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ONLY THE LEFT CAN BEAT SDP BENN MUST RUN!

The recent controversy over Tony Benn's statement in Parliament that Labour would renationalise North Sea Oil without compensation once again highlights the need for the Left in the Labour Party to organise against the right wing.

Since Brighton various left wingers have argued against running Benn for Deputy Leader a second time. The arguments runs in favour of the left keeping quiet for a time to restore 'unity' in the Labour Party.

What is the response of the right wing to such sentiments? Writing in the AUEW Journal arch right wing General Secretary John Boyd said, the right wing gains were a good start. But this is "an exercise which we must complete next year for a few more must be removed to bring sanity and pragmatism back to the NEC."

Boyd's sentiments make it clear that the right wing is seriously organising for next years conference. Immediately speaking, the right wing Manifesto Group of MPs has called for the banning of the *Militant*. The role of Michael Foot in these developments must be noted. At the same time he attacks Benn for simply spelling out Labour policy in the Commons, Healey is allowed to speak roundly against unilateralism with no comment.

This experience is enough to say that the left would be committing a suicidal error if it stayed silent. It must fight back openly for:

1. Benn for Deputy Leader 1982.
2. A left controlled NEC at the next Conference.
3. No bans and proscriptions within the Labour Party.



**Benn must run for Deputy in 1982!
Organise the Left!**

Organise the Labour Left

Stop the Witch-hunters!

Developments within the Labour Party have been swift since the Brighton Conference. Spurred on by their gains on the NEC and the defeat of right wing candidate Stan Boden by the SDP in the Croydon by-election, the right are attempting an offensive.

60 *Manifesto Group* MPs demanded that the NEC disqualify the recently selected parliamentary candidate for Bradford North, Pat Wall. Wall is a well known supporter of *Militant*, a fact which was known by the local Constituency Labour Party when they selected him and threw out the sitting right wing MP, Benjamin Ford.

'ENQUIRY'

This move by the *Manifesto Group* harks back to the days when whole local Labour Parties were disbanded if they insisted on a candidate the NEC didn't want. Among the supporters of such actions were — Bill Rodgers and George Brown!

The NEC has promised an enquiry into the 'regularity' of the selection. The right wing is pushing for a fullscale witch-hunt against *Militant* supporters. It is only two months since the Brighton Conference overwhelmingly threw out a call from Sid Weighell to reintroduce the proscribed list. Weighell is currently conducting his own 'enquiry' within the NUR into the supposed activities of members of the Broad Left in that union. Clearly the right wingers feel this is the time to strike.

Many right wingers who put out treacherous calls for unity at Brighton and supported Denis Healey are now leaving in a trickle for the SDP. Those who are staying want to use the time available to them to break the left. It is vital that the left does not adopt a 'keep our heads down and it will go away' attitude under the pressure of the right. It will not go away. It must be fought out in the open and every step of the way.

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FORCE A GENERAL ELECTION NOW!

Continued
from front page

LEFT MUST RECAPTURE NEC

The calls for 'unity' under which the witch-hunting right are hiding their real intentions are not calls the left is answering with counter statements condemning the role of the right in not clearly attacking the SDP. The recent skirmish between Foot and Benn on the question of whether the Shadow Cabinet, and of course the next Labour government, has to pay any attention to Conference policies, reveals that the situation is very tense. But so far not a single one of the left MPs has called for Benn to declare *now* that he will run against Healey next year for Deputy Leader. This would give the left in the whole Labour Party and in the unions a point around which to rally.

The question has to be put to Tony Benn pointblank — does he intend to let Healey stay there another three or four years, in a position to take over from Foot when that elderly renegade from his own past retires? The question must be put to all left MPs and union leaders — at what point do you stop lowering your heads and start fighting to defend what has been gained?

Socialist Newsletter believes that every time a right wing attack goes unanswered it will result in a redoubling of the pressure to drive the left out of existence within the Labour Party.

The fake 'unity' calls of Foot, Healey and the rest have already led to the demise of the *Rank and*

File Mobilising Committee. The *Labour Co-ordinating Committee*, which is heavily influenced by the politics and methods of Stalinism, has already called for an end to united left organisations and the shelving of the fight on the Deputy Leadership. The influence of Stalinism within the Labour Student organisation has led them to do the same.

Now the *Campaign for Labour Party Democracy* has outlined a deliberately 'low-level' campaign for the next period, based on parliamentary democracy, positive discrimination, nationalisation of the top 25 manufacturing companies, ending the shortlist of one and making Labour Groups accountable to local parties. All these are necessary objectives for the left and are in the interests of the working class. But what about the leadership of the Party? What about the attacks of the *Manifesto Group* on *Militant*?

The approach being put forward by some leaders of CLPD is quite inadequate in the fact of the high level of organisation by the right wing during and since the Brighton Conference. The right wing union leaders, among them Chappell, Duffy, Grantham and Basnett, and their supporters, meet regularly to plan tactics in a London hotel. Any fight for Labour Party democracy has to get to grips with this, by linking with Broad Lefts in the unions to fight the common enemy. A campaign should be run by union Broad Lefts to affiliate trade union branches locally and to elect left delegates to constituency Labour Parties to act as a counterweight to the right union bosses.

On this basis real national campaigns to democratise the block vote could be run. But for this to be meaningful the left in the Labour Party must reconvene its forces and unite for an offensive against Healey. The best form of defence in this situation is attack.

Such a national offensive requires grass roots mobilisation, against right wing Labour councillors and undemocratic union delegates such as those 'appointed' by Chappell.

The new left regroupment which emerged out of the ad hoc meeting on November 22nd is to be welcomed. This offers a chance for the whole left within the Labour Party and unions to fight back against the witch-hunt and to drive the right off the National Executive Committee.

But the key to left regroupment is the *leadership* of the Labour Party itself. The victory of Denis Healey was narrow but it has allowed him and Michael Foot to underpin the aggressive moves of the right on the NEC. It also allows the front bench in Parliament to be made up of people who do not support major aspects of the Conference policy.

If the NEC is to be taken back next year and if Conference policy is to be enforced on the Parliamentary party then Tony Benn must be drafted to run for deputy leader and must quickly declare his intention to do so.

Right-Wing Defeated in Streatham Labour Party

The right wing suffered two defeats at the last meeting of Streatham Labour Party's General Committee. A resolution from Streatham Hill Branch condemning Michael Foot's support for an incomes policy under a Labour Government was passed, despite fierce opposition from the right wing. The mover argued that to talk of a 'fair' incomes policy in the future gave support to Thatcher's present 4% policy.

A second resolution called on the CLP to sponsor a Borough-wide meeting of *Campaign for Labour Party Democracy* supporters. Lam-

beth Councillor Peter Dean, ex-chief whip, formerly a self-styled *Tribune* supporter and now an open backer of Denis Healey, attacked the organisers of the CLPD meeting and the leaflet they produced which, he said, contained attacks on trade union leaders Duffy and Chapple which were 'damaging' to Labour Party unity.

The resolution was passed and highlighted the need for a national left regroupment in the Labour Party. As the mover of the resolution argued, the moment we ease the pressure on the right wing they will exploit our weakness and attack us.

Locally

Stuart Holland MP calls for disruption of Parliament!



Reg Race

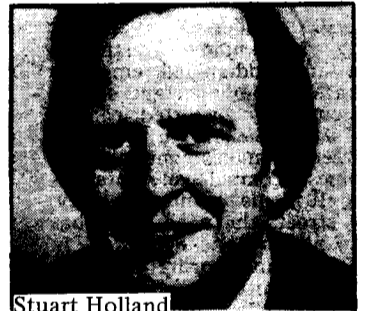
A well attended meeting in Haringey heard Reg Race MP spell out the need for Parliamentary Labour Party accountability to the party as a whole. He referred to the effective collapse of the *Tribune Group* in the Commons. The meeting discussed the problems of holding councillors to the fight against Heseltine and the need to unite and fight in the Labour Party and the unions. A *Campaign for Labour Party Democracy* group was set up to co-ordinate work locally and most people in the room agreed that Benn should run against Healey.



Clive Soley

At a similar meeting in Hammersmith, Clive Soley MP, who succumbed to the pressure for 'party unity' around the right

wing, even before Brighton, underwent some probing discussion. He was very hesitant about the need to contest the leading positions within the Labour Party at the next Conference in Blackpool. The meeting decided to organise campaign work pointing to the need to mandate union delegations to Labour Party Conference well in advance.



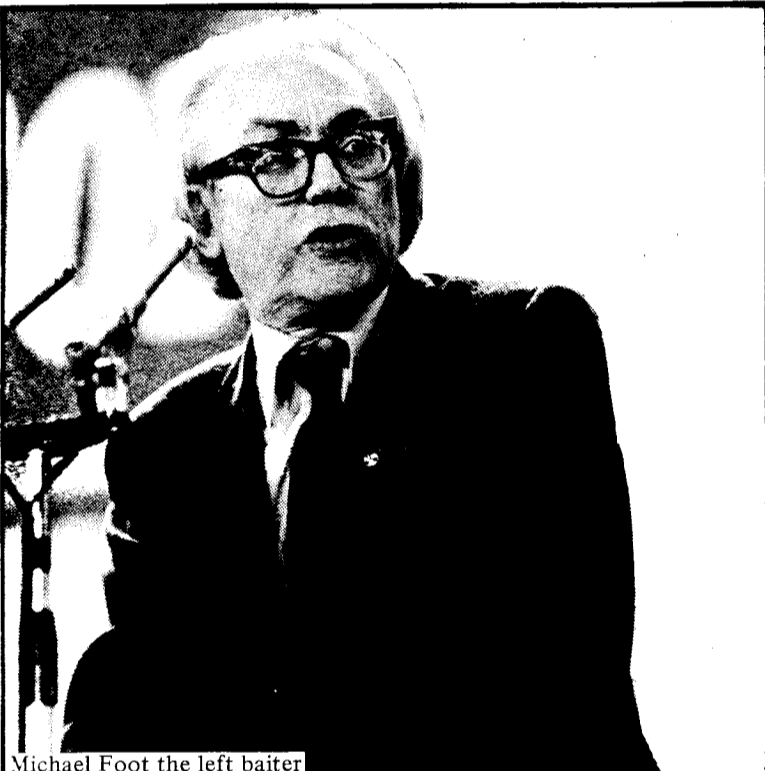
Stuart Holland

In Lambeth Stuart Holland MP, at the CLPD meeting, called for the disruption of parliament as a means to halt Thatcher's attacks on the working class. We await the first act of disruption from Holland.

