

socialist newsletter

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VOTE LABOUR MAY 6

On May 6th, many cities and towns in Britain go to the polls, for local elections. These elections are a most important political event and in many ways will set the scene for the rest of 1982.

If the SDP-Liberal Alliance does well in May, and if Labour is driven from control in the important cities and towns, then the Tories will be emboldened to continue their attack on the unions, on social services, on education and on jobs.

Equally important, the ruling class will have a fallback alternative government based on its own parties, at the next election. The aims of trade unionists and Labour Party supporters will be thwarted at local government level.

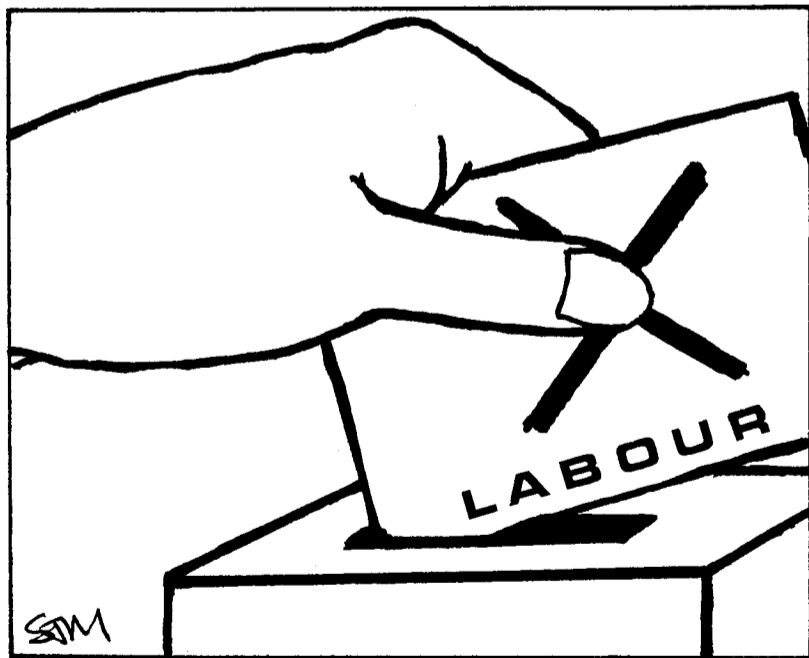
The fight against Heseltine and Joseph, who want to cut services like old people's homes, nurseries, schools and colleges, would be much harder facing SDP-Liberal or Tory councils. Just what can be expected from the SDP-Liberal Alliance is shown in Liverpool, where a Liberal dominated council has brought house building to a standstill, cut jobs, wound down social services and taken on a strike by its typists. In Islington, North London, where the right wing Labour councillors defected to the SDP en bloc, a long strike by local government workers has been fought. This was directly caused by the SDP council, which victimised a trade unionist trying to defend social services. No co-operation with the defence of local government workers' jobs can be expected from the SDP.

LABOUR HAS CUT

It would be foolish to pretend that the record of all Labour councils since Thatcher took office has been positive. Many Labour councillors have been only too willing to make the cuts demanded of them by the Tories. Others, like Ted Knight in Lambeth, opened up a movement to fight the cuts and then left it in the lurch, making cuts in a more underhanded way. The pressures on Labour councils are real ones. Labour councillors who refuse to make cuts are liable to have to pay the difference, losing their houses, cars and everything else in the process.

It is nothing less than a betrayal of those councillors who want to fight the cuts that the Labour leaders will not promise a full indemnity against surcharges when the next Labour government takes

NO MORE TORY CUTS!



office. The Tories are able to point the gun of financial ruin at the heads of all Labour councillors who make a stand in the interests of the working class. Even in areas like Hackney, where there is a strong left wing, councillors have been backing off recently from the commitment not to make cuts after May.

Anyone with children at state schools or nurseries, any old person using council services, all those who need social services, who are disabled, who use public transport, in short, most of the working class, have very real reasons for voting Labour on May 6th. Along with the vote though, must go the necessary extra fight to make Labour councils

and councillors act in *your* interests. *That's why we elect them, not so they can pursue their careers in the Town Hall.* Labour Parties locally are the best place to get at councillors and tell them what is to be done.

MAKE LABOUR FIGHT

Local government workers, council tenants and members of the ethnic minorities should consider actually joining the Labour Party, not because Labour is perfect, but to make it fight in their interests. Clay Cross proved ten years ago that a local Labour Party can be taken under the grip of working

people and it proved at the same time the limitations of the national leaders of the Labour Party.

Geoffrey Howe's budget shows that cuts are far from over. It allows for an increase of 300,000 on the dole, without taking into account school leavers. Where will these extra job losses come from? Many will be local government workers. Members of local government unions, such as NALGO, NUPE, GMWU and TGWU, have every reason to build a united front between the unions and Labour councils against the effects of the budget, which mean more massive cuts this year. The SDP and Liberals, with their support for Tebbit's anti-union laws, will implement these cuts if placed in control of councils. It will be far more difficult for trade unionists to pressure them than Labour councils.

DON'T ABSTAIN!

It is time now, before and after the 6th May, to work for a real fighting alliance between the Labour Party and the unions at local government level. When given the opportunity council workers will fight in their tens of thousands just like the train drivers and London Transport workers. *But cutting Labour councils are like a knife held at their backs.* The cuts which some Labour councils have already made could lead to abstentions in May or even to votes for the SDP. A massive attempt must be made in the council estates and workplaces

to stop these understandable but disastrous acts of desperation at Labour cuts.

