

# socialist newsletter

Number 21

Paper of the Socialist Labour Group

February 22nd

1982

20p

## DEFEND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

After more than a month of two days, then three days a week on strike, the train drivers still did not get their 3% without strings. The McCarthy committee finding was not the same as a victory.

The first lesson to be drawn from the ASLEF dispute, and from a line of others, is that partial strikes or threatened strikes are nowhere near enough to defeat managements backed by the Tory government. Since Thatcher came to office we have seen partial strikes by engineers, shipbuilders, civil servants and train drivers.

*In no case have they won their full claim.*

Under the pressure of unemployment, low wages and high inflation and of a politically determined government, only the full industrial and political strength of the unions and Labour Party can ensure victory. If this strength were seriously mobilised in industry-wide solidarity and direct action, the main object would be to force the ruling class to withdraw its finger of accusation from the unions and Labour leaders. Above all at Sidney Weighell, who has proven himself a good friend of the job cutting destruction of the rail industry by the Tories. But also at Len Murray who claimed the ASLEF case was lost — then did nothing, and at Michael Foot — who has said nothing and done less to support the train drivers.

The working class will have to drive back and overcome these misleaders to get at the Tories and to defend its jobs and wages. There is a crying need for rank and file inter-union unity in the rail industry. **Action committees to defend jobs and services** are an immediate necessity, covering the NUR, TSSA and ASLEF and the other rail unions.

Margaret Thatcher wants to make the 1960s Beeching cuts look small. If she has her way 16,000 jobs will go as soon as possible. Many lines and stations will be closed. Others will be run without station staff. As it is, the rundown on maintenance facilities threatens many cleaning and engineering jobs and is a threat to safety. Silence by Michael Foot in the face of this is nothing less than support for Thatcher.

The railway industry is part of the backbone of the British working class, whatever the changed place of rail in the transport business. Although a small union ASLEF has a central place in the history of trade unionism. The feeling of its members for the eight hour day is something we should all back. The Tories are using the prob-

# UNITE THE UNIONS!

## BUILD RANK AND FILE ACTION COMMITTEES

lems on the railways for yet another attack on the unions. *This is part of the softening up process towards the Tebbit anti-union laws.*

The British Railways Board want a "flexible Day" to go from 6 to 10 hours. If this applies to train drivers why not to other industries? The *Times*, a true voice of the bosses, called for a "stiffening from the Government". Added to last year's settlement the current 3% being sought by drivers without strings only keeps wages level with inflation. They are being asked to take worsening conditions and job losses for nothing.

In the name of what? Not to improve efficiency on the railways, this is a myth. In the name of Tory cuts in state spending and rundown of unprofitable nationalised industry.

**Weighell must go!**

It is criminal that Weighell attacked the train drivers. Weighell has sold the jobs of his own members and is frightened that the ASLEF fight might yet spark off action by NUR guards, station staff and trackworkers, who are far from happy with the new settlement. Only the full weight of the NUR apparatus was able to stop a strike by guards. Weighell is not invulnerable. The Broad Left in the NUR and the left in the Labour Party must join together to fight for his removal.

The McCarthy findings will solve nothing. It was the same committee which produced the confusion which led to the ASLEF dispute and allowed Parker a loophole to withhold the 3%. Rail workers cannot rely on official arbitration or ACAS to protect their jobs and wages. *Under the Tories there are no firm guarantees.* Every settlement with Thatcher has a sting in its tail.

**For united action by  
all public sector  
transport workers**

Public transport as a whole is now under threat from the government. London Transport faces slashing cuts, redundancies and 100% fare rises from the middle of March. South Yorkshire bus fares will go up 300%, with cuts in services. British Airways are axing 8000 jobs this year. It is the united strength of the unions which must be brought to bear to stop this slaughter of jobs and services. The TUC has the strength to defeat Thatcher. *The TUC has the responsibility to use it.* All transport unions must be mobilised for industrial action to defeat Sir Peter Parker, to overturn the Law Lords' ruling on cheap bus fares and subsidies, to save jobs on the buses, the railways and the airlines.

# To win in May Labour must defend jobs and services

The local government elections in May will be crucial in the fight to hold the ruling class inspired SDP-Liberal offensive in check. At local level, as well as Westminster, the Tories are in crisis. Little hope is being pinned on them to oust Labour from control of most of the London boroughs and other towns.

Driving Labour back at council level could be an important element in destroying its chances of forming the next government. The SDP-Liberal Alliance, which according to the latest opinion polls is losing

support and would now gain 100 seats if the election were held, must do better than Labour in May.

If the SDP poll well a renewed pull will be exerted on Labour Party right wingers to desert. Many 'career' councillors would do so. Already they are working to wreck the election manifestos in the London boroughs, using every trick to take out measures which would mandate them to any degree of confrontation with Heseltine and Thatcher.

Contd. on page 5, col. 4.

# Labour Liaison 82

Labour Liaison '82 was established on January 23rd, at a small meeting convened on the invitation of Norman Atkinson, MP for Tottenham and ex-treasurer of the Labour Party. The platform of LL '82 calls for 'tolerance in the Party', an end to witch-hunts, no attacks on the constitutional reforms and no dropping of conference policies. All are, in effect, requests to the right wing to take it easy.

Norman Atkinson spoke of strengthening the 'recognised left' and setting up a 'registry' of the left. This implies that no new steps will be taken to hammer out a platform capable of carrying the fight to Healey on policies and of defeating the witch-hunt. A registry of existing groupings, 'recognised'

by Atkinson and friends would be purely for the book.

Tony Benn said that no 'truce' had been decided on at the Bishop's Stortford meeting, which he was at. Maximum agreement had been sought to win the next election. He said nothing about fighting for the leadership in 1982. Most left MPs believe Thatcher will call an election by October 1983. Thus 1982 will be the last chance to challenge Foot and Healey. Either Benn thinks Labour is certain to lose the next election or he is prepared to see Healey as deputy Prime Minister.

LL '82 decided, on the suggestion of Reg Race MP, to organize fringe meetings at trade union conferences. The objective of these remained open to question. Race argued that Labour Liaison should meet 'fre-

quently', but Atkinson did not allow any votes to be taken.

Thus the meeting, which could have pulled the left together for a united campaign against witch-hunts and to contest the leadership and deputy leadership at Blackpool, ended on vague promises to work together to regain the left majority on the National Executive and to defend Party policy. No practical initiatives were planned.

LL '82 can still be turned into a fighting body, with thousands of supporters in the local Labour Parties and trade unions, but only if the policy of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy to hold an open conference of the whole left is put into effect and if Tony Benn comes off the fence on the leadership question in 1982.

# London CLPD

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has been holding a number of regional conferences, for it a new departure.

The London regional conference was held on January 24th, in the shadow of the national gathering, held the previous day under the auspices of Norman Atkinson, MP for Tottenham. Atkinson's meeting was a low key affair. The CLPD meeting was anything but.

About 35 CLPD members attended, and voted their affirmation of the policies passed in the December AGM. The meeting declared itself in favour of:

1. the need for an open conference of the whole Labour left, to organise against the offensive of the right wing,



Benn must run in '82!

2. the CLPD organising a delegation to Tony Benn, urging him to support a fight for the leadership of the Labour Party,
3. the CLPD organising a public meeting against the Foot-Healey witch-hunt,
4. the CLPD undertaking a cam-

paign to expose the activities of the EETU headquarters, which has tried to 'stack' Constituency Labour Parties with right wingers.

The content of the regional conference was to reaffirm CLPD policy. Why was this necessary? Because some leaders of the CLPD, particularly Derer, Willsman, Costello and Schonfield, appear not to want to carry out the policies democratically decided at the CLPD Annual General Meeting. One of the members at the London meeting pointed ironically to the need for accountable democracy in the CLPD. Some of the policies of the AGM have just been dropped, for example the call on Benn to run and the fight against the EETU, others have actually been countermanded in practice. For instance, the CLPD delegation to the Atkinson meeting on the 23rd January, including Derer, Willsman and Schonfield, neglected to speak on CLPD policy for unity of the left and an open conference. Schonfield has distributed leaflets, under the banner of the CLPD, containing things which were actually thrown out by the Annual General Meeting.

The London region took the Executive to task for this flagrant flouting of the decisions of the AGM. Regional meetings are a useful new weapon in the fight for Labour Party democracy, along with CLPD groups organised in the localities. Activists must work for more regular consultation between the Executive and the localities in the CLPD.

# Enough backsliding call an open conference

The need for a broad and open conference of all the forces of the left in the Labour Party has not been removed by the outcome of the Bishop's Stortford meeting between trade union leaders and the Labour Party's National Executive. No real concessions were made by the right wing at that meeting. No signs exist that the danger of a witch-hunt has passed, or that the defections to the SDP will not continue.