In St Helens GMWU members who had seen the role of Basnett at the Brighton Labour Party Conference took part in a CLPD meeting organised by left wingers in the constituency party.

The struggle between right and left in St Helens has a particularly turbulent history especially in recent years. The left has had to defend itself against expulsions and witch hunts organised by the right wing and directed primarily against trade union militants who joined the Labour Party after the historic Pilkington Glass factory strike in 1971.

The CLPD meeting was addressed by Victor Schonfield who argued that there was now a necessity for the left to keep its head down. This approach was rejected by the CLPD supporters in St Helens who realise that this would only allow the right wing to make more attacks on the left. The rank and file CLPD members in St Helens argued for a national regroupment of the left to win back the NEC and to campaign for Benn to run against Healey in 1982.



Michael Foot the left baiter



Right wing leaders Sid Weighell, Terry Duffy and Basnett.

Help our fund!

Socialist Newsletter, like all papers on the left, runs at a loss. We have to make up this loss through the generosity and solidarity of our readers. The same applies when we want to develop our resources. We are appealing for funds for new machinery to improve the layout of the paper. Please send all donations, however small, to our box number or give them to your regular seller.

We need £3000



Williams the personality

Social Democratic Party

A Bosses' Party

Shortly after one of Edward Heath's recent attacks on Thatcher, SDP leader David Owen remarked, "I don't believe that we should be afraid now of openly advocating a 'British people's movement of justice'." This really defined the nature of the SDP. It is a party which has come into existence with the task of blocking a majority Labour government. They and their ruling class backers put their hopes in a coalition of the 'wet' wing of the Tory Party, the SDP and Liberals and potentially the Healey wing of the Labour Party. If as currently seems possible, the SDP were to win a fair number of marginal seats in the next General Election, a hung parliamentary crisis would allow Denis Healey to justify a coalition on the basis of 'the national interest'.

Today the working class is undefeated. What's more the actions of the class have been responsible for toppling the last three Governments Wilson, Heath and Callaghan. Since Thatcher's victory in 1979 there has been a sharp radicalisation inside the Labour Party against the old right wing who were held responsible for Thatcher coming to power. It was this radicalisation which the 'Gang of Four' could no longer tolerate and they were effectively driven out.

The Gang of Four were the arch-enemies of the old right wing bourgeois Labour leadership. Jenkins used the Labour Party to become President of the EEC. David Owen supported the Shah of Iran to the very end, as Labour's last Foreign Secretary. William Rodgers was always the firmest supporter of NATO. Williams is renowned for her role as cutter-in-chief when Minister for Education. The shift to the left in the Labour Party and the demands for greater accountability made their life intolerable. Denis Healey does not disagree with the essential programme of the Gang of Four but the latter have launched an advanced offensive in unity with the other bourgeois parties against the movement of the working class in the Labour Party.

BOSSSES' PARTY

The SDP is unmistakably a bosses' party, a bourgeois party constructed by the most openly bourgeois elements originally in the Labour Party. In other words a section of the bourgeois reformist apparatus has broken away to attack the left in the Labour Party from outside. The SDP's support is very largely petty-bourgeois. Its conference revealed that SDP activists are predominantly professional middle class elements and older ex-Labour right wing bureaucrats.

At the level of policy the SDP is absolutely pro-NATO and firmly multilateralist. Although of course, consistent with their contempt for conference sovereignty in the Labour Party, the SDP leadership ensured that their conference took no policy decisions. There is also a streak of absurd utopianism about the SDP which seems to ignore the current crisis of British capitalism. For instance speaking on industrial relations Rodgers advocated the "middle way" of Macmillan in the 1950s; as if the working class

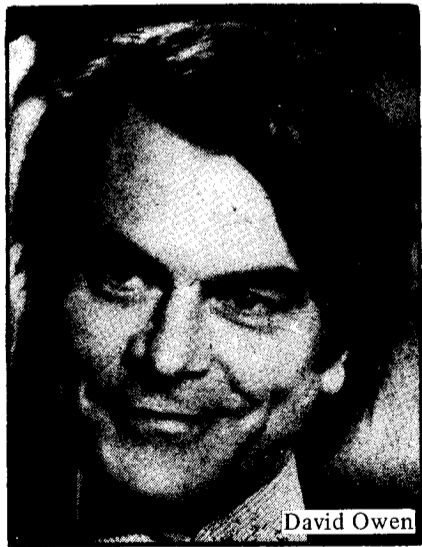
hadn't smashed 'In Place of Strife' and the 'Industrial Relations Act' in 1969 and 1971 respectively; as if British industry had not suffered a qualitative decline since the 1950s and as if the ruling class had any other option but to attack the labour movement in the hopeless effort to maintain profitability, as if it wasn't Rodgers, Williams and Owen who took part in the Government whose policy of wage restraint and strike breaking (Firemen's dispute) was crushed by the working class in the winter of 1978/79.

In the country as a whole, at the grassroots, support for the SDP is contradictory. On the one hand it is clear many traditional Tory voters, frightened by the disasters of the Thatcher regime, are defecting. But the SDP has also won a fair amount of support from traditional Labour voters. The root cause of this is the refusal of the

name of unity against the Tories. Evidently this has led some confused Labour voters to identify the SDP as a possible alternative. Foot and Healey are to blame for this.

The attitude of the Labour leaders to the SDP is predictably ambivalent. On the one hand Healey and co. have to keep their distance from it to more effectively carry out their sabotage inside the Labour Party. However it was Shirley Williams who said not so long ago that the idea of a centre party was "without principles and without fears". At the level of policy Healey is far closer to the SDP than he is to Labour Party conference, and Foot protects him. Healey may talk of winning a majority for Labour but in reality he would be far happier in coalition with the SDP and therefore armed with an excuse against implementing Labour's policies.

The present line of the Foot-Healey leadership is fundamentally responsible for the SDP's ascent. Healey is after all their ally. The right wing can't fight the SDP because they're politically too close to it. But we cannot ignore it or its allies still in the Labour Party. The left must organise to go out and fight it. The battle for democracy which drove out the SDP has to continue if the Labour Party is to take power again. It is imperative that the left maintain an offensive nationally and locally to drive out the right wing who have split Labour Groups on numerous councils, continue to hold seats which they won as Labour candidates etc etc. Foot's plea for unity really means unity behind a policy of passivity in the face of Thatcher and continued loss of support. A Labour Party that goes into an election on this basis of cowardly passivity

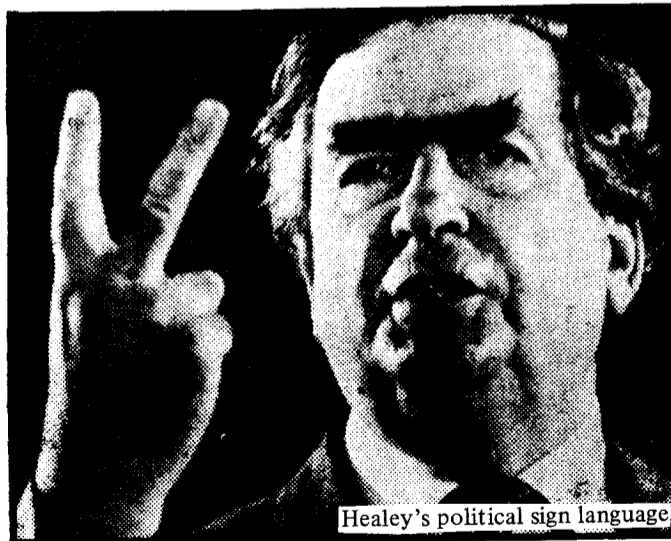


David Owen

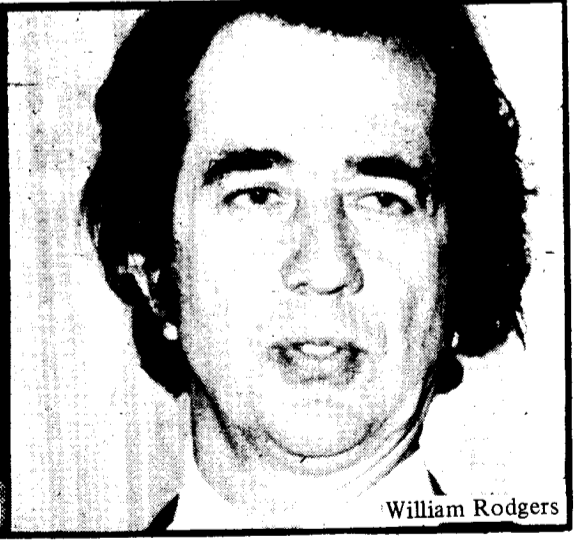
COALITIONS

The SDP may well be an important factor in the life of the next government. So what is it and who supports it? It came out of the Labour Party, which, since the days of 1906, has been a party containing both a working class base and an apparatus which supports the ruling class. In moments of extreme crisis the more openly right wing leaders of the Labour Party have directly linked themselves with the political parties of the ruling class. The classic example are the First and Second World War coalitions and the 'National Government' of 1931.