A vote for Labour is a vote to stop the cuts. No-one will vote Labour on the basis of supporting cuts. A vote for Labour is a mandate for Labour to lead the fight against the Tories. The Labour Party must not be allowed to wriggle off the hook after the elections. Already some councillors and left wingers are saying that Labour should refuse to form councils, even where it has the majority. *This will not stop the cuts and even less will it help mobilise the working class for a fight. It would be a confidence trick played against those who voted Labour in order to put them in power.*

Every Labour vote will be a vote for Labour to take office. However difficult the conditions that is exactly what Labour councillors must do whenever in an overall majority. *No deals or coalitions must be formed with any other party.* The so-called 'majority opposition' method will only lead to Tory or SDP-Liberal councils.

A massive Labour vote is needed on May 6th, to stop the SDP-Liberals in their tracks and strike a blow at Thatcher's anti-working class budget.

All out on May 6th! Labour to power!

Unify the CPSA Left

As more trade unionists in the civil service now focus their attention on the joke pay offer made by the government, it is essential that CPSA members especially step up the campaign against the monitoring of Ethnic Minorities.

This has been met by unofficial strike action at the Battersea office in London. The monitoring is a barely concealed attempt to collect information on Black claimants along with the new racist restriction being introduced under the Nationality Act.

The leadership of the CPSA does not see the issue in quite the same way. Alistair Graham, General Secretary elect of the CPSA, has said that he is not in principle opposed to Ethnic Monitoring! Consequently neither Graham nor the CPSA National Disputes Committee will sanction any strike action.

This is a disgrace yet not surprising considering the right-wing nature of this bureaucrat. Equally disgraceful is the passivity of the leadership of the CPSA Broad Left, led by members of the *Militant* tendency.

All socialists must stand square in defence of *Militant* against the witch-hunts of the Foot right-wing in the Labour Party and their friends in the Tory media. But criticism of the *Militant* inside the CPSA Broad Left becomes a necessity when they refuse to struggle against Ethnic Monitoring.

Militant supporters have expressed the view that the Ethnic Monitoring issue is secondary. But *Militant* are doing equally little to use the Broad Left's leadership to organise against the right-wing's preparations for a sell-out on pay for the second year running. Their passivity on pay is concealed behind a welter of abstract sloganising.

This difficult situation in the CPSA could lead members either to run up the sectarian blind alley of the SWP's Redder Tape Faction, or simply give up. The need to unify the left in the union on the broadest possible basis and on a programme of action requires fighting through the political obstacles in the Broad Left.

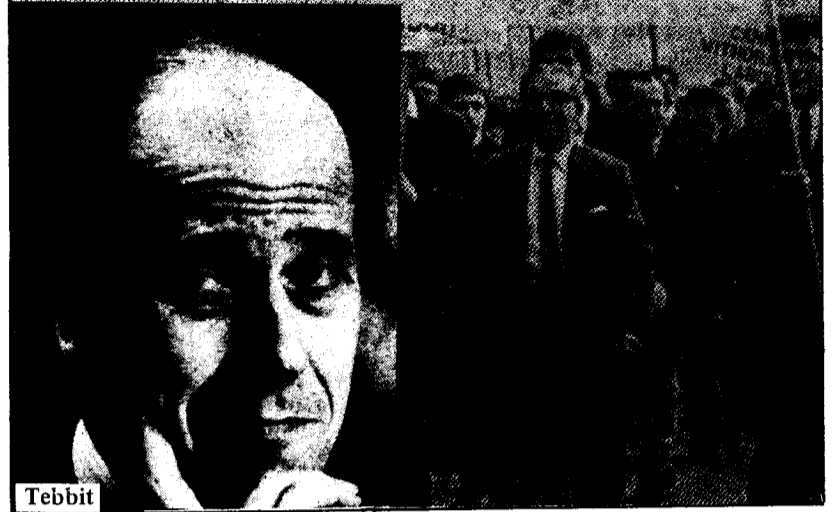
Evidence of the potential for this fight was a meeting of 50 Broad Left supporters in London during

the Ethnic Monitoring pilot scheme in February, to discuss ways of opposing racism in the civil service.

The meeting was called by the Socialist Caucus which seeks to challenge the opportunism and passivity of *Militant* within the Broad Left. The Caucus intends to build a national regroupment of civil service trade unionists to make the Broad Left a campaigning and not merely an electoral body.

Socialist Caucus recognises the need for a Broad Left which genuinely fights the right-wing, not with words but with mobilisations against their continual sell-outs. The 1982 pay campaign is in danger of being still-born if the Broad Left leadership do not prepare now against the manoeuvres of Losinska, Graham and co.

Socialist Caucus seeks to build itself as a united front of all rank and file civil servants who want a union which campaigns on their immediate economic and political needs against the bureaucratic left, the Losinska reactionaries and the biggest enemies of all — the Tory government.



Tebbit

Tebbit
Where is the fightback?

At the end of 1981, when the full extent of Norman Tebbit's anti-union laws emerged, the TUC promised an immediate and 'massive' campaign in the early months of this year. We are already approaching April and no real campaign, 'massive' or otherwise has materialized. Such tardiness — if that is all it is — in mounting a fight against Tebbit, will be paid for heavily by the unions.