It is imperative that the Labour left are not lulled into a sense of false security because no obvious attacks have been made by the right wing in the past few weeks. *The dogs have not been called off.*

Bob Wright, assistant general secretary of the AUEW, in an interview with *Socialist Challenge*, said that "there will be no formal organisation" of the left. Whilst saying that the left would fight a witch-hunt, he thought the "major task is to ensure that all parts of the Party accept the authority of Conference on policies decided and to seek their implementation, to unify the movement to defeat the Tories . . ." This sounds good until it is recalled that it is Conference policy to stay in NATO, that the parliamentary party avoided a commitment to immediately withdraw from the EEC and that the so-called 'Alternative Economic Strategy' still has to be worked out in real terms and is supposedly supported by both Denis Healey and Tony Benn. Bob Wright is fudging the issue if he thinks there can be genuine unity between the left of the Labour Party and Denis Healey "to defeat the Tories". For a start, while most Labour activists want to see Thatcher driven from office, using the strength of the workers' movement, Healey fully accepts the right of the Tories to stay in office,

attacking us, so long as they like, because they gained a parliamentary majority in 1979.

Is Bob Wright proposing unity on Healey's terms? So far as Conference policy is concerned, Michael Foot has already broken it by his witch-hunting and Healey has never hidden the fact that he'll ignore what he doesn't accept.

Why is Bob Wright, and with him Norman Atkinson, plus the leaders of the *Labour Co-ordinating Committee* and the Derer block in the leadership of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, so afraid of a 'formal organisation' of the left? The *Tribune Group*, before it was riven with splits, was a formal organisation of the left - in parliament. *No-one on the left objected.* If it was alright for MPs, why not for the Party as a whole? Isn't the *Labour Solidarity* grouping a 'formal organisation' of the right?

Talking about the problem of the leadership in the Labour Party, and the Foot-Healey leadership in parliament and the NEC is the nub of all other problems, Wright says, "Whether [Tony Benn] stands again, in my view, will be largely determined to the extent that the right wing launch an assault when it comes to Conference." Wright makes the mistake of tying the whole leadership question to a decision of the right wing at Conference. He completely ignores, or stands on its head, the problem that all the good Conference policies in the world are so much confetti if Labour is saddled with leaders who will not carry them out.

The reason why Benn must run for leader now is so that Labour can present a leadership to the electorate which can credibly say it will carry out the radical aspects of Labour's programme. Wright must know that if Benn doesn't



There can be no truce with these men!

declare his intention to run by March he will lose the chance to campaign around the crucial union conferences.

The 'co-ordinating body' which emerged from January 23rd seeks to preside over inaction by the left. Its line is to promise to be silent if only Foot and Healey will stop the attack. But this possible stalemate is not good enough. Unemployment is rising. Tebbit's laws fast approach. Young people are being dragooned into poverty. Right wing councillors are sabotaging a fight in the local elections and preparing to make cuts after.

Do the supporters of a 'low profile' by the left propose to accept Labour inaction on these bread and butter questions? Who is responsible

for the impasse on the left? Even Reg Race, one of the more outspoken critics of the right, has used Bishop's Stortford to try to avoid the need to drive Foot and Healey from leadership. He says that there 'was a realisation that . . . we have to decide when we campaign to win the leadership of the party . . .' But he does not really believe that 1982 is that time. He says that any attempt by the right wing MPs to "fudge conference policy and construct an election manifesto as trivial as that of 1979 will be opposed fiercely." What he reveals here is not so much that he wants to fight the right, but that he envisages them still being in control of the next election manifesto. Not only Wright, but Race, sees Foot and Healey leading Labour

into the next General Election.

The battle has already been conceded by Wright, if only the leadership will refrain from a full-scale witch-hunt. Of course, to the right witch-hunting is only the prelude to political sell-out - on policies, on the rights of Conference, even on entering a coalition with the SDP-Liberal Alliance.

Labour Party activists and supporters must drop any illusions they have left on this score. What is needed now is not closed door discussions of 50 or 100, but a national conference to fight the witch-hunt, a conference of the left to prepare for Blackpool. *This is the time to challenge for the leadership of the Labour Party because this is the time to prepare a real battle against Thatcher.*

# Labour Committee on Ireland Votes for tour by Owen Carron MP



Concannon must go!

Carron to be given platform

The Labour Committee on Ireland annual general meeting on February 6th was attended by over 100 Labour Party supporters from London, the Midlands and the North of England. It saw a heated debate on perspectives and the entire role of the Committee since the Brighton Labour Party Conference.

Two currents of opinion were crystallized at the AGM. Some members of the National Council appear to want the LCI to become more of an advisory and educational service, closely linked to the Parliamentary Party's 'Northern Ireland Group'. They were calling on the LCI to provide an "analysis of the full range of policy options on offer to the Labour Party leadership" and to have "dialogue with all interested parties, facilitated by closer links with the Parliamentary Labour Party Northern Ireland Group."

Basically this element saw the NEC resolution at Brighton, which claimed to be for Irish unity *some time*, as a victory. According to them the main task must now be to persuade the Labour front bench to adopt some kind — any kind — of withdrawal policy.

A more principled view was expressed by many activists at the AGM. They recognised that Brighton had not removed the reality of the bipartisan policy which ties Labour to Tory decisions on Ireland. They said that the clearest expression of this was the fact that Concannon, who backed Thatcher at the time of Bobby Sands' death, was still front bench spokesperson.

Resolutions were passed committing the LCI to a firm campaigning orientation. Included were a fight to remove Concannon, to break the bipartisan policy and immediately, to mount lobbies, petitions and resolutions against one of its lynchpins, the Prevention of Terrorism Act. A new departure for the LCI will be work among students and youth, particularly to counter the position of *Militant* in the Labour Party Young Socialists and *Clause Four* in the National Organisation of Labour Students, which both refuse to call for immediate withdrawal of troops from the North of Ireland, the position of the LCI.

One resolution, passed overwhelmingly, which no-one dared speak against, but some indirectly referred to as "unrealistic" and meant for "the next conversation in the pub with Irish Republicans", read, "The Labour Committee on Ireland salutes the memory of the ten martyred Hunger Strikers, victims of Tory imperialism. We recommit ourselves to fighting within the British Labour movement for the achievement of Special Category status for Irish political prisoners.

We reject the ghoulish statements of Don Concannon and other Front Bench spokespeople on the death of Bobby Sands MP. We call for the sacking of Concannon as Front Bench spokesperson.

We mandate the incoming National Council of the Labour Committee on Ireland to organise a speaking tour for Owen Carron MP."

*Socialist Newsletter* welcomes this campaigning orientation, whilst

recognising that its aims will not easily be achieved. We reject the bending of principles which seems to be happening among some leading LCI members, for instance, in a paper which asked, "Should we look to a friendly government (the French?) . . . to oversee withdrawal and prevent a Loyalist takeover?" Such positions open the door to support for a ruling class solution on Ireland. It is not the job of the British Labour movement to allow an imperialist power, France, to oversee British withdrawal on British terms.

One of the delegates at the AGM said that everyone there was an "anti-imperialist". But that term loses all meaning if it applies to people who want to invite French or United Nations troops into Ireland when Britain leaves. If French troops are to be brought in "to prevent a Loyalist takeover", doesn't it imply this is what the British troops are doing there now?

Some of the "anti-imperialists" at the AGM were even toying with the idea of raising cash from Fianna Fail, a ruling class party in Ireland.

The LCI AGM revealed that the pressure on the Labour leaders to assist the British and Irish ruling classes in finding a solution to the political problems now represented by the current crisis of Partition of Ireland, also has its echo in the ranks of the Labour Party. The incoming AGM did not elect a National Council particularly sympathetic to the tasks which the LCI has set itself for 1982. **All LCI members must work to make sure they are carried out.**

# Defend London Transport!

## Mobilise the unions! Not a job must go!

A group of left wing Labour councillors on the Greater London Council, most notably Valerie Wise and John McDonnell, voted in the council chamber on Tuesday 26th January against the fare rises which are being imposed on London Transport under the direction of the law lords.

This group, which has launched a "Can't Pay — Won't Pay" campaign to fight the probable 100% fare rises due in March, has been attacked for threatenin the leadership of Ken Livingstone in the Labour group. The campaign is based on passengers paying the old low fares and handing in an IOU for the difference. Technically this would be illegal. Thus the councillors are breaking the injunction of the Labour leaders, especially Roy Hattersley, to keep resistance to Thatcher within the law.