Today, the problems facing the ruling class are even more explosive than 1931. When MacDonald formed the National Government the aftermath of the General Strike was still weighing on the working class.



Healey's political sign language



William Rodgers

Labour leadership, both nationally and locally, to confront the Tories and pose a way forward. Locally leaders like Livingstone and Knight have both suffered at the hands of the SDP because of their policy of massive rate rises rather than take Thatcher head on in the struggle against cuts. Nationally Foot and co. have done nothing to centralise the nationwide hostility to Thatcher. Foot argues that the divisions in the party have caused support to fall. This is undoubtedly true but not for the reasons Foot outlines. The campaign against a united party has come precisely from Foot and Healey themselves who have used the national press and TV to berate Benn and co., flout conference policies and do absolutely nothing about the Tories in the

The election results in Croydon and Warrington were both bad for the Labour Party. They just held on to the safe-seat Warrington but had their vote halved in Croydon. In the GLC by-election in St Pancras the Labour vote fell by one-third and the SDP took the seat. However in every instance the Tory vote fell dramatically, in St Pancras it fell 50%. This indicates a strong anti-Tory sentiment. But in both Croydon and St Pancras the issue of massive rate rises administered by a Labour Council obviously had a critical affect. The unpopularity of the Tories at the polls clearly shows that if Labour led an offensive to oust the Government, as opposed to remaining a passive, loyal opposition, the SDP would have little appeal to Labour supporters

is doomed to opposition and Healey's willingness to form a coalition with his allies in the SDP.

The need for the left in the Labour Party to regroup nationally and locally is not simply about achieving democracy internally. This battle is but a prerequisite for a fight to place in leadership those who are prepared, at local level to confront Heseltine's legislation and on the national plane to struggle for the bringing down of the Tories and the return of a majority Labour Government. The possibility of a future Labour Government and the crushing of the Tories and the SDP depends on the determination of the left to prevent the Labour right wing dragging the Labour Party into the General Election disarmed and demoralised.



CPSA Broad Left meets

The Civil and Public Services Association, largest civil service trade union, has a strong Broad Left. At its conference, held in Leeds on November 6th and 7th, the shadow of British Leyland hung over all the proceedings.

Civil servants fought a 20 week battle in the last pay round. They know the importance of unity in fighting the 4%. The BL strike makes this unity even more urgent.

CPSA Broad Left passed resolutions calling on the CPSA leaders to call a joint public sector workers' conference against the 4% and agreed to work with other Broad Lefts towards such a conference.

The Leeds conference was the biggest ever, with over 250 militants from all over Britain. A central debate was on reaffiliation to the Labour Party. It is not generally known that clerical civil servants were affiliated to the Labour

Party in the 1920s. It was a Tory law, after the General Strike, which forcibly disaffiliated them.

A Campaign Committee had been set up by the Broad Left national committee, but it had excluded anyone who was not an individual member of the Labour Party. This was done on the initiative of supporters of the *Militant* paper. Many CPSA Broad Left supporters are in favour of affiliation to the Labour Party, some of them are already individual members, many are not. The supporters of *Militant*, who put up the rule that only Labour Party members can join the Campaign Committee, are operating what amounts to a proscription or ban against those who would pay the levy to the Labour Party but not be individual members. They do this on the grounds of fear of a press witch-hunt against 'communist' influence. *As if there isn't*

already a howling capitalist press attack on the Militant itself.

There will be an inevitably hue and cry if the CPSA decides to affiliate to the Labour Party. On top of this, the supporters of *Militant* are denying the right of all tendencies in the workers' movement to support and take part in the Labour Party if they so choose.

In this they are sailing close to the methods of Chappell, who argued against the discussing of the Labour Party deputy leadership in the unions because it would give members of the Communist Party a say in Labour Party affairs.

Supporters of the *Militant* also forced through the CPSA Broad Left conference a series of economic resolutions, including a call for the "nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy". It clearly saw the Broad Left as a vehicle

for rubber stamping its own programme. However there was one small omission — no reference was made to getting rid of the Thatcher government!

There was a three cornered fight within the Broad Left over who to run for the presidency of CPSA. *Militant* won this fight against supporters of the Communist Party and against the Socialist Caucus. The latter is the main regroupment of those within the Broad Left who reject the useless politics of the CP and *Militant* but want to build campaigns on pay, cuts and democracy. The outrageous attitude of *Militant* over the Campaign Committee for Labour Party Reaffiliation was not totally unconnected with the fact that one of their supporters is running for the General Secretaryship of CPSA. *Militant* supporters attacked the policy of selective strikes and piecemeal action pursued

during the 20 week 'pay campaign'. They forgot to mention that they themselves supported this policy until it was too late. They opposed all-out strikes on the grounds that the members of CPSA were too backward to support it!

CPSA Broad Left supporters need to formulate a programme of action for the coming year. To start with, the recent appeal from Alan Fisher, the leader of NUPE, for all public sector workers to come to the aid of council manual workers against the 4% should be taken up. The Socialist Caucus should build joint action committees across the public sector unions in the localities, ready to help any sector in struggle and campaign for the CPSA National Executive to endorse the call for a joint public sector conference before the New Year against the 4%.

West London becoming an industrial wasteland

The closure of the Hoover factory in Perivale, West London, adds yet another nail to the industrial coffin of that area. West London was once a great manufacturing area, now few factories are left. Heathrow Airport has become the biggest employer and the 8,000 layoffs at British Airways are hitting even there. 1,081 jobs are going at Hoover. Many skilled workers are on the scrapheap. There they will join their comrades from the British Leyland truck factories which closed in Southall and Park Royal, from the closed Firestone tyre plant, the United Biscuits factory and the Aladdin heater plant. West London will be as much an industrial wasteland as Newcastle or Liverpool.

There is a crying need not only for the unions to fight this never-ending tide of closures from within industry but for the organisation of the unemployed. Most of those losing their jobs have traditions of trade union membership. It is a crime for the union leaders to accept closure after closure and let those made redundant quietly slip into oblivion on the dole. The unions should be forced to build a national unemployed workers' movement and link it with employed trade unionists in a wave of anti-Thatcher protest which could shake the government to the core and make the People's March look like a tea party. A recent conference of the unemployed called for national organisation. The potential is enormous. It must be mobilised and soon.

Unite the Public Sector!

Water workers have been offered 6.5%. This was quickly rejected by the public sector union negotiators. The 6.5% offer follows the 10% offer to firemen and nearly 10% for the miners, all well over the 4% 'pay norm'. This would seem to indicate an attempt by the Tories to quietly introduce a kind of two-tier system in the public sector, where stronger, industrially-based sections could expect seven to ten percent and the weaker local government, clerical and professional sections, such as nurses and teachers can only look for 4%.

Such crude divisive tactics by Thatcher must be opposed by all workers in the public sector. Even those being offered the higher settlements are losing by the 4%, for it is the driving down of the weaker sections to 4% which allows offers such as 6.5% to be made to waterworkers. This may appear good compared to 4% but the true picture is given when we remind ourselves that the rate of inflation is running at above 11%. *Offers of 6.5% are wage cuts!*

Public sector workers from all quarters must keep up the calls for an alliance of public sector unions, to co-ordinate claims and industrial action. Joint meetings of union chiefs are not enough. Action is needed and soon. The government

is the common employer. If the union leaders settle for the stronger sections and leave the weak to suffer 4%, and unions such as the GMWU and NUPE cover all areas, they will have acted as willing accomplices of the Tory government.

The Queen's Speech revealed a change to a virtual statutory wage policy, a wage freeze well below the rate of inflation. This makes a united response by all public sector unions even more imperative. Most rises are now being tied to productivity clauses, which in effect means not only that workers are taking pay cuts against the rate of inflation, but that conditions of work are getting worse. In any case, how can nurses and teachers achieve higher 'productivity' without the health and education services suffering? This is yet another divisive trick by the Tories.

On a local basis rank and file members and representatives from all the public sector unions should seek to build committees to publicise their joint claims, pressure union leaders for action and build solidarity action with those on strike or working to rule.

If the government cannot afford to pay wage rises which keep up with the cost of living then it has to be forced out of office.



Tenants organise against Heseltine

On December 2nd in the Grand Committee Room at the House of Commons several hundred council house tenants are expected to gather to discuss a campaign for a nationwide rents freeze. The meeting has been called by the Lewisham tenants' association (FELTRA). Already tenants in Walsall have refused to pay the recent rent rise and the meeting on December 2nd will discuss ways in which this bold stand can be extended.

FELTRA argue that tenants are sick of being forced to pay ever-increasing rents as well as suffer cuts in services. The Tory Government announcement that rents are to go up again in April 1982 is the last straw.

The meeting on December 2nd is extremely important in that it is the first time council tenants have organised to counter Thatcher's attacks on a national scale.

The campaign for a national rents freeze also raises the problem of Labour controlled councils. Will they continue to carry out the

Tories' dirty work by administering rent increases, or will they stand shoulder to shoulder with the tenants against the Tories? FELTRA state in their leaflet advertising the December 2nd meeting that they want Lewisham Labour Council to stop apologising for rent rises and start fighting with the tenants against the Tories.