To begin with, the total shut-down of London Transport on March 10th, for the first time since 1926, would have been declared illegal. Tory MPs called the strike a 'political act', and in the sense that it gave the reply of transport workers to a Tory inspired *political* judge's ruling, it was. Under Tebbit all the unions which had members out on strike could have been taken to court. They were liable, up to the sum of £250,000 for the loss in fares due to the strike. Since the fares loss was around £800,000, the penalties could have been big enough to financially cripple the union concerned, and end the action.

The union leaders, in particular the TUC, must act against Tebbit *now*, not when the first union is being fined. Rank and file trade unionists must equally oppose token actions such as half hour extensions of the lunchbreak. The TUC and the Labour Party have a responsibility to call a one-day all-out stoppage against the Tebbit laws, centred on a million strong March on Parliament.

Immediately the laws are used the TUC must move to call an indefinite General Strike, such as it did to get the dockers out of Heath's jail in 1972. All unions must be pulled out of joint bodies with the Tories, such as the National Economic Development Council, until the Tebbit measures are withdrawn.

When the Bill comes up in the House of Commons, Labour MPs must make that institution unworkable. The Labour leaders quite rightly threatened protest over Reagan's proposed visit to the Commons. Tebbit's laws are equally harmful to the interests of working people. *Total and disruptive opposition is called for.*

Civil Service Pay

Don't rely on arbitration!

By Frank Irvine

After the government's insulting pay offer to civil servants, designed to divide the grades by offering most money to the longest serving, a highly cynical manoeuvre is being lined up by union leaders.

The first part is taking place now. The leaders argue publicly for a 13% claim, but talk privately about 7%. The second part, planned in case Thatcher refuses to honour an arbitration recommendation of around 7%, will be to declare a national indefinite strike without the necessary planning, knowing it would lead to demoralization if it dragged on.

The most likely outcome of arbitration is an offer which raises the overall 4% cash limit, perhaps to 5%.

Unlike the Tories the union leaders have accepted *in advance* whatever offer the arbitration panel comes up with. There is very little chance of them agreeing to the magic 7% and less chance of Thatcher paying it.

Civil servants are in no mood for a repeat of last year's 21 week round of 'selective strikes'. The majority of the lower paid — those being offered from 0% to 2% — are for a national strike. Hundreds of resolutions have been sent to union executives demanding they call one.

The executives of the nine white collar unions sped into action as one, to present written evidence to the arbitration panel — which won't report until April 19th! Civil service trade unionists must mount the campaign *now* to force the national leaders to *prepare* a strike for the full claim. The TUC General Council should be called upon to organize aid from other parts of the workers movement.

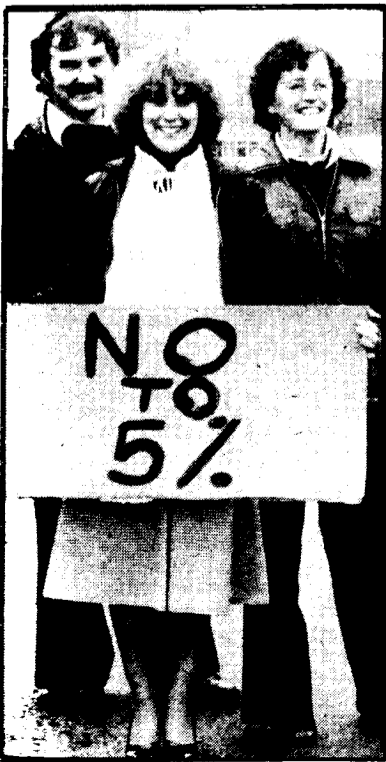
At this moment right and left candidates are 'batting' it out for the post of CPSA deputy General Secretary. The Broad Left candidate, Macreadie and the Broad Left candidate for the presidency in May, are supporters of *Militant*. These two must be pushed to give a concrete reason for voting for them — by issuing statements to all branches, calling for a national strike for the pay claim and for the setting up of civil service inter-union unity committees to lobby union headquarters for an all-out strike. *No faith at all should be placed in any form of arbitration under Thatcher.*



CPSA leader Graham

The Pay Conference called by the CPSA London Area Committees, must address itself to these questions. Many members are furious at the pay offer and now look for a serious way to make the unions move. On April 1st, the official pay settlement date, the London SCPS and CPSA Area Committees are calling a march and rally. Executive members of both unions must be forced onto the platform to say how they intend to win fair play for their members. The rally can send a clear message to all General Secretaries that members are ready to fight and win.

- * Inter-union committees to prepare the fight and organise the action!
- * The union executives must declare a strike and build for all-out action!
- * No reliance on an arbitration panel which reports to the Thatcher government!



Swindon Rail Works Committee an obstacle:

Shift them!

Men in the Asbestos Shop of Swindon Rail Works recently struck against the introduction of a three-shift system to replace the traditional two shifts. The Management unilaterally broke the men's contracts on the basis of a decision by the Works Committee which accepted the three-shift system for the men. Unfortunately it neglected to consult them!

When the men turned up for their usual shift they were locked out by the Management and ordered off the premises by the local constabulary. The Management said that only when the three-shift system was accepted would they reopen negotiations... with the Works Committee. Meanwhile this Committee produced a news-

letter trying to pass off the three-shift system as a way of creating new jobs. This is a sick joke. The workforce has shrunk from 15,000 to 3,000 in recent years.