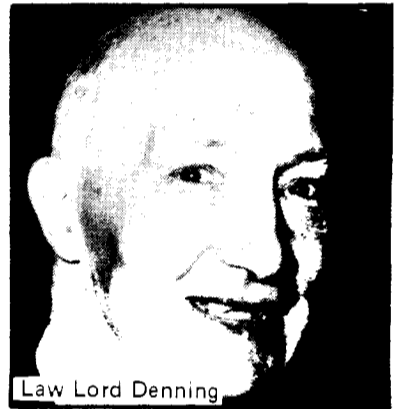


Livingstone

The left wingers were forced to vote against the Labour Group majority in a free vote in full council. Ken Livingstone and other erstwhile opponents of high fares voted *for* the increases. Rumour has it that some right wingers threatened to defect if any sort of whip was put on the Labour group, which voted by a majority of one to *oppose* the rises. Livingstone seems to have placed continued leadership of the GLC above defence of low fares on a fighting basis. His vote for rises was added to by Liberal, SDP and some Tory support. The majority of the Tories voted against Livingstone's proposals because they wanted another type of fare rises. London Transport chiefs are raising fares without a GLC directive.

The Labour controlled GLC is now spending up to £200,000 on a propaganda campaign against the rises. Three events are being staged: a so-called 'London Assembly' on February 27th; a lobby of parliament on March 11th and a demonstration on March 13th. The 'London Assembly' is a dangerous

fraud. Vicars, business interests, unions and community interest groups have been invited, to show that all classes in London oppose fare rises. This is ridiculous when the widescale business opposition to subsidised fares is considered. *It is the unions and the council estates which need to be mobilised.*



Law Lord Denning

However large the protest movement which is generated now, the damage has already been done. First by the law lords, then by the mass tracking of the Labour majority on the GLC. The stand taken by Wise, McDonnell and the minority of Labour councillors will be supported by working class families which rely on the buses and tubes to get around. But the emphasis now needs to be on forcing *all the Labour majority* to fight the rises, *using every means possible.*

Busworkers, at a meeting of TGWU members, called for a one-day strike against the new policy, which will mean not only massive fare rises but thousands of job losses on the buses and tubes. Conditions will worsen, with increased pressure on drivers, conductors and guards. Many bus routes will be heavily cut. Times on bus stops, already treated with cynicism by Londoners, will become pure fiction.

A one-day strike by London Transport workers, across 23 unions, seems strongly possible. But a one-day stoppage, even added to a lobby and demonstration, will not stop the cuts and rises. Only a movement to wreck the operation of rises and stop cuts will do that. **The onus now lies on the union leaders and the Labour council majority jointly to make the Tory proposals unworkable.** The fight must not be thrown onto the shoulders of London in general. Londoners voted the Labour councillors in on a clear manifesto for low fares. They need these, with wage rises being held way behind the rate of inflation. For those on the dole cheap fares are an absolute social necessity.

Trade unionists, students, the unemployed and all Londoners, should come out on March 11th and March 13th.

# 'Community policing' is a fraud

## Labour councillors must boycott these schemes

Renewed outbreaks of fighting between police and young people in St. Pauls Bristol and Toxteth, reveal that the tensions which led to last summer's riots have not lessened. Nor will they, given the everyday conditions faced by the youth in these areas.

On February 4th, around 40 young people fought the police in Toxteth. Three weeks earlier police had started foot patrols in Liverpool 8, on the basis of "community support". Eight policemen were injured in the February 4th incidents.

Labour and Liberal councillors in Liverpool have been pushing support for changes in the techniques of policing areas like Toxteth, in the hope of peacefully restoring a full police presence to the area. Margaret Simey, chairperson of Merseyside Police Committee, said, "We are managing this ourselves, with the police." Such a complacent attitude reveals little understanding of what the police have done to the youth of Toxteth over the years.



There are no jobs in Toxteth as the result of Heseltine's and Whitelaw's visits. No houses have been started as the result of Tory money. No improvements to the outlook of the youth have come about. Foot patrols by 50 police do not remove the poverty and feelings of anger and despair. Nor do they cover the reality of the Merseyside policy — a record of brutality and hostility to working class people.



David Aaronovitch

Let us never forget it was a Merseyside copper who killed a Liverpool boy by crushing him under a police car.

Community policing, or any other kind of community politics gimmick, is a fraud. Behind the so-called "consultative committee" Whitelaw has set up in Brixton is the same old reality: thousands of black youth on the dole; more houses smashed up in raids. Constant guards are necessary outside the police station.

William Whitelaw will not even take the step, recommended by Scarman, of setting up independent investigations into complaints against the police, because it would stop chief constables from being able to discipline their own officers! Whitelaw says he does not want cops to stop "doing their duty for fear of complaints". So much for community policing!

The Tories and the police are trying various ways to mask what the police are really about in depressed areas. Mini and local police stations, 'consultation with the community' and other gimmicks are to be expected. But it is criminal for Labour representatives to help in this cover up. The police have not been made more accountable since last summer. Indeed the technology of repression has been developed: better shields, plastic bullets, armoured cars, light and sound machines to make people dizzy and sick, gas grenades, even machine guns. All these have been made available and bought by police forces over the past nine months. Labour councillors and party members must be made to speak out against this preparation for local civil war. Fake improvement schemes must be boycotted and opposed.

Young people will rise again, to express anger and frustration about unemployment, poverty, racism and police intimidation. They have learnt from experience what the police are about. The question for Brixton, St. Pauls, Toxteth, Moss Side and Southall is not if but when.

The question for Labour councillors and MPs will be — whose side are you on?

# STUDENTS

## For a fighting leadership of NUS

## For adequate grant rises!

Since the Tories came into office the cost of living for students has risen by £590 a year. Yet the full grant has increased by only £350. Many students now face severe financial hardship.

Not only have the Tories penalised students again this year, by keeping grants rise to 4%, way below the rate of inflation, but in an attempt to squeeze yet more savings out of higher education, they have decided to bring in a policy which makes parents contribute more towards students' main income. In 1982, students will, for the first time, receive less than the previous year.

If we taken an example of a student whose parents are both employed and earning £7000 between them, and after mortgage and other things have been taken out, then their daughter or son would have received £1458 from the local authority in 1981. The parents would have had to contribute £77.

In this year, assuming the parental income increases by about the rate of inflation, to £7700, the parental contribution will rise to £177 while the local authority would pay £1418, a drop of £40.

At present about 75% of parents who are expected to contribute towards their daughter or son's grant are unable to pay their full contribution. Next year that 75% of students will be much worse off. Not only will they be cut back on clothes and food but also they will be less able to buy books of their own. Since 1979 catering prices in higher education have risen by 60%, the price of books has gone up by 50% and this year alone the cost of accommodation and board in halls of residence will go up by between 15% and 40%.

Students clearly do not want to be fleeced in this way. There is no evidence that they do not want to fight the cuts. But the same cannot be said of the leaders of the National Union of Students. In an article in *National Student*, Dave Aaronovitch, NUS president, wrote that, "The NUS has taken the unprecedented step of calling a grants action week." In actual fact, instead of co-ordinating the widest national campaign with the support of sympathetic trade unions in the education sector, the NUS leadership 'action week' will effectively divide up the impact that the campaign could have, by calling into action the various sectors of Further and Higher Education at different times. The impact an all-out general strike by students could have is deliberately being dissipated. Further Education students will strike alone on one day, Polytechnic students on another, with no organised solidarity between them.

The grants campaign is being handicapped from the start by a deliberate sectionalism imposed from above. According to Aaronovitch, "Our chance to change things comes when the budget is discussed on March 9th." But by then it will all be over. The fight on grants should have started long ago.

### New regroupment

The 'keep politics out of it' approach imposed on students by the Communist Party-Right Wing leaders of NUS, along the line of 'grants is not a party political issue', leads students right away from fighting the cause of the problem — the Thatcher government.

What can students do on grants this term? Those students who recognise that the enemy is the Thatcher government and who want to fight and not just meekly protest, should not try to act against grant cuts and facilities cuts in isolation. No doubt the *Socialist Workers Students Organisation* will propose the usual 'kamikaze' operations during the week of action. But considering the current lack of any effective regroupment within NUS which could actually call out large enough numbers of colleges in united action, the method of isolated actions is not only adventurist, perhaps leading to needless victimisations, but it will not find an echo among most students.

From March 1st to March 5th, students must work, without adventures, to pull out the maximum number of students within the framework NUS proposes. These actions must be used to the links between colleges and between militants in the colleges and universities, necessary for a further stage of the fight. The 'week of action' will not make Joseph change course. Along with this a common front is needed with the Association of University Teachers and NATFHE, and the other unions in education.

The work to get a fighting leadership for the National Union of Students must take steps forward on the basis of the biggest turnout on March 2nd, 3rd and 4th. At the demonstration on March 5th the leaders must be challenged for organising a token campaign which cannot succeed. Student unions as we have known them are under threat, as are educational opportunities. **This threat cannot be defeated with a leadership of compromisers, dealers and political careerists.** A new regroupment, based on the National Organisation of Labour Students, but drawing in student militants from other currents is called for. Supporters of *Socialist Newsletter* will be actively working for such a regroupment.