FELTRA are absolutely correct to ask the question. Heseltine's local government legislation leaves no room for manoeuvre. The choice for Labour Councils is a stark one. Either they become Heseltine's slaves or they start building now a great alliance of Councils, local government trade unions and tenants' organisations in a campaign against all cuts, all rate rises to cover cuts and against any further rent rises.

It is no longer possible for Labour Councils to hang on and hope for the best. Council tenants can no longer afford to pay for this cowardly policy.

Broadwater Farm Estate says No to local police station

The Broadwater Farm Tenants Association Committee, based on a large council estate in Haringey, North London, have asked the police to set up a police substation, manned 16 hours a day. The request was made at a meeting with police, kept small "because the police wanted it that way and the Tenants Association felt they could not make progress with a big meeting". There was apparently a presence at the meeting from Haringey's Labour controlled council. Only six "specially invited" tenants were there, all white, although a large proportion of tenants on the estate are black.

Some tenants on the estate plan to circulate a questionnaire to ask the question "Do you want police in your estate to harass your children more easily?"

The estate is run down and the community centre largely just a drinking

club. Unemployed youth have virtually nowhere to go except cafes with money-eating video games. The community centre does nothing for these youth. According to the police there were 36 break-ins and 10 attempted break-ins from July 23rd to September 23rd. Some tenants allege that many of these are down to a desire to move away from the estate or even get a new lock on the door.

Whatever the situation, it is clear that a police station on Broadwater Farm Estate will do nothing to improve the life or finances of unemployed youth. Any resources spent by Haringey council must go on amenities for the tenants and their children. The police can do only one thing and this they are good at - intimidate the youth, especially black youth. *No to a police station on Broadwater Farm Estate!*

Defend the rights of local government!

The court case taken by Tory controlled Bromley council against the Labour Greater London Council reveals just how fragile the democratic rights of local government are in Britain today. In effect, what was taken to court was the right of an elected authority to carry out its manifesto. Labour had made no secret of their 'cheap fares policy' before they were elected. Denning told them they must renege on their manifesto.

The Denning ruling shows what contempt judges have, and indeed the legal aristocracy in general has, for the rights of Labour councils. This incident is not an aberration and must be treated very seriously by all working class activists, in the face of Heseltine's assault

on local government. It is an object lesson in the workings of the British state, which when necessary, does not hesitate for a second to overturn democratic rights.

The current Labour GLC policy of cutting fares and massively increasing rates is not one that is widely supported among ratepayers, most of whom in London are working class. But the arguments on this point should not be tangled up with the Denning judgement. *Denning did not act in the defence of the living standards of the working class. The Labour GLC must be defended all the way against the reactionary geriatric Tory legal system. Our watchword should be - Legal hands off local government!*

HESELTINE'S LAW Anarchy in the Town Halls

Two stark alternatives now face Labour councils. Either refuse to carry out the Heseltine measure and challenge the Government. Or, carry out the cuts and rip the heart out of local government. However, the attempt by some Labour councillors with past left wing reputations, to run away from the fight is still going on. In a recent issue of *Labour Herald*, Ted Knight, the leader of

Lambeth Council, suggested that Labour councils should hold their own referenda, in advance of the May 1982 council elections. He reckons this would help gauge support for a policy of no cuts and rate freezing.

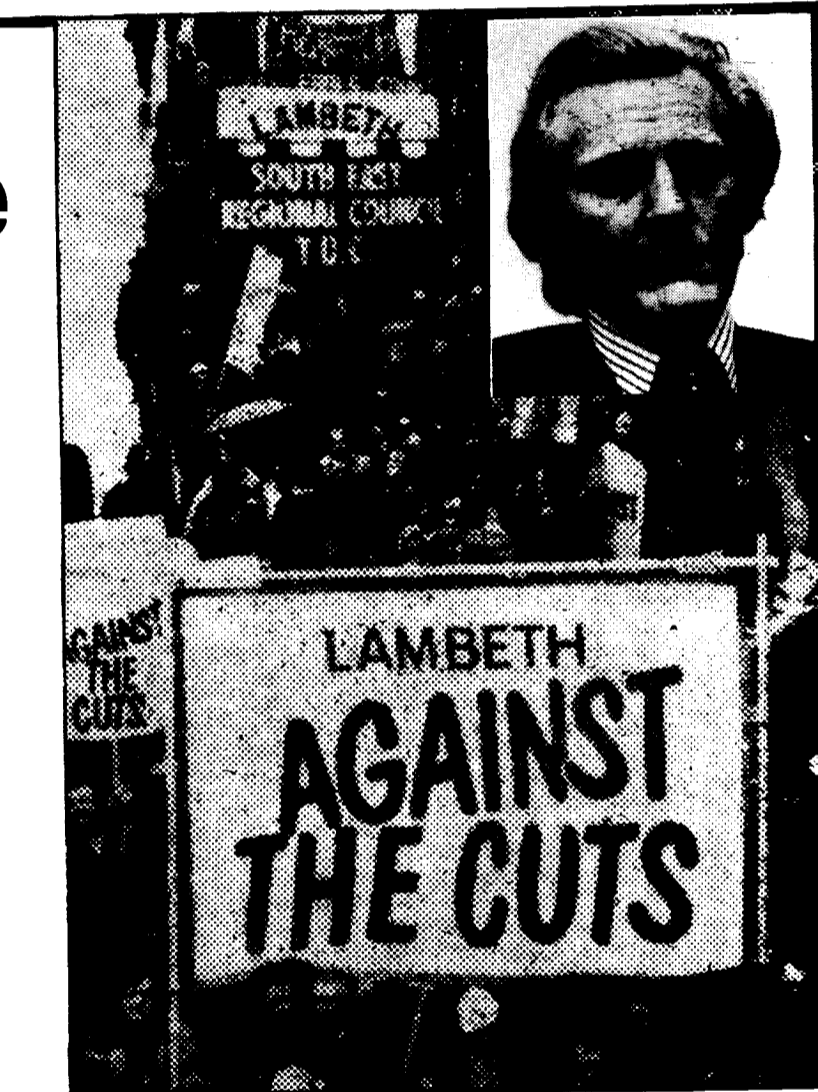
Leaving aside the hypocrisy of Knight, who has seen massive cuts and jobs losses through in the Borough of Lambeth and is well

known as a rate riser, the idea of an 'alternative referendum' is a great mistake. The history of referenda in Britain shows that they have only been used to railroad the working class, for example on the questions of the EEC. More recently, in Coventry, the Labour council right wing used the device of a referendum to push through cuts in jobs and services.

This is the time for Labour Councils to unite and challenge Heseltine

Legislation is currently being pushed through the House of Commons designed to give the Tory Government the right to fix an upper limit to local government expenditure. The Tories are, at the moment, divided over how to react to councils that spend above Heseltine's legal limit. The original proposal for an enforced referendum has had to be dropped because Tory backbenchers rejected it, fearing that Tory councils would be drastically affected. Now it appears Heseltine will push for a system of fresh local elections every time a council 'overspends'.

Heseltine will try to use these elections to force Labour councils to make massive cuts. The situation for many local Labour controlled authorities is not a good one. They have incurred a good deal of hostility from traditional Labour voters by trying to avoid the fight with Heseltine by making massive rate rises. Of course, Heseltine is no friend of the ratepayer. Even if a Labour council was to win an election on a rate-rise programme Heseltine's legislation is designed to force local councils to levy domestic ratepayers as opposed to commercial ratepayers. Working-class householders, who are already suffering falling living standards, would have to pay for the services



they themselves need to use. Under these circumstances most people would vote against rate rises and thus against many Labour councils.

This whole discussion on referendums, although not now directly relevant, does highlight the lengths to which local Labour leaders are prepared to go to avoid confrontation with the Tories.

The problems are very severe. They require a determined and united stand against the Tories. Ted Knight and others like him must call for and lead a mass movement of Labour councils, trade unions and Labour Parties against the Government. Not to do so at this

stage would be a conscious betrayal.

Heseltine's attacks on Borough councils involve direct interference and intimidation, seen in the GLC fares affair for instance, and threaten to create anarchy and collapse in local government.

If Labour councils are to be forced into elections on the issue of overspending, they must campaign together to reject all cuts and rate and rent rises with a demand on central government to provide the money needed to maintain services.

Only on this basis can the necessary unity of council employees and tenants be achieved to confront the Tories.

job cuts on docks

The National Dock Labour Board is seeking a further 2,750 redundancies from the registered dock labour force. In order to get them the NDLB upped its offer of severance pay from a maximum of £10,500 to £16,000. As a result 2,578 dockers applied to leave the industry.

This represents a cut of 13% in the registered list of 20,500 dockers. Already this spring 2,200 dockers left Liverpool and London on a similar scheme with a workforce of 2,000. The dockers' predicament

in Britain is nearing rock bottom. London and Liverpool, once among the most powerful ports in the world, are now in a state of decay. These changes reflect the collapse of former industry and made possible by the massive cuts in public services. The dockers' predicament is a direct result of the cuts in public services. The dockers' predicament is a direct result of the cuts in public services. The dockers' predicament is a direct result of the cuts in public services.

BL SELLOUT

The traitors must go!

The outcome of the short but crucial dispute at British Leyland over the 3.8% can be summed up in one word — *sellout!*

The mood of the workers was angry after Edwardes made his 3.8% offer, combined with a threat to sack anyone who struck. It was anger tempered with the knowledge that the threat was not hollow. BL workers know that the misery of the dole queue is only too close in the West Midlands and other areas. They wanted to keep BL open and they wanted their jobs.