Faced with this lack of leadership, the 70 workers involved have accepted the new shifts. The fight is now on to remove those leaders who are hand in glove with Management. In one NUR branch a resolution against the three-shift system was passed but the Convenor refused to accept the mandate. In another an EC member closed the meeting rather than let a motion be put. The strikers' determination to remove these bureaucrats points the only way to a successful defence of jobs and conditions.

London Transport

Strike to defend fares and jobs!

By Paul Glazier

Fifteen of the unions organising London Transport made history on March 10th when they closed down all services for the first time since the 1926 General Strike. Although the shutdown was total, two of the unions refused to call their members out.

Now we are told to wait and see what will happen at the second reading of Labour MP Douglas Jay's Transport Bill in April. All energies, chorus the union leaders and the GLC, should be put into lobbying Tory MPs to vote for this. As if lobbying alone will force a cave-in by Thatcher. *This will not happen.*

7000 jobs are threatened in LT over the next two years. Stations will be closed, bus garages merged. Already 27 peak-time tube trains are being taken out of service. LT has reduced its 1982 wages budget to allow only a 5 per cent increase. All-out strike action is vital if these attacks are to be fought and won.

GLC leader Ken Livingstone has suggested that not collecting fares would help put pressure on the government. This sounds fine, but what happens when LT victimises bus workers and station staff who adopt this tactic? Once again, strike action will be necessary — not just at individual stations or isolated garages — but across the whole of LT.

The bureaucrats in the LT union defence committee have no intention of doing what is necessary to win. The one-day strike action was deliberately scheduled in the same week as the lobby of Parliament and a rally. After a week of protests, transport workers are told to wait for Parliament to do something. *Another sell-out is being prepared.*

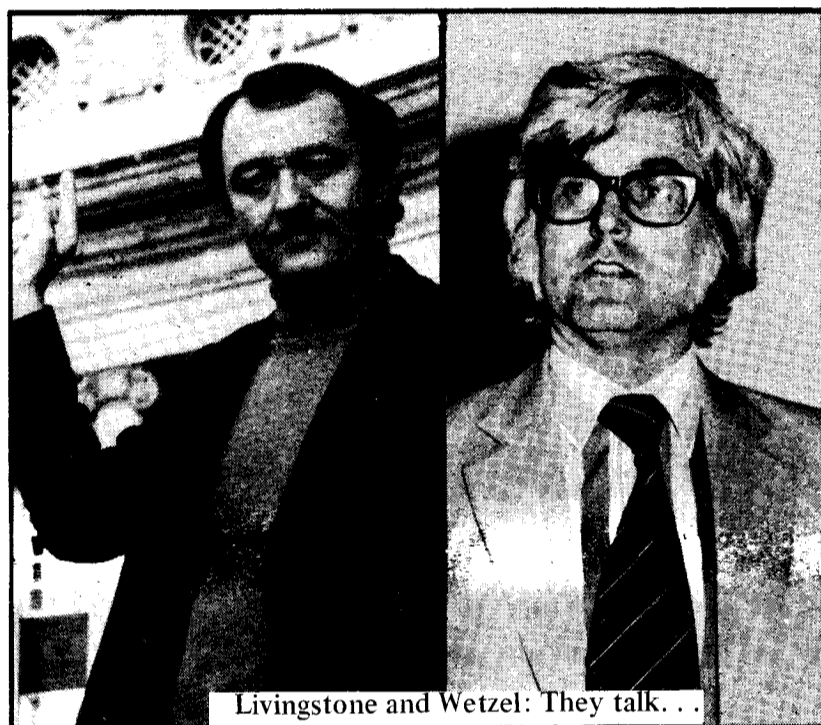
But the rank and file membership is extremely militant. 600 shop stewards voted unanimously for the day's strike and the majority of those who spoke called for escalated action. Campaigns to 'educate public opinion' are no substitute for this.

The basis for strike action must be laid now.

- Inter-union action committees must be formed, to defend jobs and services. Union head offices must be flooded with resolutions and petitions calling for strike action.

- The GLC must put its resources not into publicity stunts but into a campaign aimed at mobilising the working class. Instead of Dave Wetzels 'London Assembly' of businessmen and vicars, they should call a conference of labour movement activists to organise material solidarity with LT workers.

- The Labour front-bench must



Livingstone and Wetzels: They talk...



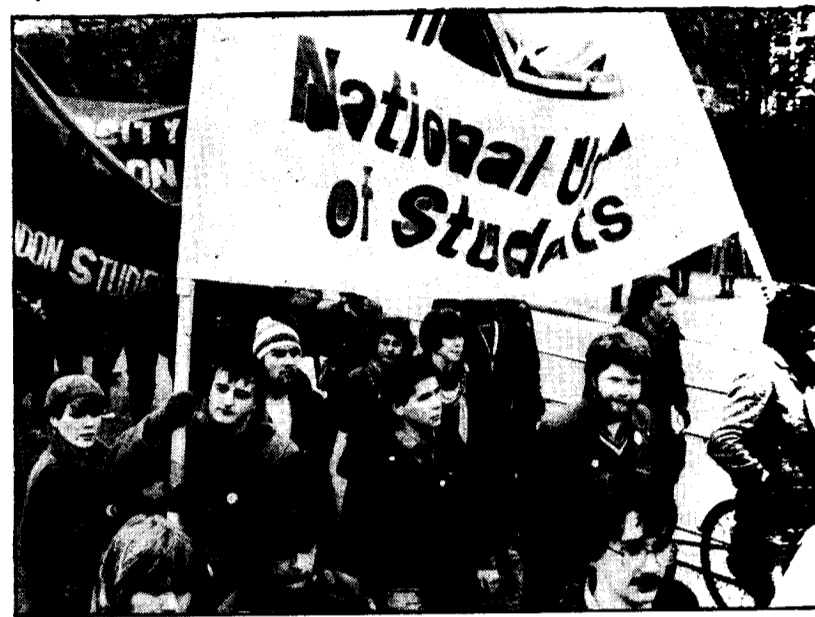
also be kicked into activity. Albert Booth, Shadow transport spokesperson has said that Sir Peter Masefield, the LT boss, is 'on our side' because he wants amending legislation. Yet it is Masefield who is putting through the cuts that will destroy London's transport system! Booth must be committed to the

