dare not refuse for fear of seeming 'weak'.

Rally

Media pressure can drive the Labour leaders to go further than they would wish. However, the media have other interests beside the Labour Party (Tory crises, Royal Weddings, Ian Botham and so on), and the Labour leaders must know that a really large-scale witch-hunt could devastate their party organisation and their electoral chances. Militant's use of the courts, bad though it is in the long term and in principle, looks like slowing down and limiting the witch-hunt in the short term. So a piecemeal witch-hunt is still more likely than a comprehensive purge — though there will probably be a lot of piecemeal action.

We must try to rally the broadest left forces against the witch-hunt. But the main job in the next period will be to educate and organise the most determined forces of the left round genuine working class socialism.

How Reagan's bombs work

Readers will no doubt have been impressed with the lethal ingenuity of the so-called "smart bomb", used to kill and maim sundry Libyan civilians. It was the supposed accuracy of these weapons which led the F-111s to be launched from British sites.

Only F-111s can drop these laser-guided bombs which work in the following way:

Just before the attack run, a laser is lowered from the belly of the aircraft. An infrared camera provides a clear image of the ground below to the Weapons Systems Officer (WSO or "Wizzo"). He locates the target as it approaches, points the laser beam at it and locks the system.

Computer

The bomb is released by computer. Its own computer controls its flight by moving its rear fins according to the instructions of a device which homes in on the spot of laser light on the target.

This spot is kept steady on the target by a remarkable swivel mechanism in the laser, even as the aircraft climbs away in a tight turn to avoid the blast of the bomb, con-

taining nearly a tonne of high explosive.

What lets down the whole high-technology show somewhat is that the whole thing depends on the "Wizzo". And he has only a few seconds, possibly under hostile fire, to identify the target, by sight, on a video screen, using his memory of his briefings.

No doubt the smart bomb is accurate enough under test conditions but only a dumb president would expect a similar performance in action.

With the Spring issue of the Women's Health Information Centre (WHIC) Newsletter comes warning that the majority of WHIC's funding has gone with the demise of the GLC.

This Newsletter concentrates on two cancers which mainly or only affect women — breast cancer and cervical cancer.

WHIC Newsletters usually consist of information gathered from the medical world, explanations of health problems and issues, articles publicising women's and other health groups and book reviews.

This issue examines gener-

al practitioners' policies on referring patients for cervical smears (the easy way to cut cancer deaths); publicises such groups as the Manchester Breast Cancer Group,



Science

By Les Hearn

BACUP (for cancer patients and those close to them) and the Mastectomy Association; and reviews books such as "Cancer In Britain: The Politics of Prevention" (reviewed in SO last year) and "The Cancer Journals", an account (and more) of the experience

of breast cancer and mastectomy by black lesbian feminist Audre Lorde.

A useful section deals with the campaign by NALGO to introduce and improve cancer screening in the workplace and in the NHS generally.

WHIC also publishes a series of "Women's Health And ..." broadsheets on such topics as Alcohol, Disability, Cervical Cancer, Infertility, Mental Illness, Unemployment, Food, Smoking, Work and Stress, and In History.

The one on cervical cancer explains the reason for smear tests, the terms used in such tests, how other tests are performed, how to decide on treatment if cancer is present (including the details of such treatment) and what to expect in the follow-up period.

These broadsheets are available at 15p plus 13p p&p from WHIC at 52 Featherstone St., London EC1, tel: 01-251 6580. WHIC needs funds to continue its work. Subscriptions are £7 (individuals), £2 (low waged), £10 (organisations) — includes Newsletter. Donations are, of course, welcome.

70 years ago revolutionary nationalists and socialists took up arms in Dublin against the British Empire. They hoped to spark a war for Irish independence; some of the socialists hoped they were striking the first blow in a Europe-wide revolution. Stan Croke tells the story. (Part 1).

"From the blue skies was falling a golden curtain of shimmering sunshine, clothing buildings in its filmy cloth of gold, and veiling their naked ugliness in beauty, or adding a richer appearance to their classic grace and strength . . .

"A semi-lazy but curious concentration of attention was fixed on an approaching body of marching men . . .

"The curiosity displayed in the proceedings gave place now to bewildered astonishment as the ring of falling glass echoed from the direction of the Post Office. Astonishment was followed by stupefaction as faint echoes of rifle shots penetrated from a distance to where the people were gathered together, and all things were forgotten as the news spread from mouth to mouth that the Volunteers and the Citizen Army were taking Dublin, that a Provisional Government had been established, and an Irish Republic proclaimed."

Such is the description by Sean O'Casey — then Honorary Secretary of the Irish Citizen Army, later playwright and Stalinist — of the start of the Easter Rising in Dublin on Easter Monday (24 April) 1916.

The insurgents were led out by James Connolly to certain military defeat. "We are going to out be slaughtered," he told his successor as leader of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, William O'Brien, as he left the Citizen Army's headquarters at Liberty Hall to begin the Rising. "Is there no chance of success?" asked O'Brien. "None whatsoever," replied Connolly.