But they also wanted a living wage. For four years running Edwardes has imposed a single figure pay rise on BL workers, with the clear connivance of the union leaders, above all Terry Duffy. BL workers are not greedy mavericks. They have been taking *cuts* in real wages to keep BL open. One Longbridge worker said, "In twenty years at Longbridge I have never seen a mood like this before. We have been talking for four years, but the time must come when we take on this man Edwardes. At Longbridge we have lost 5,000 jobs, raised productivity 30% and still we don't get the money."

That was the reality behind the strike.

The strike was about a low pay offer, 3.8%. By anyone's standards a pittance compared to the 11% rate of inflation. Things don't end there though. It is no accident that Edwardes takes on BL workers just at the moment Thatcher announces a 'pay norm' of 4%. *The BL dispute was a political dispute.* As well as Edwardes the BL workers were fighting the intentions of the Tory government. This fact makes the sellout by the union leaders trebly criminal. *Duffy, Chappell, Kitson and Len Murray have opened the way for the Tories to try to attack not only wages but the very power of the trade unions.*

It seems the union leaders will do anything except take on Thatcher.

The sellout began even before the strike started. On October 27th, Len Murray presided over 'private' talks between Edwardes and the BL union bosses. What was the object of these talks? Michael Edwardes always made it clear he wouldn't give an inch. Indeed, Ken Cure, one of the chief union leaders, speaking of talks with Edwardes, said, "We will be going with an open mind but I think the company will be going with a closed one." The talks Cure referred to took place one day before the strike began, *after the workforce had massively indicated it wanted to fight.* Cure's "open mind" was an arrogant dismissal of the wish of his members to fight and win. Under crisis conditions where Edwardes threatened to sack thousands, where every BL worker was placing his job on the line by striking, Cure had "an open mind".

This is the measure of the right wing union bosses.

OUR LIVES AT STAKE

Cure, Hawley and their ilk have the power to treat BL workers with such contempt because they have stood by while Edwardes attacked the shop steward structures in BL. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the component parts of today's BL all had powerful local rank and file stewards' committees. These were able to motivate their workforce and counter the attempts of management to drive up productivity at the expense of wages, through devices such as measured day work. Edwardes was put in to attack the stewards. This was done by replacing plant by plant



time officials of the TGWU and AUEW became the main negotiators. Shop stewards, fighting to establish a combine wide structure to answer the problem, were virtually reduced to a kind of 'advisory' body in relation to national pay, productivity and manning questions. This situation gave Edwardes the green light to clamp down on steward organisation locally. The victimisation of Derek Robinson at Longbridge was a prime example.

Even this was not enough for Edwardes. He has worked, for the past two years, to reduce even the full time union officials to a passive role. He is a man driven by an ego which strongly reflects the crisis measures necessary in

them are the fault of the workforce.

In the face of these problems either the interests of the workers or the profits of the management have to come first. You can't have it both ways.

The BL management want to reduce 'fixed costs' by £240 million a year. This means massive job losses and closedown of plants. Taking this figure as a base, not only the 5,000 redundancies due at Rover Solihull, Coventry Engines and Speke, will be needed, but another 20,000 out the gate on top of that. This is what BL workers now face through the treachery of the union leaders.

Edwardes must further weaken the unions to achieve his ends. BL workers are well aware of this. One picket said, "If I had a picket line I would block the gates at

Edwardes thought it worth his while to see Michael Foot privately, to try to persuade him to use his influence against the strikers. Foot refused to intervene then. *He did not make a single statement in defence of the BL workers' fight for a living wage, of their right to strike without being threatened with the sack, or in defence of union rights.* Instead he begged, yes, *begged*, Thatcher to intervene. She brushed him off saying, "Industrial relations are a matter for the company and the Government is not seeking to influence the company in those matters." Foot did not support the BL workers. His action, just as much as those of Duffy, and Kitson, were those of someone seeking to prevent the defeat of Edwardes and Thatcher.

Only Tony Benn, in a speech to BL truck workers, spoke out. He called for the removal of Edwardes.

DIRTY WORK BY LEADERS

The day the strike started, Kitson and Cure went on television and made it clear they were in favour of ending the strike, behind a flimsy screen of ambiguities which every BL car worker would interpret as 'go back to work'. They did this on the basis of 'new terms' offered by Edwardes. What were these terms? In relation to pay, nothing. The return to work was being put to the workforce on the basis of a statement by Edwardes to seek, "an adjustment in the manner in which we do things." In the face of clear indicators from the union bosses that they would not prosecute the strike with the full strength of the unions at their disposal, the workers agreed two days later to go back to work by 25 plants to 7, by a margin of around 25,000 to 18,000. Edwardes had won the round, *the union leaders had done the dirty work.*

For the second time this year, the first being the prolonged civil service dispute, union leaders held their members back from delivering a crushing blow to the Tories.

The BL workers felt defeated — but not broken. Cowley voted massively for the strike and the mood there over the cave-in was bitter and angry. Remarks were made about the weakness of Longbridge workers. There is some justification in view of the weak way that Communist Party convenor Jack Adams called for the strike to continue. But this does not apply to the Longbridge workers as a whole. They have been made cautious by many bad experiences with the union leaders and the inadequacies of their CP led stewards, such as around the Robinson affair. It would be wrong for plant to be pitted against plant. **This will only help Edwardes.** Very soon the anger of the BL workers was shown in a new outbreak of strikes over an attempt by management to cut the length of tea breaks, in an attempt to make the workforce bear the brunt of a reduction in the basic working week to 39 hours. The unions propose to fund the shorter working week by adjustments in bonus payments, but the sharpness of the dispute has to be seen in the light of the anger BL workers feel towards the management. *An anger over the sellout.*

THREAT TO CAR INDUSTRY

Edwardes felt confident enough after the sellout to ask Thatcher for £900 million in cash grants. In return the cabinet asked him to speed up the hiving off of the profitable bits of BL and the closedown of the rest. This would mark the end of BL as we know it.

made a loss of £45.3 million last year. Any breakup or reduction in order from BL would make a company like Lucas fall to pieces.

The whole British car industry is being immediately affected by the outcome of the BL defeat. The public sector as a whole, is facing cuts and the 4% pay freeze limit. Fords, on the brink of industrial action from its workforce, has laid down '5 Principles' relating to pay rises, which directly reflect the methods of Edwardes. They are:

- optimum mobility and flexibility
- co-operation with new technology
- avoidance of demarcation restrictions
- full overtime flexibility
- avoidance of lost time in working hours.

Each one of these applies equally to BL. Each one is an attack on the power and rights of trade unions. Each one would worsen working conditions. *They must all be fought!*

The response of the union leaders to the sellout deal reveal that they knew the strike was a political strike which could have defeated Thatcher's 4% pay limit and opened up a smashing wave of battles this winter. Len Murray supported the return to work on the basis that it was "premature to take on the government".

Len Murray must say, when will it be time? After more defeats and sellouts? Murray must be branded as a defender of the Tories.

Terry Duffy said, "I'm backing England." This kind of gibberish says it all. We put the question to Duffy, whose England are you backing, that of the BL workers or that of Thatcher and Edwardes? **You can't have it both ways.**



Edwardes the axeman

REMOVE THE TRAITORS!

The BL dispute faces car workers and all sections of the working class, with more difficult tasks in fighting the 4%. The unions are under threat from Tebbit and new laws. The BL sellout helps Tebbit do his work. *But a sellout is not the same as a defeat in battle.* If the BL strike had been fought with all the strength of the unions at the disposal of the union leaders and Labour movement, then not only Edwardes but Thatcher as well could have been defeated. The task now is to broadcast far and wide the betrayal, to call for the removal of the traitors who sit in the head offices of the TGWU and AUEW, and to fight within BL for an accountable negotiating structure. The traitors who have sold out the workers must be removed from the union leadership.



Higher Education on the block

It is no coincidence that news of massive Tory cuts in the University and Public Sector Higher Education has been closely followed by proposals for equally savage cuts in student grants. Both attacks represent a coordinated campaign to weaken what has come to be known as our Right to Education.

But the Government will face combined opposition from the teaching, administrative, professional and ancillary unions, as well as students' unions themselves — and consequently on the leadership of the NUS, which if the recent past is anything to go by, is unlikely to meet the struggle head-on, but adopt a conciliatory fall-back position.

Until fairly recently the education system was based vaguely on the notion that individuals from any class background had at least some opportunity of getting into higher education. Obviously we shouldn't be naive about the reality that underlies this principle, but the grants system was structured to give at least the impression of equal opportunity. This impression is now being blown apart.

The Tories have consistently attempted to undermine our right to education, while at the same time ensuring the survival of the more privileged educational sector. It is against the background of this policy that we should view the Tories' attacks on student grants. For the latest proposals are clearly intended to penalise working class students.

To begin with the Tories advanced the plan to change student grants to student loans. This system would deter a great many from even considering higher education. But a loans system also raises the danger of students becoming victims of employers prepared to super-exploit undergraduates and graduates desperately trying to pay off their 'debt'. This danger is still hanging over all students, as one of the Government proposals is to review the type of Higher Education courses which are at present designated as carrying mandatory award status. Another proposal, to cut discretionary awards altogether, is clearly designed to prevent working-class students from gaining Further or Higher Education. Up until now, each individual authority had just enough independence

to allow for a certain measure of flexibility when considering claims for awards. The cutting of discretionary awards means that central government will now rigidly determine exactly who does receive an award — and no amount of mitigating evidence can be cited by a student in support of his or her case. The students most affected by these cuts will be those who are married and whose spouse is working, those who have done virtually any type of course before. The many thousands who are caught out by the intricate and constantly shifting regulations are above all working-class students.