full restoration of the cheap fares policy. He and other transport union-sponsored MPs must be called on to disrupt Parliament and organise a massive campaign of labour movement solidarity.

UNITED STRIKE ACTION TO DEFEND CHEAP FARES!

Students need leaders who will fight the Tories

By Michael Keene



A record 60 candidates are standing for election to the executive of the National Union of Students in April. The foremost issue in this election is how to throw back the offensive that Thatcher has launched against education and students' living standards. The main options for the leadership of NUS are as follows:

Left Alliance: the present leadership theoretically made up of individual NUS members, is in practice a Communist Party dominated group, with the active support of Liberal and SDP students and voting back-up from Tory 'wets'.

The Left Alliance is making a strong bid to control the executive, running 8 candidates for the 17 positions. Stalinist Doug Herd, who is standing for president, typifies the Left Alliance. His manifesto contains nothing but generalities about achieving 'progressive and lasting change' in education. It doesn't mention fighting the Tories. It doesn't propose a single campaigning activity for the coming year and it makes no balance sheet at all of what has been done by the NUS leaders over the past year. The Left Alliance slate is backed up by a number of SDP-Liberal candidates, standing on a 'students before politics' platform. These are indistinguishable from the Left Alliance.

The National Organisation of Labour Students is potentially the most powerful grouping within NUS. It could take the overall leadership. But the leaders of NOLS over the past few years have refused to fight for this. For some time the NOLS leaders were part of the Left Alliance, until forced to break from it by the rank and file. This year they are only standing 5 candidates for 17 positions. This gives the Left Alliance a clear run. NOLS leadership claims it has influenced NUS and that 'NUS policy is NOLS policy'. This is the same as saying that Stalinist policy is NOLS policy.

This year the NOLS slate was not even elected by a full NOLS conference but by a 'student council' of chosen hacks. The Labour Clubs and the rank and file in the colleges have been disenfranchised, we think deliberately.

NOLS presidential candidate Neil Stewart is identical with Doug Herd on policies. He talks about an overall push 'to popularise the Union's Education policy', avoiding mention of the Thatcher government. He says he is committed to 'a National Union that involves a collective leadership of different political views', in other

words he has no reasons why students should vote Labour. He wants to work with Tories, Liberals and the SDP!

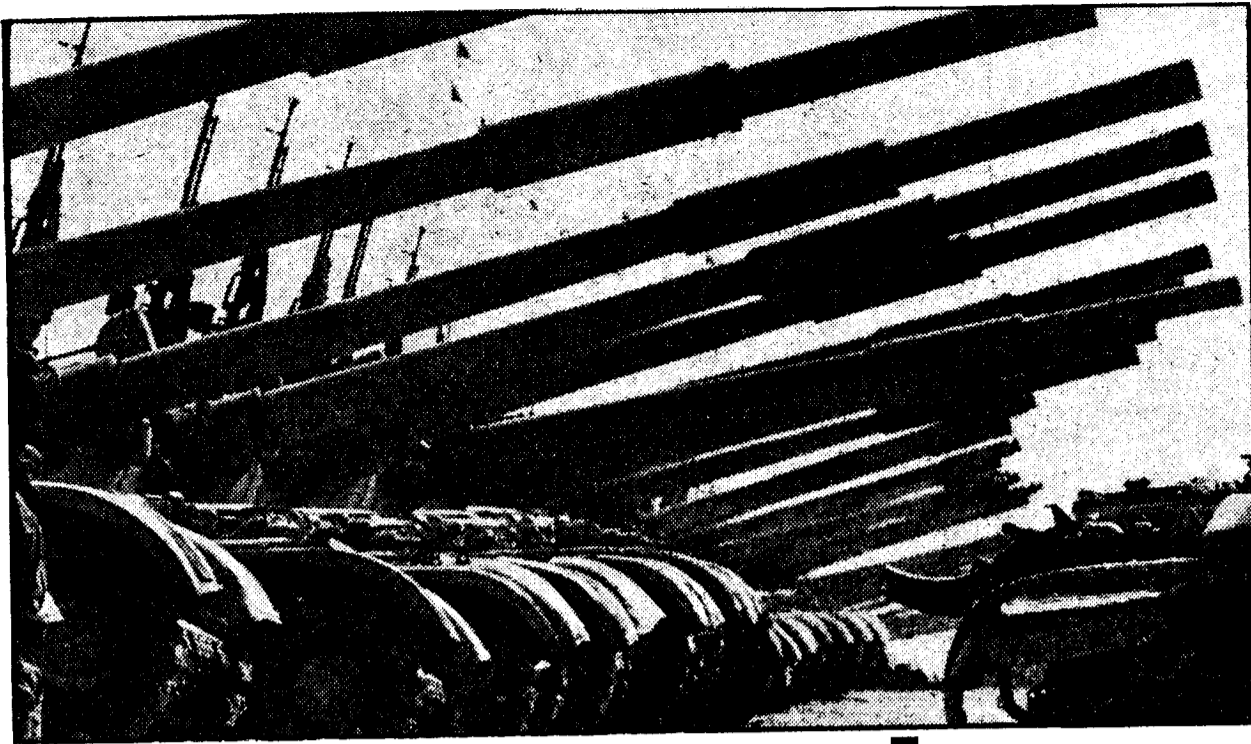
In contrast Ken Stratford of Thames Polytechnic is standing for election as a Campaigning Labour Student. He attacks the Left Alliance for its destruction of a student fightback against Thatcher, and campaigning for an end to NOLS support for the Left Alliance to an effective campaigning NUS, for solidarity with the NZS, the independent Polish students union which has been banned by Jaruzelski and for opposition to British imperialism in Ireland. For taking this stand Stratford was vilified on the front page of *Labour Student*, the NOLS paper, by Neil Stewart. *Labour Student* calls on NOLS supporters not to vote or transfer to Stratford — *in other words the NOLS paper has called for transfers to Liberals and Tories before a Labour Student.* There is a word for this — *scabbing*.