Correct

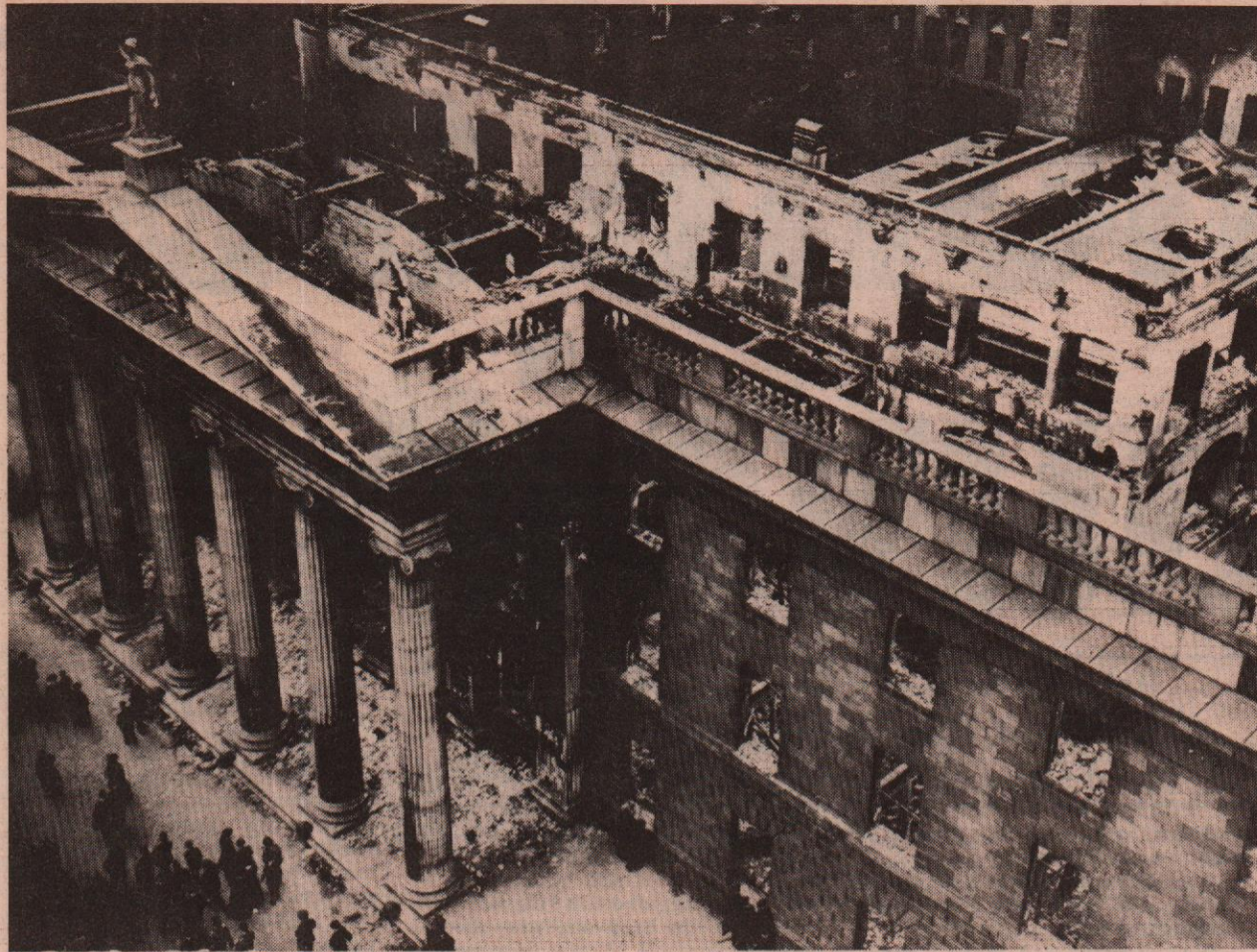
Connolly was equally convinced that few would understand the Easter Rising. "They (the socialists) will never understand why I am here. They will all forget I am an Irishman," he told his daughter, propped up in bed awaiting his execution after the defeat of the uprising.

He was quickly proved correct in his estimation of the "socialists". "The rising was foredoomed to failure, and in my opinion was a crime against the Irish people," wrote left wing Labour MP George Lansbury. An editorial in the Independent Labour Party's paper explained: "We do not approve of the revolt of the Sinn Feiners. We do not approve of any armed revolt, as we do not approve of the revolt of the Sinn Feiners. We do not approve of any armed revolt, as we do not approve of any form of militarism and war."

The British TUC (September 1916) passed over the uprising in silence, save for one delegate's reference to the shooting of the non-combatant Francis Sheehy Skeffington and the Parliamentary report at the Labour Party conference (January 1917) described the uprising as "the calamitous outbreak in Ireland."

Amongst the minority who refused to join in this chorus of condemnation were Lenin ("whoever calls such an uprising a 'putsch' is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of picturing a social revolution as a living thing") and, in this country, Sylvia Pankhurst ("their rebellion was but a stage in the long struggle for Irish independence").