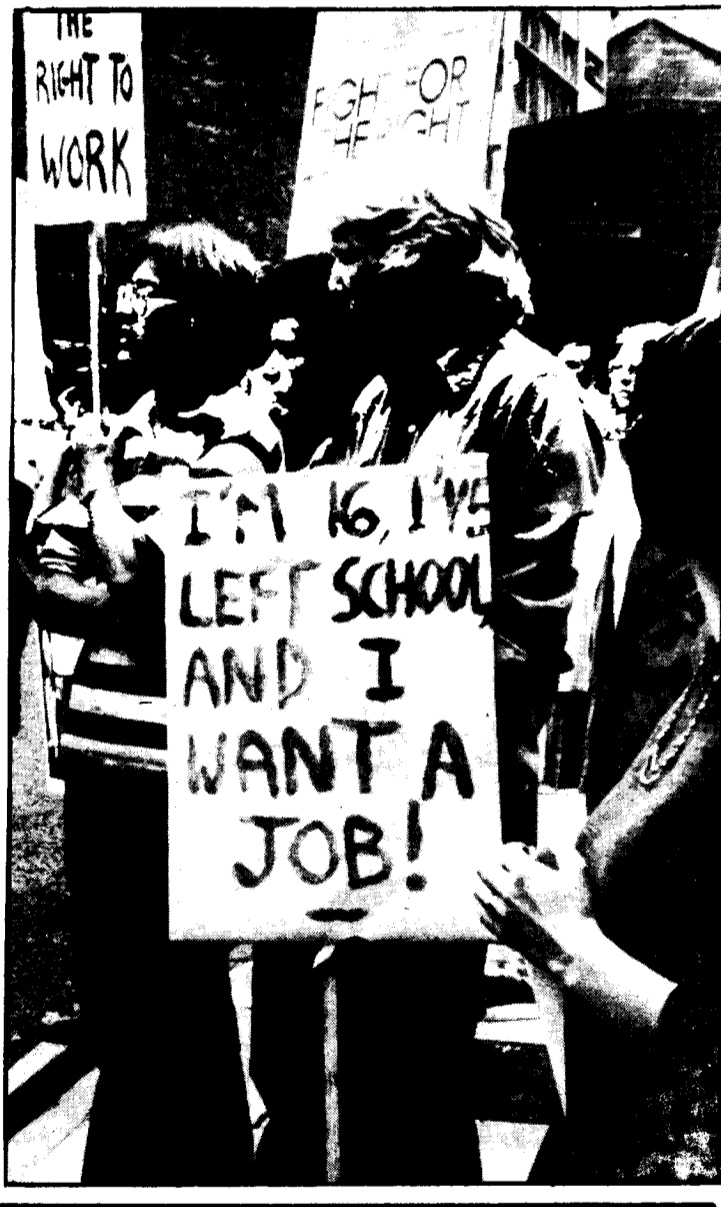
The Tories are also considering cutting the length of the student grant from three years to two. English degree courses are already about the shortest in Europe, and any attempt to shorten the duration further will have dire consequences for academic standards. Students are facing the problem of financing themselves for at least one year of their course. Clearly with student grants already falling behind the rate of inflation, the prospect for students having to finance themselves for a substantial part of the course, are grim indeed. Given the current unemployment situation very few students will be able to work to support themselves. Consequently only those with a substantial income will have enough security to take a course, let alone complete it, without having to worry about where the next meal is coming from, or how to pay for necessary books.

There can be no doubt that underlying the economic arguments the Tories produce to support education cuts, there exists a much more sinister intention. That is, to ensure that education is far more closely geared to suit ruling class interests in this period of political and economic crisis. They hope to determine more rigidly who has access to education and also what education is.

Any failure to cut back in educational institutions will be compensated by cuts in student grants and will result in further destruction of the right of the working class to further education. We must take a stand now. *There must be no cuts, either in educational facilities, or in student grants. A defeat in either area will mean a defeat in both.*

Jobs Express

Mobilise the youth don't railroad'm



The Jobs Express will be making its way around Britain this month picking up several hundred unemployed youth in most major cities. This initiative from the TUC regions comes towards the end of a year in which the youth of Britain has dramatically stamped its presence on the British political landscape.

Youth unemployment has been a long standing issue in Britain throughout the 70s and 80s and particularly since Thatcher took office. It was a key theme on the Peoples March in May of this year. The idea of a Jobs Express arose out of the Peoples March mobilisations. However the youth rebellion in July has raised fundamental questions about how to organise youth against unemployment and the Tory government responsible for doubling unemployment in the space of two years.

The riots in July, particularly the events which occurred in Toxteth, Moss Side and Brixton, revealed that the largely unorganised youth

recognised the necessity of organising against police harassment. The subsequent emergence of Defence Campaigns in numerous cities and towns like Liverpool, Bradford and Woolwich confirms this.

The central problem in organising the youth in Britain after July is to create a framework through which the revolutionary energy demonstrated in July can be mobilised in a permanent and direct fashion. The Jobs Express simply does not fit this need. On the contrary, everything about the Jobs Express is designed to control and contain the youth, to reduce the energy revealed in July to the level of passive appeals to Thatcher for a change of heart. This approach was always a key element in the Peoples March. However the fact that support demonstrations could be organised to support the march in May enabled workers and youth to transform the march into a massive anti-Tory mobilisation.

For the best part of the Jobs Express 'Campaign' the unemployed

youth will literally be locked up in a train! What is worse, the TUC is going to great lengths to depoliticise the whole affair. For instance local Labour Parties have been banned from taking part in the organisation of local arrangements committees on the grounds that it is a political party!

Rather than build on the strengths expressed in the July events, the TUC want to bury the memory of the riots as a bad nightmare over which they had no control and little influence. Rather than champion the cause of unemployed youth with a dynamic campaign, the TUC seek to use them as an apolitical football. The TUC has 12 million members and enormous resources to build a direct campaign of mobilisations against the Tories. Instead it books a train!

However this should not lead us to boycott the Jobs Express. The struggle must be taken up to break it out of the straitjacket the TUC regions have imposed. Many unemployed youth, who have little or no opportunity to demonstrate their anger, will look to this initiative as a chance to become involved in a fight against their oppression. It is this willingness to fight that the labour movement rank and file must build on.

First of all local receptions for the Jobs Express must be turned into political demonstrations. This will necessitate a struggle against the bureaucrats who are busily organising festival jamborees. Thatcher can endure countless numbers of festivals. But she had great difficulty in containing the direct activities of British youth in July. This does not mean we counterpose riots to festivals. But it does mean organising political, anti-Tory Government mobilisations.

Against the passive appeals of the TUC leadership we must advance the following as the central features of the campaign:

1. Full trade union rights for all YOPS workers.
2. Full unemployment benefit for all jobless school leavers.
3. For a specific drive against racism in employment which results in far greater percentages of Blacks being kept jobless.
4. For an end to the political restrictions on TUC unemployed centres. For the right of the youth to organise their own political and independent activities.

The labour movement, trades councils, trade union branches AND constituency Labour Parties must organise to stand with the unorganised youth. They must make their facilities available to youth who want to organise directly against their oppression and against the Tories.

The Jobs Express Campaign reaches its 'climax' on November 29th and 30th. The march and rally on Sunday 29th must not be a repetition of past mass demonstrations. The days of marching simply to make heard the anger about unemployment are over. November 29th must raise the demand — bring down the Tories!

On Monday November 30th the youth on the Jobs Express are due to meet the leaders of all parties in Parliament. To the Tory leaders we have only one thing to say — RESIGN! To the Labour leaders we say: Make concrete your support for the unemployed. Disrupt Parliament for the day by boycotting the Commons and greeting the unemployed youth en masse.

The spirit of July 1981 burns on in the minds and experience of youth in Britain. We need a national campaign which can organise youth in an offensive to cripple Thatcher's regime and bring down the Tories.

British Labour must oppose Irish deal



Fitzgerald and Thatcher

On Friday November 6th a meeting took place between the government of Margaret Thatcher and the Irish coalition government of Garret Fitzgerald. This was not merely a routine exchange of views. It had something of the nature of a summit conference.

What were its results?

It decided to establish an 'inter-governmental council'; to set up a joint economic committee; to sell southern Irish gas to the 6 Counties, to restore North-South electricity connections; to work for closer 'legal co-operation' and to establish other advisory bodies. Thatcher indicated that, under the impact of the massive movement unleashed across Ireland by the Hunger Strikes, she has grasped the need to incorporate the Irish ruling class directly into the work of stabilising British domination in a capitalist Ireland.

Almost ten years ago a summit meeting of the British and Irish governments took place in Sunningdale. This meeting tried to find a constitutional way out of the anti-imperialist war in Ireland. It failed. Thatcher may well attempt another Sunningdale type agreement on the basis of the 'inter-governmental council'. This new move by the Tories, with the tacit support of the Labour leaders, infuriates hardline unionists like Paisley. The British ruling class are testing the water towards a deal that would make the southern Irish ruling class politicians the main defenders of capitalism in Ireland. The scope of the Hunger Strike movement was such that the stability of the whole of Ireland was threatened and under these

conditions the loyalists in the North would be totally inadequate to repress a mass movement, across all of Ireland's 32 counties.