All this was shown to chief constables last summer

# Anti-Union Laws must be smashed!

## No TUC treachery!

On the same day that 1100 De Lorean carworkers in Belfast were told by the Tories they could join the dole queue, 400 scabs were rewarded with a £2 million fund for refusing to join a closed shop.

Nothing could more clearly reveal the nature of Thatcher's strike-breaking, job-destroying government. Thatcher spoke of this as "justice at last — and it took a Tory government to do it." This is the justice which forced 3 million onto the dole queue, often after backbreaking struggles by workers to keep their workplaces open, workers who know they lose all rights and dignity if they are out of work.

If the closed shop is broken the fight to stop bosses closing factories and sacking workers will be severely weakened.

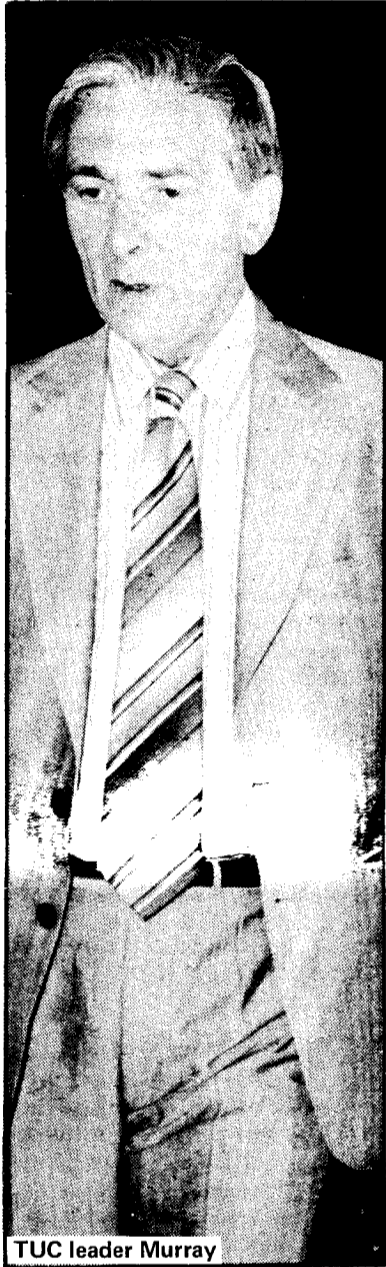
In the same legislative package with the scab fund, expected to become law this summer, Employment Secretary Tebbit aims to outlaw all solidarity strikes, all solidarity or 'secondary' picketing and all 'political' strikes. Damages of up to £250,000 a time could be claimed for any unlawful strikes. In addition it will be virtually impossible for any new closed shops to be set up.

Existing closed shops will be reviewed every five years and the workers must record an 80% vote in favour.

The 1980 Employment Act, under which a tribunal has just ordered the reinstatement of four Walsall council staff sacked for refusing to join a closed shop, has proven too tame for Tory appetites, which is why Prior had to be replaced by Tebbit.

The new legislation goes further than anything attempted by the ruling class since 1926. For example, under the Tebbit law, the recent blacking of the *Sun* and the *Times* by railworkers at Kings Cross could have led to them claiming damages from union central funds. No longer will there be any need to seek injunctions against named individuals. Instead Tebbit is aiming for the jugular vein, the money and material resources and the previously legal practices by which workers have protected their right to organise since the pre-First World War Trades Disputes Act.

Since legal liability is to go beyond individual union officials, Tebbit's Bill will have the inevitable effect of encouraging union



TUC leader Murray

bosses to keep an even tighter hold on industrial action. It will give people like the scandalous Sidney Weighell the basis for preventing actions like the action of the NUR drivers and guards who have supported the ASLEF drivers.

The response of the TUC so far had been to reproach the Tories for causing unnecessary confrontation. This kind of whining is criminal in the face of such attacks. *At the special meeting of union executives in early April it is essential that any use of the new Act is answered by a call for immediate and generalised industrial action.* When the Pentonville 5 dockers were jailed under the anti-union legislation of

Heath, it was the call for a General Strike from the TUC which gained their immediate release. This was forced by a wave of industrial action within the working class itself. If talking shop conferences of union leaders had been relied upon to defeat the Industrial Relations Act, then every struggle would have ended up like that around the Shrewsbury pickets, with long jail terms.

1982 sees the working class facing mass unemployment and lower wages as well as the legislation of the Tories. It confronts militants with the added problems brought about by over a year of demoralising sellouts by the union leaders, which have had their effect on the willingness of workers to take industrial action. But the working class needs to take action against the Tebbit laws. It will be forced to take action by events, or the unions will be reduced to ineffective friendly societies.

In this respect the 30 minute lunch time 'protests' being mooted by the TUC are a treacherous act. These 'protests' will add to the demoralisation of workers, not with trade unions, but with their leaders. If led into half-hour prolonged lunch breaks and then a one-day token strike workers will not act. People know the difference between effective action and useless action. *The result would be another May 14th 1980, another debacle brought about by the TUC.*

Neither is it just an 'industrial' issue we face. Every section of the Labour movement would be reduced in strength by Tebbit's laws. The TUC and the Labour leaders must declare for action now, beginning with a one-day national work stoppage enforced by all unions and focussed on a *March on Parliament* by millions of workers in London.

*The General Council must pledge itself immediately the laws are used to call an all-out strike.* No union, at any level, must have anything to do with the mechanisms on which the laws will be based. The TUC and union trade unions must now withdraw from all joint bodies with government, until such time as the anti-union laws are removed from the statute book. *When the Bill comes up in the House of Commons, Labour MPs must make that institution unworkable. Every instrument and method of disruption must be used. Nothing less will do.*

# Civil Servants strike



CPSA members in more than 30 London dole offices supported a one-day strike called by the London Regional Committee on the 26th January. The walkout was organised against the government proposals for new procedures to be introduced into unemployment offices later this year, at the moment being tested in a number of offices in London.

These proposals include the taxation of benefits, a new test designed to make people with skills and qualifications accept any job and what is called 'ethnic monitoring', which means racist questions.

Taxation of benefit is planned to start in July, but as from March claimants will feel the effect of taxation when all tax rebates will stop for the newly unemployed. The poverty rate of benefit means that many on the dole need their tax rebate in order to survive. The new 'availability for work' test is due to come in in October. A new question will be added to the claim form. The Tories are trying to drive people off the dole queues by threatening those who refuse low paid and bad jobs. Thatcher's aim is to cut the official

number on the dole by whatever means possible. This is also the meaning the 'Youth Training Scheme' — compulsory for all school leavers.

The third proposal is for 'ethnic monitoring', which is to be done by staff in dole offices from October this year. All the information will be placed on the computer of the Department of Employment. So the race and origin of all unemployed people will be available to the racist Thatcher government.

A national one day strike is planned for March 1st, to protest against the proposals. But this in itself will not be enough to make the government back down on its plans. The Department of Employment section executive of the CPSA must demand official backing from the CPSA national disputes committee for a campaign on non-cooperation with the pilot schemes currently in operation, and blacking of all training in connection with these proposals. Only in this way can CPSA members be prevented from having to act as the agents for the anti-working class measures of Thatcher.

# May Elections

From Front Page

The Labour Parties in the London borough of Southwark have been told by Labour's National Executive to reverse a decision to exclude eight right-wing councillors from their list for May. Judith Hart was sent to Southwark to browbeat the local parties. Clearly Foot-Healey and their NEC majority want to impose right wing councillors on local Labour Parties against their wishes. Equally clearly these right wingers will want tame right wing manifestos which make a mockery of Labour Conference policy.

Labour has much less chance to win in May if it tries to match its policies with those of the SDP. *Only through seeking to represent the interests of working people and mobilise them behind it — which means refusing Tory cuts and job losses — can Labour fight to do its own.*

Foot is leading the Labour Party to defeat in May, unless the party activists and working class

supporters are given something to fight and vote for. This is yet another treacherous act by Foot, who demands support for Labour and yet does not lead it against Thatcher, but attacks the left.

Those left wing councillors who stand on a policy of fighting rent and rate rises, defending services and refusing Tory cuts and job losses, must be backed to the hilt. Right wingers who play the SDP game and will bend the knee before Heseltine are a liability which will be carried through the elections. But the battle to cleanse the Labour Party of SDPers must go on. Renegade councillors should be placed under every pressure to fight the Tories between now and May. Local parties can declare for the interests of the working class even if some of the national party leadership work for the elections should begin with a call to refuse to fight people into the Labour Party. The threat to be made is that the party will be defeated in May unless the party activists and working class



Out against Heath in 1970

# France hit by strikewave

## Workers refuse to pay for the 39 hour week



Prime Minister Mauroy

A wave of strikes has recently hit France, the first since the Socialist government of Francois Mitterand took office last summer, after the workers and small farmers of France massively voted for an end to the reactionary Gaullist Fifth Republic.