That the leaders of the labour movement in this country should have refused to support the Easter



The Dublin Post Office after the uprising

The Easter rising

Rising is hardly surprising. In the preceding years they had likewise failed to give adequate support to the Irish working class and its leaders such as Connolly and Larkin in the struggles which mapped out the road to the Easter Rising.

In the opening years of the century conservative craft unionism was pushed to the sidelines by the emergence of a new trade unionism steeped in militancy and combativity. This was epitomised by the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, established by James Larkin after the leadership of the British-based National Union of Dock Labourers had turned its back on the Dublin dockers' and carters' strikes of 1908.

Syndicalist

In 1911 Connolly, returning from America where he had been heavily influenced by the syndicalist ideas of de Leon and the concept of "One Big Union", became Belfast organiser of the ITGWU.

By mid-1913 the union had organised a majority of Dublin's unskilled workers, and unionisation of the 'general labourers' was beginning to spread throughout Ireland. As Lenin wrote: "A new spirit has been around in the Irish workers' unions. The unskilled workers have introduced unparalleled animation into the trade unions. Even the women have begun to organise — a thing hitherto unknown in Catholic Ireland . . . This country, bearing a double and triple national yoke, was beginning to turn into a land with an organised army of the proletariat."

The employers struck back in the Dublin Lock-Out of August 1913. By the following month 25,000 workers had been locked

out in Dublin in an organised attempt to break the ITGWU: re-employment of those locked out was conditional upon signing a pledge not to join the ITGWU.

After eight months of bitter and physical conflict the workers were starved back to work, betrayed by the British trade union leaders who had refused to carry out solidarity blacking and to organise a levy of the TUC's membership to provide financial support for the Dublin workers.

Lenin, over-optimistically, wrote "The Dublin events mark a turning point in the history of the labour movement and of socialism in Ireland. Murphy (leader of the Dublin lock-out) threatened to destroy the Irish trade unions. He has only succeeded in destroying the last remnants of the nationalist Irish bourgeoisie over the proletariat in Ireland. He has helped to steel the working class movement in Ireland, to make it independent, free of nationalist prejudices and revolutionary".

Citizen Army

But the lock-out did mark a major step forward for the Irish working class in the formation of the Irish Citizen Army, the first armed workers' militia of the twentieth century, and the force which, along with the Irish nationalist Irish Volunteers launched the Easter Rising.

The constitution of the Citizen Army declared that "its principal objects shall be: a) to arm and train all Irishmen capable of bearing arms to enforce and defend its first principle (that the ownership of Ireland, moral and material is vested of right in the people of Ireland); b) to sink all differences of

birth, privilege and creed under the common name of the Irish people".

The final clause of the constitution stressed that, "every enrolled member must be, if possible, a member of a trades union recognised by the Irish Trades Union Congress".

Class

In March 1914, a month after the ending of the Dublin lock-out, Larkin and Connolly reconstituted the Irish Citizen Army. The Irish Volunteers were armed, as too were the Ulster Volunteers, with the full support of British Tories and British Army Officers. The labour movement could not afford to remain unarmed. It needed its own militia to fight for its class interests.

"An armed organisation of the Irish working class is a phenomenon in Ireland. Hitherto the workers of Ireland have fought as part of the armies led by their masters . . . Now with arms in their hands, they propose to steer their own course, to carve their own future. Neither Home Rule, nor the lack of Home Rule will make them lay down their arms."

But from March 1914 onwards it was not Home Rule for Ireland which the British government was proposing, but partition of the country. Connolly — from October of the same year onwards the leading working class militant in Ireland after Larkin's departure for America — condemned the proposal in the strongest of terms. The prospect of partition sapped Connolly's optimism of earlier years.

"In their movement (of socialism) the North and South will again clasp hands, again will be demonstrated, as in 1798, that the pressure of a common exploitation

can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics, and out of both a United Social Democracy," he had written in 1910. Three years later he wrote: "But with the advent of Home Rule, nay even with the promise of Home Rule . . . the old relation of Protestant and Catholic begins to melt and dissolve, and with their dissolution will come a new change in the relation of either faith to politics . . . The writer looks forward with confidence to the future, believing that the tale these Notes from Ireland will have to tell will be a hopeful one, even if the hope is nurtured amid storm and stress."

From March 1914 onwards, Connolly's writings were streaked with a pessimism born of the fear of the consequences of partition upon the working class and its organisations. Partition would "set back the wheels of progress, would destroy the oncoming unity of the Irish labour movement and paralyse all advanced movements while it endured".

All hopes of uniting workers irrespective of religion or old political battle cries would be shattered. All old sectarian jealousies would be kept up, workers would be kept fighting workers, and progress would be impossible. "It still remains to be seen whether the working class agitation cannot succeed in frightening these vampires from the feast they are promising themselves upon the corpse of a dismembered Ireland."

Five months after the emergence of the plans for partition, further impetus along the road to the Easter Rising was provided by the outbreak of the First World War. While the leaders of the parties of labour across Europe reduced themselves to being recruiting sergeants for the war effort of "their" country, Connolly, along with other revolutionary leaders such as Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht denounced the imperialist war.