The Socialist Student Alliance is fielding six candidates, fighting for all five full time posts. The SSA is at a crossroads in its development. It has recently suffered a split, with an exodus of *Socialist Challenge* supporters who previously formed its core. It has traditionally needed the support of the NOLS left. Several SSA candidates are themselves NOLS members. The manifesto of the SSA correctly attacks the Left Alliance for refusing to campaign clearly against the Tories. But it stays on the level of general arguments such as, 'We believe that class confrontation will eventually be inevitable and that people's consciousness must be raised so that we win the fight when it comes.'

The problem for the SSA is to find a way to join the fight to clear out the existing rotten leaders of NOLS with their pro-Stalinist positions.

The fight is on in NOLS. Supporters of the Socialist Students Alliance and the left in NOLS should unite to form a strong national regroupment committed to taking the leadership of NOLS.

NUS conference at Blackpool looks like confronting the principles left with the election of an even stronger Left Alliance. Many manoeuvres will take place there to marginalize the fighting left. *The time has come, given the roadblock in NUS and the pressing urgency of stopping education cuts, for the SSA, the NOLS left and all those who want a fighting NUS to unite in one national left regroupment.*



Reagan's Budget

By Bob Graham

The American economy is following those of Western Europe into the severest crisis of post war years. Unemployment is rising at the rate of 250,000 a month and has reached nearly 10 million, about 9% of the US labour force. Industrial output fell by 3% in January and many factories are operating at only 70% of capacity. Competition from the cheap labour economies of Taiwan, South Korea and other Asian countries is hitting America's industrial base. The American motor car and steel industries are in ruins, car production has hit a 35 year low while Ford is kept in business by the profits of its European subsidiary. American multinationals are aggravating these problems by setting up new plants in third world countries where their interests are protected by repressive regimes and where there are no trade unions to protect workers' rights.

Ronald Reagan, however, continues to pursue the monetarist doctrines with which Thatcher has been experimenting so disastrously in Britain for the last three years. In order to try and reduce inflation and, thereby, revive the economy Reagan believes the money supply should be strictly controlled. But to do this interest rates have been raised to unprecedented levels, currently 17%, driving small firms out of business, discouraging the 'hire purchase' consumption so important to the American economy and encouraging those with surplus funds to invest in government stocks rather than in industry. High interest rates cripple American exports by overpricing the dollar.

Reagan's budget proposals reflect the decline in the American industrial base. In a pattern familiar



enough in Britain it is social welfare which is to be cut as the Reagan government's tax base collapses. Spending on education, health and social security programmes is to be cut by 14% in Reagan's proposals put before Congress in February. The gains for the working class in the 'Great Society' of the 1960s are to be systematically dismantled. At the same time the budget will give large tax reductions on higher incomes, the so-called 'trickle down' method of increasing private consumption, which has proved completely ineffective. As the crisis deepens, areas which are non-essential to the capitalist class are cut back while the repressive apparatus is strengthened. Faced with working class protest Reagan is cynically trying to shift responsibility for spending cuts to the governments of the 50 separate states by reviving Nixon's idea of 'New Federalism'. Having decided

in the budget how much to cut from welfare spending Reagan tells the states they will have to implement the cuts. Granting responsibility without power will discredit Democratic state administrations in the poorer areas where welfare cuts will hurt most, like Mississippi, where aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) is already only 20% of what it is in Alaska.

While welfare spending is reduced arms spending is increased. Reagan wants to raise it by 10% of real terms to 216 billion dollars, the highest ever total, giving his defence chiefs and the powerful military-industrial complex everything they want. This will finance new B-1 bombers, Cruise Missiles, the neutron bomb and the production of chemical weapons for Europe. Direct defence of American interests in Central America and the Middle East means massive spending on arms to prop up repressive regimes, \$256 million is going to El Salvador this year, and on the Rapid Deployment Force. This will intervene to prevent the overthrow of American puppet regimes in Saudi Arabia and South West Asia.