What has caused the strikes? A decree from the Ministry of Labour cutting the working week to 39 hours!

On the surface there would appear to be no reason for French workers to oppose a cut in their working week by one hour or more. But the workers have responded very angry to the decree of the Government. It is not the 39 hour week in itself, which angers French workers, but the fact that the decree allows the bosses to make them pay for it. The employers in France are using a number of means to avoid having to maintain wages and conditions at the old levels whilst cutting the working week. All sorts of excuses are being put forward for not taking on extra staff to cover the effects of the shorter week. Even in the public sector, where the Socialist government is the employer, agreements are being broken. The Public Assistance department should have taken on an extra 5000 people according to the minister responsible. Instead it works out at less than half that figure.

In the PTT (post office), telecoms sector, the bosses have placed a question mark against a tradition which gives workers a half day off in the working week or fortnight. Many French workers, such as customs officials, have to travel between jobs and this time has been,



up to now, incorporated in their working time, now there are moves to take it out. In the post office there is a threat that jobs will be lost as the result of the 39 hour law. At the Sofresid plant near Paris the bosses decided to keep the 40 hour week norm and to keep wages the same. This means, according to the decree, that the Sofresid workforce are working an hour a week for nothing. The Sofresid workers, like thousands of others, struck in protest. The same was true at Dassault, the aircraft company. Some companies tried to cut the lunch break by ten minutes, shades of BL. Allowances for special duties have been 'adjusted', in other words

cut. At the Chausson de Gennevilliers factory the employers went so far as to say that lunch hours, previously incorporated into the working week, would be discounted!

The Mitterand government, elected by the workers to act in their interest and against the bosses, has so far not taken any action to enforce the 39 hour week on employers, without loss of pay or deterioration in conditions. This is the first big test for its social programme. The current decree is a fraud, because it makes the workers pay for the 39 hours.

The French Communist Party, which has four ministers in the

Mitterand government, has said, "the bosses are provoking the conflicts," over the 39 hours. *L'Humanité*, the French CP's daily paper, calls the 39 hour decree 'generally positive'. If only the bosses would see reason, then the 39 hours would work. The CP ignores the fact that many workers in the public sector have been on strike — and the employer there is the government in which the Communist Party sits!

The PCI, the Internationalist Communist Party, French sister organisation of the Socialist Labour Group, has said, "It is necessary to speak plainly: it is the governmental decree which has opened the door

to all the bosses' attacks against the workers." The PCI calls for the rejection of the decree as it stands. It says, "the problem is not a 'good application' of the decree as opposed to a 'reactionary application', but to force a real reduction in the working day with no loss of pay or worsening of conditions."

French workers will continue to strike against the effects of the current 39 hour law. As it stands it leaves the field open to bosses, both in the private and public sectors, to try to make the workers pay. The PCI will work to mobilise against the effects of the 39 hour law and to maintain jobs and standards without penalties.

On strike!

## Ghana Crisis Military Takeover

The second coup in two years has overthrown the government of Hilla Limann. Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings has set up a "Provisional National Defence Council" of military officers and hand-picked civilians.

The "democratic" government of Limann was no different than those which preceded it. Financial scandals exposed corruption from top to bottom in the ruling party. The economy in Ghana is undergoing catastrophic decline. A combination of crisis and corruption had created an explosive mixture. The coup had the aim of "cleaning out corruption" and creating "certain social and political structures to ensure that the rights and interests of the people are not held in bondage."

Food is increasingly scarce and this has been exploited by market sharks who hoard and profiteer. These black-marketeers have had close links with officials in state agencies, buying and selling at

massive profits.

Cocoa production, the major export and foreign currency earner is only half that of ten years ago and the market price has fallen. Much of the crop never reaches the ports because of the disrepair of roads and broken lorries.

Bread supplies are running out because, after 25 years of independence, it is still necessary to import flour and there is little foreign exchange to buy it.

The populism of Rawlings, drawing on the example of Libya's Gaddafi, has mobilised the lower ranks of the military and the poor of the towns. But in itself, populist politics will not solve the political and economic crisis. The next step must be the mobilisation of the masses against the corrupt state bureaucracy, the rich traders and speculators and the wholesale takeover of foreign owned land and that of large landowners, combined with port facilities and imperialist interests.

## The Utopian Socialist Society

Last month the *Socialist Society* held its inaugural meeting, attended by over 1000, in the heart of the University of London. Its aim, according to a statement was to "bring together intellectual workers and worker intellectuals."

The meeting adopted a 'Socialist Charter' and undertook to provide, at a local level, research and policy advice for Labour councillors and trade unionists. It decided not to align itself with any political party as this would be 'sectarian'. Eric Heffer was hissed when he suggested that the Labour Party was the framework within which the *Socialist Society* could pursue its aims.

The meeting was characterised by the purely ideological aspect to the discussion. At the moment when the Labour Party is going through the most profound upheavals in decades, hundreds of post 1968 lefties seem to think that, in their own words, "promoting

awareness" of social issues is enough. The *Socialist Society*, whilst not stopping to dirty its hands in the Labour Party claims to be able to "develop the programme and promise of socialism". For it, as for George Bernard Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb and all the other middle class pundits of yesteryear, the main task is "to help socialist ideas become the commonsense of the age."

If only the nasty bosses and the ignorant bureaucrats would show some commonsense!

The underlying aims of the *Socialist Society* are based on bringing together lecturers, students, social workers and the like. The inaugural hand-out said, "the search for new answers gives new openings for the left and could furnish the impulse for building a popular, anti-capitalist movement. Yet, so far, the Social Democrats have been able to make the running in public

debate and exploit discontent with the traditional pattern of politics." Here we have a clear statement that it is the concerns of the middle class that motivate the ideologues of the *Socialist Society* — above all fear of the SDP.

Despite its high-flown objectives the *Socialist Society* is powerless, like its predecessor, 'Beyond the Fragments'. It calls for "socialist renewal inside the labour movement". Well and good. But the renewal of the labour movement will not be brought about through the arguments of 1000 intellectuals but through the actions of the working class and the building of a revolutionary party.

The *Socialist Society* is a society of revisionists and utopians. In order to unite the working class a sharp political and organisation battle against the labour bureaucracy is needed. Will the *Socialist Society* take up this task? Only in the fight for a clear revolutionary programme for the working class, which is by definition an international programme, can society be transformed. The test for the *Socialist Society* will not take place in the lecture hall but in the factory and on the street.



## IN DEFENCE OF TROTSKYISM

# Stalinism AN ENEMY OF WORKERS POWER

One of the central political differences between Trotskyists and those who revise Trotskyism is that Trotskyists base their actions on the understanding that the basic antagonism in the world is that between the working class and the capitalist class — the bourgeoisie. For the revisionists this class analysis has been replaced by one which sees the world divided into two 'camps'. On the one side stands, according to them, the USA and its allies, on the other stands the USSR and a vague 'revolutionary process' which the Kremlin supports.

Revisionists deny the fact that the differences between the Kremlin and Washington take place within a framework where both police the world against the workers' revolution, in their own ways, with the White House taking the lead. At the end of World War Two Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill met to decide the forms this counter-revolution would take. The world was divided into 'spheres of influence'. The meetings at Helsinki and Madrid were the most recent proof that imperialism and Stalinism still seek to operate within this same basic system.

It is the mobilisation of the working class, against both Washington and the Kremlin, which threatens to break up this world order. The events in Poland are the striking proof of this, as were those in Iran and Nicaragua. Poland has thrown into the balance the whole world order on which counter-revolution rests.

The capitalist press has played up the different responses to Poland made by Western governments. Henry Kissinger said that a lack of united action by the imperialist powers would threaten NATO. Kissinger fails to understand that the European imperialist powers have to take into account the continental effect of the Polish events on their own working classes. The position of the Western European capitalist countries in the defence of their power is more closely determined by the place of the

Kremlin and the division of Europe than is that of the USA. *Revolutions begin at the national level, noted Lenin, but they set off a process which extends to the international.* West German leader Schmidt is obliged to differ with Reagan not only because of the huge sums of German money tied up in Poland, but out of a fear that the Polish events would spread into East Germany and from there destabilize his own bastard state. Schmidt has to take into consideration the needs of East German Stalinism.



Schmidt



Fidel Castro

The crisis that the Polish revolution causes for international Stalinism is of a different nature. No ruling Stalinist party, from Peking to Havana, has been slow to

applaud Jaruzelski's repression. Viet Nam "warmly applauded the timely and necessary measures" taken in Poland. The Kremlin's satellite of Cuba allowed its press to denounce "the subversive and counter-revolutionary activities of *Solidarity*". The leaders of the FSLN in Nicaragua, who so recently headed a revolution, issued a statement which said, "In Poland it is not the working class but the counter-revolutionary elements who are being repressed."