Transformation

Connolly looked to the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. The workers he wrote in 1915, "should have refused to march against their brothers across the frontiers". If such a refusal led to civil war, then "each socialist who fell in such a civil war would have fallen knowing that he was battling for the cause he had worked for in days of peace".

Foreshadowing the events of 1916, Connolly wrote on the outbreak of war: "Even an unsuccessful attempt at socialist revolution by force of arms . . . would be less disastrous to the socialist cause than the act of socialists allowing themselves to be used in the slaughter of their brothers." And shortly before the government's banning of the "Irish Worker" at the close of 1914, he wrote: "The Irish working class sees no abandonment of the principles of the labour movement in the fight against this war . . . in their fierce resolve to do no fighting except be it in their own country."

Recalling Larkin's adage that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity, Connolly saw the war as the time to strike at British rule in Ireland. Writing in the "Workers' Republic" — which replaced the banned "The Worker" in February 1915, and throughout the rest of the year ran a series of back-page articles on insurrections — Connolly warned that once the war was over England would have at its disposal an army of over a million men, more than two soldiers for every adult male in Ireland.

As the time of the insurrection approached, the contents of the "Workers' Republic" became increasingly explicit: "Our opportunity has arrived, if we have but the will and the courage to use it," explained an article in the issue of January 22 1916, while the editorial of the following week's paper asked, "We have planted the seed in the hope that when many of us are much older, it will ripen into action. For the moment and hour of that ripening, that fruitful blessed day of days, we are ready. Will it find you ready too?"

Simone de Beauvoir

1908 -
1986

"One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the female figure plays in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine."

Treatise

So begins Book 2 of Simone de Beauvoir's famous treatise on

Belinda Weaver looks at the life and works of Simone de Beauvoir who died last week.

women, *The Second Sex*. The book was to cause a storm of indignation and controversy. It was denounced as obscene and pornographic by Catholics and right wingers.

Yet women read it, and some claimed it saved their lives. It was

an important book for the emerging women's liberation movement of the 1960s. It is still widely read today, and regarded as a "classic".

Simone de Beauvoir, who died aged 78 on April 14, was born into a respectable Parisian middle class family. She studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, where she was placed second to Jean-Paul Sartre in their final exam.

Her lifelong friendship with the philosopher, described by de Beauvoir as the "one undoubted success in my life" began then; so did her revolt against her confining middle class origins. She was not to live the conventional life - she did not marry or have children, she worked as a teacher in Rouen, and, later, Paris, she wrote philosophy, novels, autobiography and a play.

Scorned

As an established writer, de Beauvoir was largely treated as an equal by the men of her circle, Sartre, Giacometti, and others. However she scorned any idea of having 'honorary male' status - she saw such a thing as a betrayal of women.

De Beauvoir did not intend *The Second Sex* to be a demand for rights, but rather an attempt to examine, clarify and understand women's condition. She had no illusions that the book would fundamentally alter this condition: "... it depends on the future of labour in the world; it will change significantly only at the price of a revolution in production."

De Beauvoir began the book to express certain of her own feelings about being a woman. To do so, she realised she would have to write of women in general - to understand the myths concerning women existing in society, in religions, literature, superstitions and ideologies, to understand what lay behind those myths, and what realities they served to mask.

Her concept of the book began to widen - to take in physiology, history, sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis.

The book does not claim that there are no differences between men and women, but rather that the differences that exist are of a cultural rather than a natural order. The book tried to show how these differences are constructed by society, by studying women's development from babyhood to old age.

The Second Sex was the book that brought de Beauvoir the greatest satisfaction. She thought it possible it could be improved, cut down, refined. "But at the time I was discovering my ideas as I was explaining them, and that was the best I could do. As for the content, I should take a more materialist (i.e. Marxist) position in the first volume."

Published in 1949, *The Second Sex* has been translated into 19 languages, and has become essential reading for men and women in the socialist and women's liberation

movements. It was originally published in two volumes.

Part 1, "Facts and Myths", was very favourably received, selling 22,000 copies in the first week. The second part, "Women's life today" caused a public outcry.

The writer Albert Camus accused de Beauvoir of making the French male look ridiculous, while other critics, rather than debate the issues raised by the book preferred to slander de Beauvoir.

Men were angry, men felt sorry for her "humiliation" (of being female). She herself believed that they were appalled at her objectivity as much as her social and moral beliefs. They would have preferred a cry of rage, rather than a reasoned analysis.

To put her in her "place", the whole range of sexual vocabulary was used to reduce her to her "true" function - that of sexual object. Men said she was a frigid woman who had never been made love to properly.

De Beauvoir also explored the possibilities life offers or denies to women in her fictional works. The *Woman Destroyed* and the character of Paule in *The Mandarins* are acute, if painful, insights into the lives of women whose identity is defined solely by their relationship to the men in their lives. These fragile identities crack under the break-up of these relationships. In losing their men, they lose themselves. Her writing is sensitive without pulling any punches.