The results will be felt by the working class and in particular by those sections already suffering the worst effects of the depression. Unemployment among young workers is 22% and among young black workers 42%. The end of equal opportunity and job creation schemes will affect them most, facing as they do no hope of finding unskilled work. AFDC is to be cut from 7.8 to 5.6 billion dollars, food stamps from 10.3 to 9.6 billion dollars. This will hit at those 33% blacks and 10% of whites still trapped in poverty.



Reagan's proposals to cut the education budget by 1½ billion dollars has provoked a sharp response from the youth. Thousands of high school

and college students marched to the White House, March 1st to protest against the attacks on education to cries of 'Books, not bombs'.

US Hands off El Salvador!



The junta in El Salvador is unable from winning the war against the popular guerilla forces as even, just two weeks after allegedly 'flushing out' the guerillas from the San Vicente region, the repressive army was fighting a pitched battle with the revolutionary forces in the centre of the largest town there.

Unable to win by straight terror junta boss Duarte is running 'elections'. This charade, of course, led to a victory for the right wing parties, since the representatives of the bulk of the population were banned!

A bigger threat to the left comes from the new measures announced by Reagan to help the junta's

operations. In Honduras and Guatemala, which border El Salvador, the repression of the left has been stepped up on the orders of Washington.

Socialists in Britain must not stand by in the face of the US build up to intervention in Salvador. The Labour Party should be put clearly on the spot by a call for it to strongly oppose the war moves of Reagan in Central America. Equally crucial in the coming months will be a fight for the bringing down of the Duarte junta in El Salvador and for material aid to the FMLN, who are leading the fighting. **US HANDS OFF CENTRAL AMERICA! VICTORY TO THE FMLN!**

Argentine Trotskyist Killed by the junta

Ana Maria Martinez, a member of the Socialist Workers Party of Argentina (PST) has been murdered. She was taken by armed men on the 4th February and 'disappeared'. On the 17th February, the Interior Minister announced that her body had been found in the suburbs of Buenos Aires.

Thousands have 'disappeared' in Argentina since military rule with the direct involvement and connivance of the security forces. Weekly demonstrations of the relatives of

the disappeared occur in Buenos Aires. Ana Maria Martinez was one more victim of the repressive apparatus of the Argentinian junta.

We salute the memory of Ana Maria Martinez.

* For the release of those imprisoned

* For the handing over of the disappeared to their relatives.

* Down with the dictatorship.

Letters of protest from the Labour and Trade Union movement should be sent to the Argentinian Embassy, 9, Wilton Crescent, London W1.



Senegal Trotskyists Repressed

In the last weeks, a vicious campaign of harassment and repression has been launched by the Senegalese Government against the Communist Workers League (LCT) of Senegal, section of the Fourth International (ICR). Members have been detained and interrogated by the police, released then picked up again. They are under constant surveillance, accused of plotting against the state.

Though the Government maintains that all organisations can obtain legal recognition, its actions against the LCT show that it is no respecter of democratic rights. The

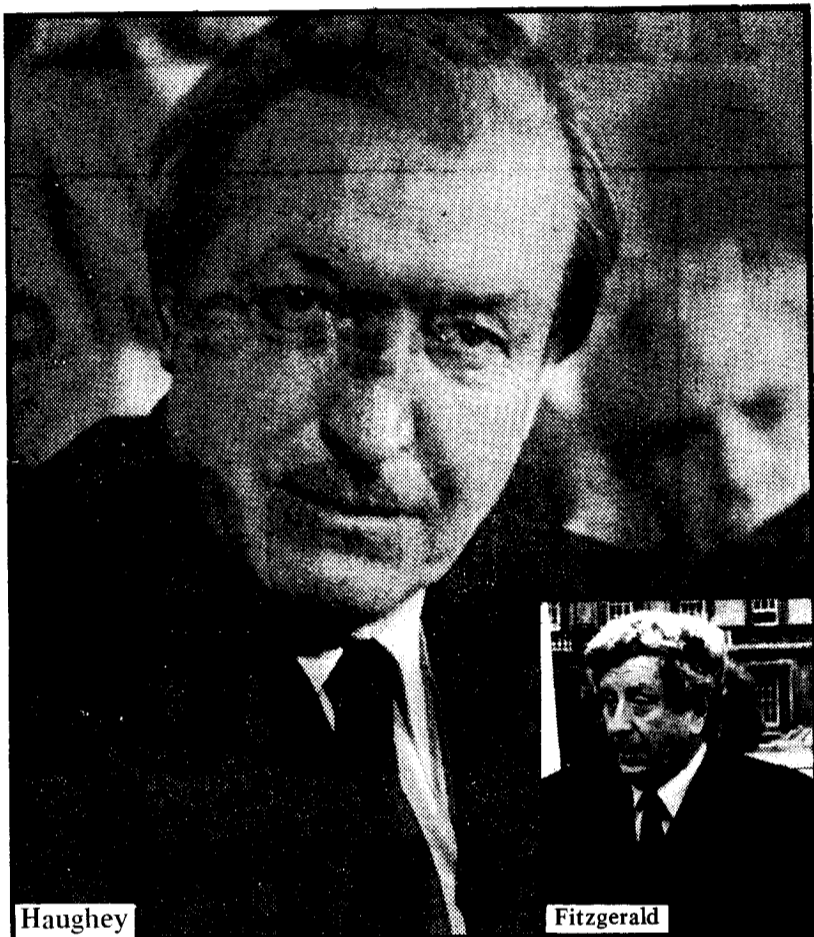
repression against the LCT came at a time when it was going through the final stages of obtaining such recognition. The LCT is being attacked because it has fought for free election to a sovereign Constituent Assembly; because it has struggled for the independence of the trade unions from the state and for the right to strike; because it has supported the just demands and strikes of high school students in Dakar.