Counterposed to this are the positions of the Italian and Spanish CPs. Torn between the need to bend before the ruling class in their own countries and the tradition which roots their following in the state power of the Stalinists in the Soviet Union, the leaders of these parties have made statements attacking the coup and denouncing the Kremlin. This will speed up the process of disintegration of these parties. But the denunciations of Jaruzelski do not in themselves solve the problem of the way forward for the working class in Italy and Spain where the Berlinguer and Carrillo leaderships are busily propping up reactionary regimes.



The Kremlin needs allies in the West with a hold over large sections of the working class. To hang onto support the leaders of the 'Euro-communist' parties are bending very far. The British CP long ago designed its own 'British Road to Socialism' — under the impetus of Stalin himself.

But the bloody repression of the Polish working class does not demand only verbal criticism of the Kremlin, even of an extreme nature. It demands international solidarity actions, *and on this level not one of the critical CPs have moved a finger.* The British CP calls for a new 'dialogue' between the oppressors and the oppressed, criticizing at the same time Jaruzelski's 'repression' and *Solidarity's* 'provocation'. This is pure hypocrisy. **The only guarantee of the rights of the Polish people is the workers' revolution against Stalinism, and this the CPGB will never support.**

The disintegration of the Stalinist hold on the international working class, based on the illusions of millions that the CPs continue the tradition of Lenin, is now underway. In France thousands of members of the CP controlled union — the CGT — took part in a demonstration in support of the Polish workers, against the line of their leaders. **Trotskyists want to win these workers to the revolutionary movement, to break up the apparatus of Stalinism, East and West, and purge from history the counter revolutionary scourge Trotsky called "the syphilis of the workers' movement".**

# Rebuild the Fourth International

## MEETING

SATURDAY MARCH 20th 2pm to 5pm  
ROOM 3D, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON UNION  
MALET STREET (near Tottenham Court Road)

ADMISSION £1  
INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS  
FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF  
THE FI (ICR)



The Fourth International (International Centre of Reconstruction) was formed at the end of 1981 as the result of a split in the ranks of Trotskyism. That split, carried out under the direct orders of Nahuel Moreno, could have the effect of demoralising and misleading thousands of Trotskyist militants. But it will not prevent the many Trotskyists regrouped in the FI(ICR) from reconstructing Trotsky's Fourth International and taking it forward to become a revolutionary leadership for the oppressed masses of the world.

It was great events in the class struggle, great defeats for the working class in Germany and Spain, which impelled the Trotskyists to declare that the Third International had been turned into a counter-revolutionary instrument by Stalinism and to declare the Fourth International in 1938. The crises which have marked the struggle for the Fourth International have always been rooted in great events in the class struggle. The Fourth International (International Committee) was formed out of the response of Trotskyists to the revolution in Iran and above all the revolution in Nicaragua. The split which brought the Bolshevik Fraction and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency out of the Unified Secretariat was on questions of principle.

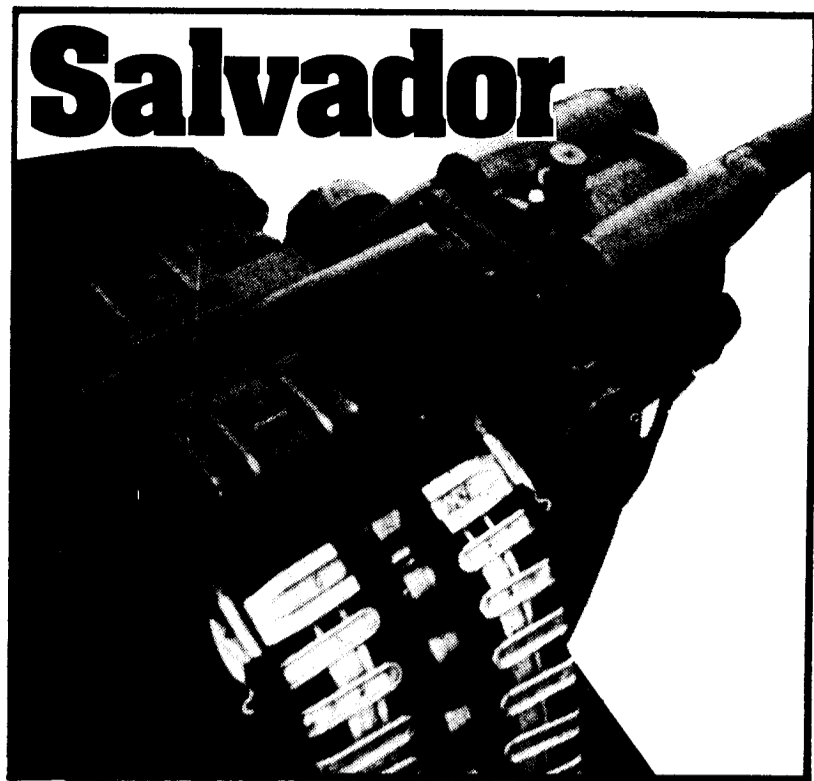
Contrary to all those who stood and cynically pointed in advance to the inevitable failure of the fusion which formed the FI(IC), that organisation was formed on the basis of principles. Its *Theses* and many statements are positions the SLG still generally stands on. It engaged in real campaigns of an international dimension and began the difficult task of building an international leadership from a fusion, one capable of forging a world party of socialist revolution on the basis of Leninist principles. Those who believe this can be achieved only on the basis of a federation of national groups are mistaken. It can only be done by combining direct intervention in the class struggle on the national level with a conscious attempt to form international perspectives and an international work. *This prob-*

*lem is not based on a formula, but flows out of the global nature of the class struggle.*

The Fourth International (ICR) continues the political work of rebuilding the Fourth International. This work needs the building of strong national sections. In Britain, the prolonged crisis and fragmentation of Trotskyist forces, following the degeneration of the SLL, against which fought the forerunner of the Socialist Labour Group, allows no other course than the fight for a principled fusion of Trotskyist forces. This fight implies a continual battle against revisionism in the ranks of those who claim the banner of Trotskyism as their own. In Britain the pressure of reformism expresses itself among revolutionaries in both opportunist adaptations to the Labour left and in ultra-left abstention from the mass movement. This compounds the crisis of Trotskyism.

Internationally the FI(ICR) is making significant interventions on the side of the working class. In Poland the Trotskyists work towards the political overthrow of Stalinism by workers revolution. In France the PCI, the largest Trotskyist organisation in history, stands four square with the workers in their refusal to pay for the 39 hour week decreed by Mitterand. It rejects the betrayal of the workers by the Socialist led government. In Peru, despite blows linked to Moreno's splitting work, the POMR, Revolutionary Marxist Workers Party, fights to build an anti-imperialist united front of the oppressed, with the working class at its head. The POMR works in a poverty stricken, backward country. It needs material aid and political support from the Trotskyists who work in more favourable conditions.

The Socialist Labour Group is organising this meeting to discuss the perspectives for Trotskyists after Moreno's split and to join in solidarity with our comrades fighting under the heel of imperialism and under the guns of imperialism. Our methods are internationalist. Our movement is the Fourth International (ICR), rebuilder of the World Party of Socialist Revolution, founded by Leon Trotsky.



## Setbacks for Junta



The civil war in El Salvador has reached a new stage.

In 1981 troops of the murderous Duarte military regime massacred 12,000 civilians in an attempt to destroy the popular support given to the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. The FMLN itself has been fighting a costly war of attrition similar to that fought in VietNam in the late 1960s. Indeed, there are now many US 'advisors' in El Salvador and Duarte's troops are being trained in techniques learned in the war against the Vietnamese.

Outside the barracks and the middle class business interests, the pro-imperialist junta has little real support. Duarte has been able to hold down two thirds of the country simply through force of arms.

But, at a terrible cost in lives, the resistance of the people has been hardened. Now the FMLN control a quarter of the country, including, for brief periods, some towns. Early in February FMLN supporters walked into the main airforce base, mined the planes and helicopters and destroyed over half of the junta's airforce. This is a disaster given the kind of war Duarte has to fight, where helicopter gunships are crucial.

Reagan and his advisors believe it is vital to smash the FMLN. They have authorised massive new levels of military aid to Duarte, starting with \$ 65 million delivered with great urgency. Direct US taskforce intervention cannot be ruled out if the junta suffers further setbacks. Reagan has drawn the line with the blood of the Salvadorean people.

A US government spokesperson, Thomas Enders, said recently, "The decisive battle for Central America is under way in El Salvador. If, after Nicaragua, El Salvador is captured by a violent minority, who in

Central America would not live in fear . . . How long would it be before major strategic interests — the Panama Canal, sea lanes, oil supplies — were at risk?"