Her best known fictional work is undoubtedly *The Mandarins*. As an examination of post-World War 2 intellectuals, it created a stir as readers identified the characters in the novel with real life figures like Camus, Sartre and de Beauvoir herself. But the attempts by an educated intellectual elite to abandon their aloofness and to try to engage seriously in political activism are the core of the novel and form its chief interest.

De Beauvoir herself was ambivalent about activism. While she took strong public stands at times on particular issues, she was wary of parties, and believed that being an intellectual was enough.

The Second Sex did have an influence on the women's movement of the sixties. Other writers used her work as the basis to develop ideas further.

Peculiarity

The book established the historical peculiarity of women's oppression compared to other types of oppression. Unlike the proletariat, women are not concentrated in groups. They do not experience the solidarity born of shared work and interests that workers can develop.

Since women are everywhere, they do not develop the community feeling which can develop in groups forced into ghettos, such as Jews or black people.

Women are also of different classes and races. Bourgeois women tend to identify with bourgeois men, rather than with working class women. Most white women would identify first with white men, rather than black women.

Women's oppression has always (or almost always) existed. The

oppression of the working class has not always existed, since the proletariat has only come into being since the Industrial Revolution and the establishment of bourgeois capitalist property relations. It is a fairly recent phenomenon, based on historical events.

Oppressed nations can remember the epoch before their subjugation; the working class has a powerful collective identity, organisations, traditions of struggle. "The oppressed retained at least the memory of former days; they possessed in common a past, a tradition, sometimes a religion and a culture." Not so for women.

Since de Beauvoir wrote, women have begun to unearth something of a feminist tradition and generate some feminist culture. Yet women's oppression still remains deeper, more obscure, more like an eternal fact of nature confronting individual women.

Can it be overthrown? "A world where men and women would be equal is easy to visualise, for that precisely is what the Soviet Revolution promised." De Beauvoir rejected both the idea of passively waiting for the revolution, and the illusion of liberation without revolution. Her book aimed to help women in the psychological self-redefinition and self-liberation which would be necessary to give substance to the revolution.

De Beauvoir has been a controversial figure. *The Second Sex* made her famous, notorious even. Her friendship with Sartre and their involvement in left wing causes earned the hatred of the French bourgeoisie. Both were banned from state radio and television in 1960 for supporting soldiers who wanted to refuse to serve in Algeria, which was fighting for independence from France at the time.

De Beauvoir formed part of an international "tribunal" in the '60s condemning US involvement in Vietnam. With 340 other women, she signed a declaration attacking France's draconian anti-abortion laws. She was a leading figure in the French League of Women's Rights.

She visited China and wrote *The Long March* about her experiences; she criticised America in *America Day by Day*.

Her autobiographical works, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, *The Prime of Life*, *Force of Circumstance* and *All Said And Done* describe her life, her friendships, her politics.

Existentialism

Inevitably, de Beauvoir's memory will be inextricably linked with that of Sartre because of their long companionship, their shared philosophy of existentialism, and the novels which illuminate aspects of their relationship. Virtually all de Beauvoir's obituaries and tributes mention Sartre.

Yet writers on Sartre do not accord de Beauvoir equal prominence. She did have an identity separate to Sartre - she was a novelist, philosopher, writer of autobiography, feminist, and *The Second Sex* is a more important work than any of Sartre's.

Yet like the women in her books she too is defined by her relation to a man. Perhaps this is an attempt by society to "feminise" de Beauvoir - to say that underneath all the opinions, the feminism, the intellectual effort, she was just like other women after all.

De Beauvoir's philosophy was that man and woman make what they can out of their existences. Her aim in writing *The Second Sex* was partly to free women from the images and myths which oppressed and crushed them, to help make women aware that their difficulties were part of women's general condition, not a personal disgrace. She was gratified that psychoanalysts gave the book to women patients to read - not just to middle class women, but to working class women as well.

While self-knowledge and understanding are not the key to finding happiness or fulfillment, they do free people to make choices, rather than have choices made for them by society's pressures.



Simone de Beauvoir: novelist, philosopher, feminist.

Back the Addenbrookes strikers



Now the leaders of COHSE and NUPE have betrayed the Addenbrookes Hospital domestics - who have been on strike for 17 months - by withdrawing the unions' official support from them. While Addenbrookes strikers were being kicked out by management on Thursday 20 February, COHSE NEC members voted 14-11 to withdraw official support from the strike.

Fight on

Earlier domestic supervisor Sylvia Burton had pleaded with the NEC to fight on for the National Health Service:

"Our fight has been about conditions of service and patient care. The conditions under which you work do affect how you care for the patient. Every job gone hits the service somewhere. Wherever you make a cut it hurts people."

On Wednesday 26 February I asked Mr Bickerstaffe where NUPE now stood? He replied: "NUPE will follow COHSE in whatever they do, otherwise the relationship between NUPE and COHSE will be upset!"

I told Mr Bickerstaffe that at Addenbrookes "All Strikers' Meeting" the Domestics had voted unanimously to continue the strike with or without official backing. COHSE branch chairwoman Sylvia Burton protested:

"The hierarchy of the unions have just stayed in the background and let the women fight on their own.