The Labour-Fine Gael coalition in the South came into office through an election right in the middle of the Hunger Strikes. The election itself was forced by the Hunger Strike movement. Fianna Fail, the strongest ruling class party in Ireland, was thrown out. But the Fine Gael-Labour coalition is extremely right wing and weak, not only because it has a tiny majority, but because it sits on top of a country with huge economic and political problems. As well as Fitzgerald offering his political help to Thatcher, to maintain British domination over Ireland, Thatcher is able, by various economic measures, to help prop up the reactionary coalition in the South.

But deals on gas and electricity are totally insufficient to turn the tide of a working class movement generated in a push for an end to partition and imperialist domination. Any new Anglo-Irish ruling class 'treaty' could only take effect through the physical repression of the Republican movement and especially the youth of Ireland. For this reason socialists and democrats in Britain must denounce the Thatcher-Fitzgerald talks as yet another scheme to maintain British domination. Members of the Labour Party should fight for the rejection of anything short of total British military and administrative withdrawal from Ireland. We have no interest in propping up a right wing coalition in Ireland or helping Thatcher to hang onto the last major colony.

Socialist landslide in Greece

Greece went to the polls on October 18th. The final results gave PASOK, the Greek Socialist Party, 48% of the vote. The Communist Party won 11%. The New Democracy Party got 36%. PASOK won a clear majority.

Greece is a country with a history of violent national and class struggles and political upheavals. In 1963 huge demonstrations brought down the right wing Karamanlis government. A military coup took place in 1967, with CIA backing, to

bring the country more firmly back under imperialist control. Widescale repression was carried out by the military junta, but in 1974 the colonels were overthrown after an upsurge among the youth. This act was part of the wave of class struggle in 1974 which swept Europe and also toppled Heath. It had its highest point in the Revolution in Portugal.

Last year half a million people came onto the streets to oppose the reintegration of Greece into the NATO high command. This movement was aimed at the foreign policy of the New Democracy Party, a ruling class party which had held power since the fall of the colonels. PASOK was only formed in 1974. It claims to be a traditional socialist party and to stand in the tradition of the fight against the Nazis. It is not a party like the Labour Party with deep roots in the working class. However, it undoubtedly has the support of a majority of the Greek workers as well as many small farmers.

PASOK has a radical programme, which includes withdrawal from NATO and the Common Market. It calls for the closing of US military bases in Greece and the 'socialisation' of the banks, foreign trade and some industries. The socialisation is very limited and PASOK to try to fully nationalise the banks and foreign trade the Greek ruling class would put up massive opposition. It would take the mobilisation of the Greek working class to achieve that end.

Andreas Papandreou, the leader of PASOK, quickly tried to blunt these policies after the election victory. He has turned away from the military and foreign policy issues to the problems of inflation and unemployment. Greece has an inflation rate of 25% a year and a quarter of a million unemployed in a country a sixth the size of Britain. Papandreou stands more in the liberal tradition than anything. Under the pressure of the Reagan government and the very poor state of the Greek economy he can be expected to bend to the right.

But this does not do away with the enormity of the PASOK win. Combined with the Communist vote, the left won 59% of the vote. The mass mobilisations which surrounded the election revealed the militant mood of workers and small farmers who are fighting to defend jobs and wages and smallholdings and who need real anticapitalist measures to do so. On the other side, international capitalism has already issued its warnings, in line with Reagan's aggressive stance on the Eastern Mediterranean. The *Guardian* warned of another coup by the Greek military.

The PASOK government of Greece, combined with that of Mitterand in France, poses some deep problems for the Reagan led imperialist alliance. What is important about them both is that they were elected directly against the wishes of the ruling class. The workers and peasants of Greece can have no trust in a party like PASOK to stand its ground against capitalism. We can be sure though, that they will keep up the fight for measures in their favour.

The PASOK victory has to be understood in the context of the Eastern Mediterranean as a whole. As well as giving a chance to the Greek working class to drive home their demands it will give an impetus to the working class fighting the military in Turkey.



Athens celebrates Papandreou's victory



UDA on the march

Robert Bradford An enemy of democracy

The killing of Robert Bradford MP, on November 14th, sharply underlines the continuing crisis situation in the North of Ireland. Bradford was a leading Unionist and close friend of Ian Paisley. Loyalist retaliation attacks on Catholics began immediately. Paisley took the chance to call for the arming of the reactionary loyalist gangs.

Bradford was no friend of the working class and was an enemy of democracy in Ireland. His clergyman's dog-collar was useful as a cover for inciting hatred against the struggle for Irish unity. He called for a state of war to be declared so that 'terrorists, saboteurs and spies'

could be shot. This was his type of 'Christianity'.

When the Hunger Strike began last autumn a number of prominent supporters of the Hunger Strike were assassinated. One, Miriam Daly, who worked in Queen's University, was bound hand and foot and shot. We did not hear any outcry then against murder. No Tory or Unionist raised their voice. Robert Bradford was a representative of the British occupation of the North of Ireland and of a privileged group within the 6 Counties.

Our epitaph for the likes of Bradford must always be simply — good riddance.



IN DEFENCE OF TROTSKYISM

Labour to Power!

A quick glance at the current positions of newspapers claiming a common reference point in Trotskyism shows that different alternatives to the Tory Government are being posed. In *Militant* we find the demand for 'Labour to Power on a Socialist Programme'. In *Socialist Challenge* 'For a Labour Government committed to Socialist Policies' and in *Socialist Organiser* 'For a workers' government'. Though differently worded, all these slogans imply that there are conditions which we would place on the Labour Party taking power. This, in advance of a situation where the Labour Party is in office and immediate demands can be placed on it, conditions the way in which we fight against the Tories.

Socialist Newsletter is the only Trotskyist paper which advances the slogan 'Labour to Power', without any conditions.

We do so because we know that getting rid of the Tories as soon as possible and replacing them with a Labour Government is the only real way to pursue the discussion on the actions of such a government. What faces the working class is a fight against Thatcher. Conditional slogans like 'Labour to Power on Socialist Policies', however well meaning, only obscure the practical task facing the working class. The real way to expose the treachery of the reformist Labour leaders is to say to them - *take power and do it now*.

Recently Stuart Holland said that he did not think the Labour Party would be placed in power at the next election. Holland is one of the foremost 'left' members of parliament. He is well prepared to argue for another three years about the programme of the Labour Party. Supporters of *Militant*, *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Organiser* play into his hands by accepting the discussion, in the abstract, on such questions as the so-called Alternative Economic Strategy.

Such debates gloss over the real problems of the working class - what we are suffering daily under Thatcher.

The slogan 'Labour to Power' expresses the real needs and the real outlook of the working class and its active elements. But it is a slogan which reaches beyond just those who are active in the internal life of the Labour Party. We have to ask and answer the question: do we address our governmental slogans just to the politically advanced workers or the working class as a whole?

This is the concrete form that the struggle for a united front against the Tories takes in Britain today - the need to unite workers who support Benn with workers who support Healey in class struggle against the Tories, not ideological wordmongering within the Labour Party. To place conditions on this common fight in the form of support for a 'socialist programme' is a sectarian distortion of the method of the united front.

It involves the renunciation of activity for the whole working class for a discussion among its vanguard, or more accurately, its intellectual fringes. It is not a process of ideological clarification by the Labour Left which is needed so much as a giant practical step forward by the whole working class. It is on the basis of this practical step that the demands to be placed on the Labour leaders will become real and not just a schema.

Slogans like 'Labour to Power on a Socialist Programme' also pander to the illusion that the Labour Party can bring about socialism. In point of fact socialism requires revolutionary and not just parliamentary struggle. This the reformist Labour Party will never do. However many right wing MPs are unseated and even if Benn became leader, the Labour Party would not be transformed into a revolutionary party. The Labour Party was founded to contain the aspirations for political power by the working class within the bounds of the capitalist state. This, of course is a contradiction. Right from the word go a pro-capitalist bureaucratic apparatus, based on the union bosses and Parliament, has kept control of the Labour Party and they will never give it up. *The Labour Party would break up first*.

Another dangerous illusion is sown by slogans like 'Labour to Power on Socialist Policies', the idea that socialism can be accomplished through the monarchist and capitalist parliamentary institutions of the British state. If the Left got hold of the Labour Party and were elected to power in parliament, as soon as they tried to take any severe measures against the repressive capitalist state and largescale private property, the army, police and laws would move against them. This is what is so criminal about papers like *Militant*, which carry article after article on the dangers of governments like that of Allende in Chile, while proposing exactly the same road for Britain. Those who play with the idea of nationalising 200 monopolies in the capitalist parliament are bringing into question the whole Marxist concept of the state. For Marxists the state is a repressive instrument of the ruling class, which exists to prevent by force of arms the working class from achieving power. The state cannot be reformed. It must be smashed.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that those who claim adherence to the politics of Leon Trotsky will not find a word in his works, of support for conditional slogans like 'Labour to Power on Socialist Policies'. This idea was introduced in the war by among others - Ted Grant of *Militant* fame! Trotsky's method was to say to the reformist leaders, with no conditions - *'Break with the ruling class, take the power!'* It is on this method that *Socialist Newsletter* bases its unconditional slogan, 'Labour to power'.

Belgium

After the General Election in Belgium at the beginning of November, the *Financial Times* wrote, 'The chances of the country being able to avoid either prolonged political paralysis or sudden and violent upheaval seem slim'.