To protect these 'strategic interests' which also include the political effects of an FMLN victory in places like Jamaica and Puerto Rico, US imperialism has sanctioned a bloodbath. Despite attempts to whitewash the Duarte junta, it is clear that wholesale carnage is its only method. In December, Mozote, a village in the Morazan province, was taken over by US trained troops. Nearly all the inhabitants, men, women and children, were shot. This technique of killing a whole village again recalls VietNam, where areas regarded as sympathetic to the National Liberation Front were destroyed.

In order to give some illusion of a return to 'democracy', the junta is planning fake elections for March 28th. No real free elections could be held against the backdrop of the civil war. In any case the Revolutionary Democratic Front, which is linked with the FMLN, is banned from taking part. Already the French and Mexican governments have called the elections a trick. The result, like that in Pinochet's referenda in Chile, is fixed in advance.

El Salvador will fight to the finish. But this small country is close to the immediate interests of US imperialism. Reagan cannot allow another popular revolution like that in Nicaragua to succeed in Central America. The attention of socialists in Britain must be focussed on giving support to the Salvadorean struggle over the next weeks. On the day of the Duarte junta's fake elections, Sunday March 28th, a solidarity demonstration will take place in London. It should be supported by all socialists.

# For a working class campaign on Poland



A recent NATO statement on Poland said, "The Polish authorities, supported by the Soviet Union, continue to suppress the aspirations of the Polish people." With this it justified the latest attempt to cobble together Common Market trade sanctions against Poland and the USSR, under the direction of Washington.

The same statement, however, reveals that sanctions so far have not moved Jaruzelski one inch closer to releasing the genuine leaders of the Polish workers.

The capitalist sanctions campaign has not changed a single military decree nor freed a single prisoner. Reagan's motives have nothing to do with helping the Polish workers to power. They are simply to exploit the situation to the advantage of imperialism.

Despite this Reagan has gained some support from leaders of the labour movement. In Britain an attempt is being made, principally by the Polish Solidarity Campaign (PSC), to link working class opposition to the Jaruzelski regime with capitalist parties and politicians. Along with this goes a group called *Solidarity with Solidarity*, which should be called *Solidarity with Reagan*, which has support from Polish emigres.

On January 30th a PSC rally in London received messages of support from Sidney Weighell, Joe Gormley, Terry Duffy and Frank Chapple, all well known for anti-left purges or scabbing activities in British unions. On the platform were Liberals and Tory MEP Nicholas Bethell. Labour leader Peter Shore used the occasion to make an attack on "command socialism" and the "party elite" system of "totalitarian communism". He turned his speech into a call for capitalist democracy to be re-established in Poland. PSC speaker Robin Blick tied this alliance of Labour rightists, Liberals and Tories together by saying, that support for the Polish people was "not a question of left or right but a moral question."

There were very few active trade unionists or Labour Party members in the audience of that meeting. Tony Benn and others have set up a separate Labour Poland Solidarity Fund. Trade union activists and Labour Party members are working

to establish a Labour campaign to defend the Polish workers which is separate from the SDP, Liberals, Tories and even fascists who frequent PSC circles.

An appeal from *Solidarity with Solidarity* for dockers to black goods for all Eastern European countries and the USSR has been ignored by British dockers.

Quite separately and in distinction to these right wing moves, Massey Ferguson tractor workers at Coventry have refused to exchange parts with Poland "produced at the point of a gun". This was in direct response to an appeal from Polish workers in the Ursus tractor plant. Before the coup messages of support and material aid were given from Massey Ferguson to Ursus as part of international workers' solidarity. As Massey convenor Jimmy Dunn put it, "from worker to worker, bypassing the bureaucratic committees".

This action has nothing in common with Reagan's campaign. It is supportive industrial action by workers in Britain with the campaign of resistance of workers at Ursus, which keeps production down to a trickle. The imperialist sanctions, designed to lead to the negotiating table with the Kremlin, have little or no effect.

Vic Thorpe, an official of the International Federation of Chemical and Energy Workers, who spoke at the PSC rally, correctly pointed out that the West is giving quiet support to certain aspects of martial law. He quoted a West German banker as saying, "This coup is a good thing for the banks," if Jaruzelski can force the workers back to their jobs.

In other European countries it is the trade unions and working class political parties which have made the running in giving solidarity to the Polish workers. The Polish Solidarity Campaign in Britain, led by middle class academics and long time Polish emigres is virtually unique. This does not indicate a lack of support for *Solidarity* among British workers or a feeling that Tories and Liberals must be allowed on every platform, as the PSC seem to think. It reveals the role of the trade union and Labour leaders in Britain, who have refused to mobilise and call to action the

strength of the labour movement in support of the Polish workers. It reveals the organic links between many of the right wing union bosses and the capitalist system.

The bureaucrats of the right have been flocking to the class collaboration of the PSC, helping it to occupy a space which should be taken by a labour movement campaign of class solidarity against the Stalinist bureaucracy. The PSC's blotting out of the class nature of *Solidarity*, reducing everything to a moral crusade for democratic rights, putting an equals sign between Tory and Labour in Britain, does not allow British workers to express support through class action, at the workplace.

For 16 months the Polish workers in *Solidarity* have fought to wrest class independence from a counter-revolutionary regime.

The British working class can best aid this fight, which is far from over, by establishing direct links with their Polish comrades and through building a campaign in the unions and Labour Party based on the demands of *Solidarity* itself. These are: *free the internees; lift martial law; return the union property taken after the coup; lift the ban on Solidarity.*

*Solidarity* wants British unions to *break off all relations with the Polish Stalinist unions and other Stalinist fake trade unions in Eastern Europe.* The TUC has broken relations with the East German 'unions', this should be extended to all the Kremlin inspired fake unions.

Workers in Britain have been asked to *consider blacking imports and exports to and from Poland until the above demands have been met.* The exception to this request is medical and food supplies.

### AID AND SPEAKERS

Financial aid should be sent to the Labour Poland Solidarity Fund c/o Co-operative Bank, 110 Leman Street, London, E1.

Information on speakers from *Solidarity* in Britain should be sought from the *Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group in the UK*, 63 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, London, SW5. Phone 01-373 3492.



# POLAND RESISTS!



Food riots in Gdansk

Since the military takeover Poland has been covered by a blanket of repression and censorship. Telephones remain cut, television and radio are under total army control. Movement between towns and regions is impossible without army permission.

Despite this, there is widespread and repeated resistance to Jaruzelski and continued activity by *Solidarity*.

*Solidarity* has regrouped its forces underground. Regular bulletins have appeared in Poznan, Wroclaw, Lodz, Lublin and Warsaw, urging continued resistance. Walesa has not issued one statement of support for the Jaruzelski regime, nor have any other main leaders of *Solidarity*.

Workers still wear *Solidarity* badges in large numbers, though this is now an offence carrying a fine of between 3,500 and 5,000 zlotys, a month's wages for most people. Several hundred people packed the courtroom in Warsaw on 11th January, to hear the trial of workers accused of inciting strikes. Many were wearing *Solidarity* badges.

While factories have been opened at gunpoint, production has fallen drastically, a general go-slow is taking place. Reports of sabotaged machines also filter out. A car factory in the suburbs of Warsaw is producing 12 cars a day! In normal times output was 350. Workers have received prison sentence of up to 7 years for striking since the coup. *Le Monde* reported

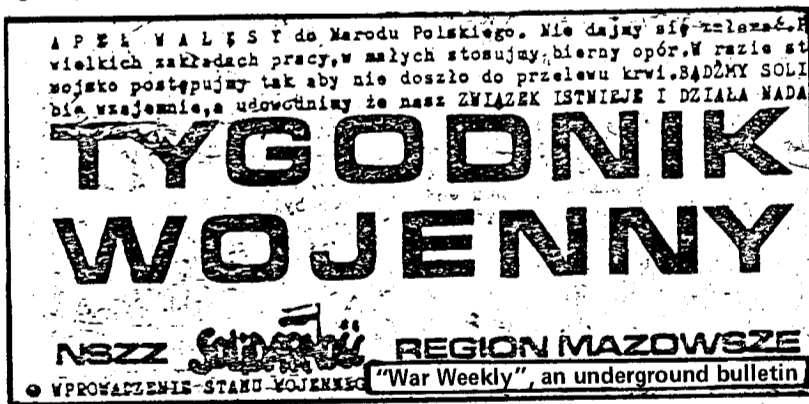
a *Radio Warsaw* bulletin as saying that "several hundred people had been fined and sent to jail for up to one month for breaching the curfew."

Fraternalization between the people and army has been reported. In most of the fighting so far it is the ZOMO which has born the brunt for Stalinism. Soldiers were withdrawn from the Bialoleka interment camp and replaced by the ZOMO because the prisoners had established "good relations" with them. The city of Radom, which has seen street fighting, remains sealed off and a mutiny of soldiers is reported. According to one *Solidarity* bulletin, troops surrounding a plant in Wroclaw, helped workers to escape the ZOMO.