By Graham Heneghan

I came out on strike in all good faith in defence of my own union's policy. It's heart-breaking to see what they are allowing to happen to the health service."

COHSE withdrew official support after seventeen months because the women domestics refused to accept the ACAS agreement of 17 October 1985. Under the auspices of the conciliation service ACAS, the private cleaning contractor OCS offered the domestics: on staffing - nothing; on hours - nothing; on conditions - nothing. But they could have job interviews when "all forms of industrial action have ceased including the removal of pickets and their accoutrements." (Caravan).

This sell-out agreement was signed by Keith Taylor of COHSE and Eddie Bradin of NUPE.

On Friday March 14 1986 we occupied the Headquarters of Cambridge Health Authority to bring the fight against privatisation back into the public eye.

The headlines of the Cambridge Evening News declared:

"New Action In Hospital Cleaning Dispute: Police and NHS officials with hacksaws and bolt cutters ended an early morning siege today. Health service workers and student sympathisers had padlocked themselves inside Cambridge Health Authority



headquarters in protest at hospital cleaning standards. After 17 months of dispute over cleaning, the workers' union withdrew official support. Today's demonstration was to show, said the workers that they are continuing their fight alone."

Radio Cambridge and BBC TV also covered the occupation.

Domestic Anne Sweeney said: "Our occupation was short but effective and we hope that it will bring to the attention of the people of Cambridge the fact that we are still fighting, despite losing union backing."

Rosina Cox added: "We want the public to know that even though our leaders have ditched us, our strike is still very much alive. We will keep on fighting for a clean hospital."

Robin Aldrich, a student at S. Catherine's College said: "It's disgusting that the unions have ditched the strikers and basically colluded with the health authority. They tried to railroad the strikers into accepting a lousy deal."

Britain now spends a lower percentage of its Gross Domestic Product on health care than any other EEC country, except Greece.

NHS staffing levels fell by 4,150 over the last financial year (March 31 1984-March 31 1985). This was the second year in succession that the number of people employed in the NHS has fallen. 11,400 jobs were lost in the previous year. Most of these losses have been in ancillary staff and are largely the effects of the Competitive Tendering programme for

cleaning, catering and laundry.

The overwhelming evidence clearly shows that privatised services within the NHS have meant worse pay and conditions for the staff employed and deteriorating standards of patient care. We cannot be responsible for the state of apathy of the public or other hospital workers - who maybe feel powerless to act. But we who are aware of what is happening to our National Health Service and who care enough, must act.

NUPE's Bickerstaffe is an expert speaker on Low Pay, but what's the point when he's not committed to supporting the struggles of low paid workers.

COHSE's head, David Williams, has become sterile in complacency and Hickson lost in rhetoric.

Bickerstaffe and Williams are blocking ordinary working people from becoming politically conscious - they undermine struggle, pull the plug on action - the biggest betrayal of any union.

They have sold us for the price of Labour Party ideology, lip-service socialism.

On Saturday 26 April there will be a National Rally to support the Addenbrookes strikers at 2.00 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, near Holborn Tube, London.

Contact Addenbrookes Strike Committee, Addenbrookes Hospital, Hills Rd., Cambridge. Tel: 0223 245151 x 7550 or 0223 834924.

Come to our School 3-4 May

There is to be a SSiN weekend school on May 3-4. This follows our successes at NUS conference, where SSiN supporters Melanie Gingell and Michele Carlisle were elected to the National Executive as non-sabbaticals and Simon Pottinger as Vice-President Welfare.

The Democratic Left (sic) who control NOLS and NUS refuse to allow political discussion. The school will provide a forum for debate that is seriously lacking on the student left.

There will be debates on the Middle East and Ireland, various seminars, including the politics of women's oppression and a history of the lesbian and gay liberation movement.

Students

The weekend is set in the context of discussing students' role in participating in and developing the struggles of the labour movement and so the current state of the labour movement and the prospects for a Labour government will be analysed.

We will be taking decisions about SSiN's work for the rest of the year and discussing our perspectives for the Fowler campaign through to next October.

The school is open to everyone and there will be a creche and crash pads available. On Saturday night there will be a social.

It would help the organisers to be informed of rough numbers so please contact SSiN if you are intending to come.

There will be a small charge for students with grants and there will be a hardship fund to help cover transport costs.

Manchester

The school starts at 11.30 on the Saturday and will finish about 4.30 on the Sunday.

The venue is Manchester University Students Union, Oxford Road, Manchester. Tel: MUSU - 061-273 5111 and tannoy Jenny Skinner, Dave Wolfe or Julie Woollacot.

Please cut out and return to SSiN, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Or phone Jane on 01-691 0734 or 639 7965.

Name
College
Phone
Creche: Yes/No
Sleeping: Friday Saturday

Fascist moved

By a Lewisham NALGO member

LIBRARY NALGO members in Lewisham meet again on Monday 21 April to hear the latest news on the Malcolm Skeggs affair.

Skeggs, an active member of the British National Party, had been called by management for a disciplinary hearing on Thursday 17 April. All that is known of this hearing is that he has been 'disciplined'.