The election came after a long period of highly unstable coalition governments. But it did not end that instability, it opened a new period of even sharper problems. The results showed a marked polarisation between the left and right. There are three main groupings in Belgian politics: the Socialists, the Christian Democrats who posed as vaguely progressive, and the Liberals, who are really the equivalent of the Conservatives but are not linked to the church like the Christian Democrats.

Belgium is floundering in economic collapse like Britain, but even more sharply expressed in the smaller Belgian economy. The French speaking south faces massive closures of steel works, mines and engineering plants. It is surviving mainly on the basis of large government grants. The Flemish working class in the north is also opposed to the austerity plans which are the mark of the Liberal Party. But it has not been hit so directly by the recession, since its industries are not so old and there are chemical, electronics and other developments.

The Christian Democrat party, which has been involved in coalitions over a long period, was held responsible for the failure of government to halt the economic crisis. This attitude led to gains for both the Socialists and the Liberals. In the French south the Socialist vote grew. In Flanders it held its own. The Socialist Party increased its seats in Parliament from 58 to 62. The right wing Liberals took seats from the Christian Democrats in both Flanders and the south. They went up from 37 to 51 seats. The Christian Democrats dropped from 82 to 61.

So the three parties have 62, 51, and 61 seats. The problem of coalitionism still remains. No clear government can be formed. The Socialist Party, especially in the French south, was supported on the basis that it opposes any coalition which wants to make cuts. This stops it from easily joining a coalition with either of the other two parties. On the other hand a purely right wing coalition which makes massive cuts will face continuous and mounting battles with the unions.

The stage is set for a combined political and economic conflict which could explode into a General Strike. Twenty years ago Belgium was convulsed by a massive General Strike which lives in the memories

of the working class. In the bastions of the industrial south the working class is tense and ready for action. Over the last year there have been many large demonstrations and strikes. The giant new Cockerill-Sambre steel plant is kept open by state aid. Its workforce now faces wage cuts and job losses. Such confrontations will explode in a great wave, raising once again the need for a government of the Socialist Party alone. This means the end of any coalition involving the right-wing parties. Certainly the leaders of the Socialist Party do not wish to travel this road. They argue for a continuation of the 'consensus politics' of coalition. They want the cuts to be toned down. The working class wants no cuts at all.

The International Socialist Organisation, Belgian section of the Fourth International (IC), wrote during the election, 'The only way to defend our jobs, wages, food, schools, services and hospitals is to build our movement and show the ruling class that the fall of the governments of Martens and Eyskens were not passing episodes and that we will never break ranks to retreat.' The OSI called for: 'Not a single workers' vote for the capitalist parties!' 'Keep the fight up against the capitalist governments!' 'Vote Socialist Party!'

Mexico Trotskyist Campaign

Following their successful election campaign of last summer in which a Trotskyist deputy was elected to the Mexican Parliament, the POS and LOM (*Socialist Labour Party and Marxist Labour League*), Mexican sections of the *Fourth International (International Committee)*, are now preparing their intervention in the 1982 presidential election.

Their campaign centred on an appeal to workers' organisations calling for a common candidate based on the political independence of the working class from the bourgeois government. The response forced the *Mexican Communist Party* into joint activity and led

to the distribution of 50,000 election programmes across the country.

For next year's presidential elections, the POS and LOM are now issuing a new appeal to organisations of workers, peasants, students and anti-imperialists to stand a joint candidate against bourgeois parties on a basis of class independence.

At the same time, the POS and LOM have organised a nationwide campaign in solidarity with the Polish political revolution. This campaign has resulted in over 50 organisations coming out in support of Solidarnosc, including the 26,000 strong National Union of Telecommunications Workers.



No Comment Necessary

Unemployment is not only hitting countries like Britain. The 'miracle economy' of West Germany now has 5.9% on the dole and the coalition government, led by Schmidt, is floating the idea of social welfare cuts. 70,000 trade unionists demonstrated recently in Stuttgart to protest against these plans.

At the end of October three employers and four leading trade union figures were jailed by the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. This was done against the background of a declaration of a 'state of emergency' for one year. Those jailed were charged with 'economic sabotage'.

A split has taken place in the Spanish Communist Party. Its section in the Basque country broke away and joined with the EIA, a Basque nationalist organisation.

Addressing businessmen near Salisbury recently, Robert Mugabe said his government wished to maintain the 'efficient private enterprise system' it had inherited from Ian Smith. He said no immediate nationalisations were planned and so long as businessmen conformed with state policy 'they would have nothing to fear'.

Deng Xiaoping has launched an attack in China's three main papers on 'bureaucratism'. He calls for an end to 'abusing one's power, keeping up appearances, indulging in idle talk, thinking in a rigid way, sticking to convention, overstaffing, suppressing democracy, deceiving one's superiors, resorting to bribery and perverting justice.' Deng warned of the need for a purge.

Alexander Haig, US secretary of state for foreign affairs, said on November 4th that Reagan was 'precisely right' to conceive of a situation where you could have the exchange of tactical nuclear weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either of the main powers to pushing the button.

1,000 US troops are to be withdrawn from West Germany by the end of the year. The US has also announced that it will be stepping up its military presence in Tunisia and \$400 million in Turkey.

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Scargill for NUM President!

**SECOND EUROPEAN CONFERENCE
IN DEFENCE OF FREE TRADE UNIONS
IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE USSR
Paris December 19/20**

Defend Solidarity against the Kremlin!



"I don't believe the miners want to be the political shock troops for anybody". So said Trevor Bell, right wing candidate for the presidency of the National Union of Mineworkers. He added, that the coming election would colour British politics for the next twenty years.

Bell knows that the NUM is as political as well as industrial. The miners have become identified with militant workers' power. Bell has spoken not only on trade union issues. He, and the other right candidates for the NUM leadership, are linked with the right wing in the Labour Party. He clearly wants to use the muscle of the NUM to stop battles with the Tories rather than win them. For instance he advocates three years pay deals to avoid 'annual confrontations'.

However, Bell's campaign is going very badly. Arthur Scargill, the left candidate, is getting support not only from the militant areas like Scotland, Yorkshire and Wales, but also from areas such as Leicester, traditionally moderate. Scargill's record on some questions is dubious. He has consistently refused to support the demand that Russian miners be able to organise a free trade union. He supports the European Little England concept of coal and oil import controls.

But he is better known, and supported by miners, for his

willingness to advocate industrial action to defend living standards. Like Bell, Scargill sees the NUM presidency as a political position. His national reputation as a militant was built during the 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes, which brought down the Heath government.

Scargill has declared himself a supporter of Tony Benn. He has moved against right wing MPs like Roy Mason in Yorkshire. Scargill's support for Benn was one of the key factors in swinging the miners' vote left in the election for the deputy leader of the Labour Party.

Scargill is no revolutionary. If he becomes president the pressures on him to enter into deals against the miners' interests will be immense. There are no guarantees that Scargill will always be calling for action as he is now.

But it is the prospect of using the strength of the NUM against the Tories and against the right wing Labour traitors that so frightens the ruling class and Healeyites. It is this same prospect which makes rank and file miners support Scargill. For this reason *Socialist Newsletter* supports the candidacy of Arthur Scargill for president of the NUM, and we will call upon him, if elected, to carry the fight to throw out the right wing MPs from the Labour Party and to drive out of office the Tory Government. **Vote Scargill!**



Anna Valentinova, whose sacking from her job as cranedriver in Gdansk in 1980 led to the strikes out of which emerged the Solidarity free trade union, has launched an appeal, based on the position of the recent *Solidarity* Conference, calling for a European Conference in Defence of Free Trade Unions. This would be the second such conference. The first was held in Paris in March 1980, on the appeal of the Polish miner Edmund Zadrozynski. It elected Edmund Baluka as standing president. Baluka now works in the shipyard in Szczecin.

The new appeal from Anna Valentinova calls for a campaign to free a number of dissidents and worker militants in Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the USSR, East Germany and China.

One of the main discussions and tasks of the Second Conference, which will be held in Paris on December 19th and 20th, will be working for the defence of *Solidarity* in the trade unions of Western Europe. There is an ever increasing threat to *Solidarity* from the Kremlin. It comes at a time of aggravated shortages of food and fuel in Poland, forcing workers to take industrial and protest action. This has provided the pretext for largescale military operations inside Poland and the strengthening of the Warsaw Pact forces around her borders. At the same time Poland has applied to join the imperialist International Monetary Fund, further linking the economy to the demands of capitalism.

The response of the Polish working class has been to fight. The Silesian

region of *Solidarity* has called on its members to put forward a slate of candidates for the local elections next February. This directly attacks the fixing of elections by Warsaw through the 'licensing' of certain parties to run. A *Polish Socialist Workers Party* has also been formed, which Edmund Baluka is associated with. This party calls for the abolition of bureaucratic privileges, free elections and workers' control of industry.

APPEAL

Edmund Baluka has issued an appeal direct to British workers, including those with whom he worked in exile, calling for the twinning of workplaces, colleges and offices with those in Poland, as a means of organising direct support for *Solidarity*.

The forthcoming Paris Conference will be a step forward in organising such support. We urge all readers to seek delegations from trade union and workers' political organisations to the Conference. As Anna Valentinova's appeal concludes, *'Millions of workers, all of whom are devoted to the principles of the independent and democratic trade union movement, will rise up to defend Solidarity, for the liberation of all militant workers who are the victims of repression in the USSR and Eastern Europe, because of their fight for free Trade Unions. Let us rise to the high level of the struggle which our comrades in Eastern Europe and the USSR have undertaken! Let us be conscious that we are living through a historic moment!'*



People queue for hours outside food shops