On the 1st February the price of butter, sugar, meat and coal were put up between 200% and 350%. Jaruzelski hoped that the 'state of war' would stop any protest. But fighting broke out in the heart-

land of *Solidarity*, Gdansk, on the 30th January. According to the official story, the fighting was merely "an incident" staged by groups of youths. In reality, large-scale fighting took place around the memorial to the dead of 1971, outside the Lenin shipyard and in the town centre, where several public buildings were attacked. 14 people were reported injured. Over 200 demonstrators were arrested, giving the lie to any idea of small incident. In Gdansk the curfew was extended by three hours, from 8pm to 5am.

Protests against the repression within Poland have begun to grow. On the 12th January, 30 historians sent a letter to Jaruzelski, refuting the attacks on a colleague, professor Geremek, an adviser to *Solidarity*. 27 artists, journalists and academics signed a public letter to the Minister of Justice, calling for the lifting of martial law. They called for an end to maltreatment of detainees,



Gdansk shipyard, occupied after the military takeover



## Socialist Workers Party

Two months before Jaruzelski's coup, on September 14th, in Szczecin, the *Polish Socialist Workers Party* was formed. Like *Solidarity*, the PSWP, was the outcome of the struggle of the Polish workers since 1956, to organise independently of the state apparatus. In its founding statement the PSWP pledged itself to fight for the abolition of all bureaucratic privileges, for democratic rights and the abolition of censorship.

The formation of the PSWP was unique in Eastern Europe. Within two months it had grown to 17,000 supporters, a clear indicator of the speed of events in Poland which led

to the coup. The PSWP called for a Constituent Assembly, or free parliament, whose members would be subject to recall. It called for popular control of the police and all officials, and the formation of workers' councils in the factories.

Today the PSWP is banned. Many of its supporters are interned and facing long prison terms, others are working underground. *The fight continues.* On the 6th January, a group of members in exile formed a Provisional Committee and called for the formation of support committees. *That call must be answered in the workers' movement of Britain.*

### THE PLATFORM OF THE PSWP

1. The freedom of the country.
2. Ending the political monopoly of the PUWP, which does not represent the interests of the working class, but is the submissive lackey of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
3. The withdrawal of the Kremlin's armies from Polish territory.
4. The dissolution of the repressive militia, the MSW, which are controlled by the Ministry of the Interior and modelled on the Nazi SS and the Stalinist KGB.
5. Trade unions to be independent, subject to no political party nor to any administrative or governmental authority.
6. The right to strike (guaranteed by the constitution).
7. Individual liberties, freedom of assembly (guaranteed by the constitution).
8. Freedom of the press, radio and

television, an end to censorship including that of all the publications of writers and persons of letters.

9. The formation of workers' councils in every workplace with a decisive voice in social and economic affairs.

10. Reform of elections. The parliament today is a parody, because the deputies merely endorse the decisions of the Central Committee of the PUWP.

11. A constitutional guarantee that the Polish army and the armed militia MO do not intervene against demonstrations and workers' strikes.

12. The independence of universities and schools of higher education (guaranteed by the constitution).

13. Cancellation of agreements with the Soviet Union and treaties which are harmful to Poland, including among others, the treaties of Yalta, Teheran and Potsdam.



The ZOMO on the street

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## General Election in Ireland

The General Election of February 18th in the South of Ireland, covering 26 of the 32 Irish counties, was the outcome of a combined economic and political crisis. After less than a year in office the coalition of the extremely conservative Fine Gael party, whose traditional base is among the rich farmers, with the Irish Labour Party, was defeated on its budget.

The previous election had been dominated by the Long Kesh Hunger Strikes. For the first time in many years, representatives of the Republican movement, Provisional Sinn Fein, prisoners, stood for the Dail. They stood on an abstentionist ticket, which meant that if elected they would not take their seats. The Sinn Fein candidates were drawn from the women and men prisoners in Armagh and Long Kesh in the North. Two were elected, the others polled well. Other supporters of their cause, such as Paddy Healy of the League for a Workers Republic, sister organisation of the Socialist Labour Group, and Vincent Doherty of Peoples Democracy, who both ran on the H Block ticket, also did well in working class Dublin.

That election was disastrous for Fianna Fail, the main ruling class party in Ireland, which claims to be republican and has the support of many trade unionists. A massive Fianna Fail majority was slashed to

bits, due to a general disillusion with their economic policies and the way in which Charles Haughey, the Fianna Fail leader, had cynically abstained from supporting the Hunger Strikers.

Labour, which had no real policies of its own, was also decimated.

It is important to realize the differences between the Irish and British Labour Parties. Although the unions formally support Labour in the South of Ireland, rank and file trade unionists do not regard it as *their* party, in the way most workers do here. Irish Labour has never been able to build a mass base in the cities. In the last election it was smashed in Dublin, the working class heartland. Its leader, Frank Cluskey, in a solidly working class area, was humiliated by losing his seat.

The Irish Labour Party has been in two coalitions with Fine Gael in the past ten years. These governments have been right wing, both in social policy and in attitude to the unity of Ireland. Under the leadership of Cluskey the Labour Party accepted that the Paisleyites would have a right of veto on Irish Unity. His successor, Mick O'Leary, has not changed that.

Along with this pro-British stance, the Irish Labour Party joined with Fine Gael leader Fitzgerald, to draw up the worst budget in years, with sharp tax

rises, cuts in welfare, probable public sector job losses and a continued refusal to attack the wealth of big business and the rich farmers.

Ireland is not a wealthy country. The ruling class has encouraged the growth of some industry by giving foreign investors 'tax free holidays' of up to ten years. Industries which export, in other words most industry, pay little or no tax. Neither do the large farmers. Where then does the money to pay state employees and run services come from? The answer is - from the pockets of the working class, through PAYE, both in public and private sectors. This gross injustice has led to two one day General Strikes in Dublin and hundreds of thousands on the streets. Yet no government can tackle this problem without attacking the profits of big business. In this contradiction the semi-colonial status of the 'Irish Republic' and its governments is clearly seen.

The Fine Gael-Labour coalition which fell at the end of January was proposing to add £280 million in extra taxes, a large amount by Irish standards, onto the bill for PAYE wage-earners. Haughey's Fianna Fail, despite dressing up their proposals in smarter words, basically put the same package before the electors. Between the traditional parties there was nothing to choose for the Irish working class. Although Ireland does not have the vast foreign debts of Peru or Turkey, it has similar problems in funding its state expenditure without recourse to foreign loans, and in Ireland nearly half of all employees work for the state. These problems are insoluble within the 26 county Partition state. They will not be magically solved in a 32 County state, but the political and economic distortions of Partition are the foundation on which the problems rest.

Ireland has high unemployment, North and South. It is also a country with the youngest population in Europe. Over 35% of its people are under 25 years of age. It faces a jobs crisis in the towns. a large layer of young people is disenchanted with all the traditional parties. *Hardly any of them turn to Labour.*

Many were drawn to the upsurge around the Hunger Strikes, seeking through the Republican movement a revolutionary way out of the frustrations of their lives. The success of the prisoners' election campaign in 1981, expressing the aspirations of many in the South for immediate Irish unity, led Provisional Sinn Fein to stand candidates in its own name in elections for the Southern parliament, the Dail. The Irish Republican Socialist Party, another militant republican grouping with prisoners in the North, stood a similar number.



On the march in Drogheda



Irish Labour accepts Paisley's veto

Haughey

McAliskey

Fitzgerald

### For a workers Ireland

Bernadette McAliskey and Joe Harrington ran for Peoples Democracy on an anti-imperialist and defence of living standards platform. Helen Corcoran, in County Louth, which borders the North, stood as a Workers Republican candidate supported by shop stewards in Drogheda and Dundalk and by national trade union figures. She left the Irish Labour Party over its despicable stand on the Hunger Strikes and has called on Irish workers not to vote for it or give it money. Her platform included a call to build a workers' party for the whole of Ireland and for a sovereign parliament to cover North and South.

The Irish political scene, at a superficial glance, appeared to quieten down after the ending of the Hunger Strike, with conservative politics taking the upper hand. Paisley brought out his 'Third

Force' in the North and Fitzgerald came to power in the South.

Then the fall of the Fitzgerald government threw things into the balance again. A crisis within the traditional bourgeois parties and their bureaucratic allies within the working class, in the Official Unionists and the SDLP in the North, the Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour in the South, combined with spontaneous mass movements, involving hundreds of thousands on strike and in the streets, this is what continues to characterize Irish politics. Such a combination is the characteristic of a pre-revolutionary period. None of the problems, especially that of ending Partition, have been taken a step nearer solution by the enforced General Election. Only a workers' revolution in Ireland, throwing out British imperialism and its Irish lackeys offers a road forward for the workers and youth of Ireland.