However, on the Friday a further meeting with management took place where the wider issue of his work as a fascist was discussed. As a result, Skeggs will be moved from his position as Librarian at Lewisham Reference Library. His new role with the library service is as yet unknown, but is likely to be away from the public gaze.

Having heard the latest, NALGO members decided to put off a decision on what to do next until management's proposals for resolving the situation were known. If proposals were not forthcoming by 29 April, NALGO would meet again on 2 May.

Over the last two weeks there has been a groundswell of liberal opinion supporting Malcolm Skeggs' right to hold certain opinions and feeling that by removing him from Lewisham Reference Library and giving him a more unobtrusive position within the library service, 'justice has been done'.

It seems, therefore, that

unless management make a mistake over his relocation, any moves for further action, or calls for his dismissal, will not find mass approval from library workers. But we should keep up the pressure.

Shakespeare boycott

By Di Gash

Stratford Labour Party and Anti-Apartheid group have organised a demonstration against the South African representative being invited to the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations on April 26.

Each year the celebrations committee invites all countries with which Britain has diplomatic relations to send a representative to Stratford for this occasion. They all march through the town with the Stratford dignitaries (and those hoping to become Stratford dignitaries) and the ceremony culminates in the unfurling of flags.

For the second year running the committee has been requested not to invite South Africa but of course they can find no reason why they should not. The organisers of the demonstration have received wide support from the trades union and labour movement including Equity and Beta members from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre who are withdrawing from any participation in the event and will instead be joining the demonstration.

So far 12 countries, including Kenya, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Bangla-

desh, Barbados and Senegal, have responded to the call to boycott the celebrations and have written to the committee explaining that they will not attend alongside a representative of South Africa. It is likely that more will follow suit.

The committee still cannot understand why "local tyro-politicians" feel the need to spoil their ceremony. They say "Shakespeare belongs to the whole world". We would like to know which world they live in and have sent them some copies of Anti-Apartheid News and a reminder that even if you are white and live in Stratford-on-Avon it is very unlikely that you will be able to afford a regular trip to see the plays.

But now who cares?

By Nik Barstow

A year ago, when they were fighting rate-capping under the slogan "Islington Cares", the borough's Council prominently featured its home help service.

As if to prove how far they have retreated since then Islington Council has now provoked the home helps into strike action. Fed up with two years of unsuccessful negotiations on extra payments for extra duties about to be imposed as a result of "decentralisation" home helps will hold a one-day strike on Thursday 24 April.

The Council is offering them a measly 15p an hour for the new duties (and that's an 'improved' offer). For the many part-time workers in the service that will mean literally pennies at the end of the week!

Of course the Council knows that home helps are very unwilling to strike because of the effects on their old and handicapped clients. The vote for action on the 24th was over 4-1: a sure sign of how far the Council has pushed some of its most committed, hard working (and low paid!) workers.

Who Cares? It sure as hell isn't Islington Council!

Laings sold out

By Vince Brown

The picket of the Laing's London Bridge site has been called off following a devastating act of treachery by UCATT General Secretary Albert Williams. Williams issued, on the same day as Laings offered fresh negotiations, a statement fully supporting the dismissal of the six victimised bricklayers. Coupled with TGWU regional organiser Davison's instruction to TGWU members to cross the UCATT picket line the Lock Out Committee unanimously felt that had no alternative but to admit defeat.

The Lock Out Committee are to issue a full statement and history of the dispute in the next few days.

Housing campaign axed

Islington Council believes that the housing it provides is now so good that it doesn't need to fund local housing campaigns. That, at any rate, is the Council's flimsy excuse for plans to axe the Islington Housing Rights Project and its five staff.

The Council's claims might come as a bit of a shock to the 9,000 people on its waiting list or the hundreds of council and private tenants who have turned to IHRP for help over the last few years.

The real reason the Council wants to close down IHRP is the campaign's successful work with council tenants' associations to get long-promised work carried out and its close monitoring of the Council's commitment to its own housing policies.

The campaign to defend IHRP got a major boost with a lobby of the last Council meeting before the elections on April 22 that was supported by all the council trade unions. Perhaps some councillors will see sense before May 8 - the voters aren't likely to be too impressed by people who think that a borough with some of the worst housing in Britain is a paradise on earth.

NIK BARSTOW,
Chair, Islington Council
Joint Trade Union
Committee
(personal capacity)

Socialist Organiser

Vote Labour MAY 8th

DEFEAT MURDOCH

BRENDA Dean has proposed to SOGAT's executive that the union go to court and purge its contempt - by withdrawing its instruction to SOGAT members to support the printworkers sacked by Rupert Murdoch.

The executive rejected her surrender proposal.

But Dean insists that the issue must be kept continually under review from now on. And that sends out all the wrong signals - to Murdoch and the rank and file.

To Murdoch it indicates that the print unions are weakening and that he should go for the kill now. If some SOGAT leaders are thinking about surrender, Murdoch can encourage them to think about it with even greater urgency: he can slap writs on the mass pickets to test the SOGAT executive's nerve.

To the rank and file it gives signals of despair. It tells them that Brenda Dean has given in publicly. If the leaders publicly contemplate retreat, it must confuse and demoralise the rank and file. But the key to winning the dispute lies with the rank and file.

NGA-sponsored MP Martin O'Neill, speaking at Wapping on Saturday night 19th, commented that the dispute could go on until the next election. He looked to a future Labour Government to sort things out.

Such an approach is fatal. The dispute will be won not by hanging on until Neil Kinnock comes to the rescue, but by building real solidarity action.

Indeed, if the labour movement does not organise effective defence of itself on the industrial front, the prospect of a future Labour government may well be all the more remote.

Rank and file control over the dispute needs to be deve-



Pickets at Wapping. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, IFL.

loped now to resist the drift towards an unnecessary surrender by the leaders. At the mass picket at Wapping last Saturday, 19th, there was a real indication of the determination of the rank and file seriously to organise the mass pickets. For the first time, many pickets showed a willingness to take on the police.

But at the same time it indicated the frustration of that minority with the way the dispute is being run.

Militants across the unions need to step up solidarity with the print workers to help prevent a retreat that may be a rout for the trade union movement. If it happens it will have been an avoidable rout.

**MARCH TO WAPPING
ON MAY DAY
Thursday 1 May.
Tower Hill, 8pm.
Called by SERTUC.**

Tuffin blocks solidarity

SOLIDARITY action from postal workers depriving Murdoch of mail could well bring News International's scab printing operations at Wapping to a standstill.

The Basingstoke branch of the UCW has urged this policy on their executive. They received the following reply from Alan Tuffin, general secretary of the UCW.

"Legally this is impossible to implement... the union cannot legally invite the post office to withdraw services from individual customers,

nor is the union itself entitled legally to discriminate between one post office customer and another".

The branch were not prepared to accept this as a reply and pressed the executive to consider the option of suspending the 1981 household delivery service agreement as a way of boycotting Murdoch.

The executive replied arguing that since neither the TUC nor the print union leaders had asked them to do anything of this scope, they were not prepared to argue for the policy of boycotting Murdoch among the membership.

Greg Birch, secretary of Basingstoke UCW, summed up the lessons of this exchange in a letter on behalf of the branch to Tuffin.

"We are fed up of hearing trade union leaders say 'we are sorry, but...'. If this dispute is to be won then the print unions will need more than moral support and sympathy from fellow trade unionists".

A boost from AGM?

Thanks this week to:

Manchester drinks levy £11; Bruce Robinson £1.50; Pete Gilman £2.60; Belinda Weaver £2.00; other North London readers £1.81; sponsor money in advance for Les Hearn's cycle ride £5.

A slow week but we're looking forward to large contributions at our AGM this coming weekend.

We're now negotiating for the last major purchase of our re-equipment drive - new typesetting machinery. Several comrades have agreed to give loans to make up the £7000 required, and we'll need about £400 to £500 from fundraising each month to pay them off.

Send contributions to: SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Local Group	Target	So far	Per cent
North London	1600	1316.39	82%
Nottingham	1000	966.01	97%
South London	800	904.26	113%
Manchester	1000	833.35	83%
East London	760	671.11	88%
Merseyside	500	562.80	113%
Cardiff	600	462.50	77%
Glasgow/Edinburgh	560	398.00	71%
Durham/North East	200	291.80	146%
Sheffield	400	259.41	65%
York/Harrogate	300	230.70	71%
Stoke North	200	202.75	101%
West London	500	200.00	40%
Coventry	350	200.00	57%
Stoke South	200	198.00	99%
Basingstoke	560	127.47	22%
Colchester	100	67.80	68%
Birmingham	100	65.00	65%
Aberdeen	20	46.00	230%
Oxford	40	40.00	100%
Canterbury	90	43.00	48%
Southampton	60	16.00	27%
Leeds	60		
Central/General	5000	1574.80	31%
Total	15000	9652.63	64%



YOUR LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP

Barking & Dagenham	(01) 517 5519	Lambeth	(01)733 5670/670 4647
Basingstoke	(0256) 28460	Leicester	707730
Bedford	(0234) 851844/211079	Lesbian & Gay PSG	(01) 737 2495
Brighton	(0273) 605552	Lewisham	(01) 690 9841/691 2897
Brent	(01) 968 3952/624 1323	Liverpool	(01) 709 3995
Camden	(01) 328 7372	LSE	(01) 226 5969
City of London Poly	(01) 247 1441	Middlesex Poly	(01) 805 4250/807 6538
Coventry	415046/310146	Oxford	(0865) 724707
Deptford	(01) 791 2573	Portsmouth	(0705) 819141
Ealing	(01) 574 7461	Reading	(0734) 861284/868614/584558
Greenwich	(01) 310 5451	Richmond & Twickenham	(01) 755 3237/876 6715
Hackney	(01) 249 8086	Southwark	(01) 582 0996
Harrow	(01) 427 5909	Waltham Forest	(01) 555 6093
Islington	(01) 281 0552/607 6383	Strike Graphics	(01) 582 0996
Kensington	(01) 960 5961		