Stop the repression against the LCT.

For the immediate legalisation of LCT.

By George White

Crisis of working class leadership in Ireland



Haughey

Fitzgerald

Before the General Election on February 18th in the south of Ireland, a coalition of the conservative Fine Gael party and the Irish Labour Party, held onto power as a minority government, for nine months. The election itself has solved nothing. Fianna Fail, the largest ruling class party in Ireland, which poses as a 'party of the people', has replaced Fine Gael/Labour in office. But there is still a hung parliament and the combined vote of all the non Fianna Fail elements could bring the government down. For weeks after February 18th, intensive lobbying of the 'independent' members of the Dail, the southern parliament, was undertaken by both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail.

The voting in the election itself revealed a further drop in the first preference votes of the Labour Party (proportional representation applies in the south of Ireland). Labour did not regain a solid base in the cities and many trade unionists, perhaps half, voted for Fianna Fail. Inside the Labour Party the new electoral drop to 15 MPs, caused a crisis on the national leadership, the Administrative Council. Michael O'Leary, the Irish Labour leader, made it clear that he would take no notice of any decision by the Irish Labour AC to go against coalition. O'Leary tried for a coalition with Fine Gael on any basis and acted as a go-between for the right wing party with the five 'socialist independents'.

Irish Labour has links with the trade unions, which are strong in Ireland. These links were strained

by the coalition of 1981 and its anti-working class budget. In some unions, including the Federated Workers' Union, the second largest, there were moves to disaffiliate from Labour and to cut off election expenses. Some of this came from Fianna Fail supporters, but a new element was a move to break with Labour from the left, because of its treachery. The Irish Labour Party as now made up in the Dail does not offer even a minimal serious political expression for the trade unions, its supposed purpose. If it fails to make a left turn it could lose the support of even its staunchest trade union allies.

Fine Gael held its vote in the countryside, among the better-off farmers. Importantly, it continued to attract support from among the new middle class and professional layers in Dublin, an area which now accounts for over 30% of the population.

Although Fianna Fail has formed the new government, the election opened up old sores in the party. Fianna Fail is no longer a united party, with a strong leader at its head, one of its trademarks. Charles Haughey is opposed by nearly half of the parliamentary party even though the challenge to his leadership after February 18th by O'Malley was dropped in the interests of stopping short of a split party. The practical programme of Haughey relies on softening the cuts in state spending through interim international loans. In the short-term this will be marginally better for workers, especially those

in the public sector. In the medium term Haughey must turn, like FitzGerald, to cuts and higher taxes, lengthening the already long dole queues and holding down wages. The new regime has no mechanisms for developing the industrial base of Ireland in the face of a world recession, except the kind Thatcher has made familiar here.

Unemployment and wages were the keynote points of the election, so far as the working class was concerned. The wave of action around the Hunger Strikes, which reached its height almost a year ago, had receded by February 18th. Those thousands of young people who took to the streets then had been let fall by Provisional Sinn Fein, the organisation to which they turned. Sinn Fein stood only a token number of candidates this time and had little to say on unemployment apart from very general arguments. There is scope for an enormous unemployed workers' movement in Ireland, with Sinn Fein at its head, but this did not materialise over the past year.

The Sinn Fein candidates, unclear about what they would do if elected, polled badly on February 18th, a direct outcome of the demobilisation of last year's mass movement.

The Kremlin's influence

In contrast the 'Sinn Fein-Workers' Party', which originated in the 'official Sinn Fein' of 1971, gained three seats. Along with two 'independent socialists', this makes a block of five MPs who claim to stand to the left of the Irish Labour Party. SFWP and the two 'independent socialists', who effectively hold the balance of power, are, to one degree or another, all under the influence of Stalinism. On international questions they are all heavily influenced by the politics of the Kremlin. The emergence of this grouping reveals the underlying instability of Irish politics and the crisis of the Irish Labour Party from which they, especially SFWP, took votes.

The working class in Ireland has not been brought closer to a workers' government by the outcome of this election. The political life of Ireland remains dominated by two problems which are in reality parts of the same problem — the need for a strong all-Ireland Labour Party based on the trade unions and the need to overcome the economic and political division of the country. It would be an error to see the success of a grouping such as the 'Sinn Fein-Workers' Party' to mean that the revolutionary struggle to throw Britain out and unite the country will now take a back seat. Economic issues, which SFWP have made a speciality, will all lead back to the need to unify the country and the working class. One of the first statements of Charles Haughey when nominated as prime minister was to call for a new initiative on unity — *he means unity on ruling class terms.*

Many elements of the trade union apparatus in Ireland are now openly or secretly influenced by Stalinism. The idea of massive British aid as a means to bring about a spurious unity was floated by some of these at a recent Labour movement conference on Ireland in London. The thinking of these people is not a million miles away from that of Haughey and a wing of the Irish ruling class, or that of 'Sinn Fein-Workers' Party' and, indeed, the Kremlin itself.

British Labour has no interest in helping out the British or Irish ruling classes to hang onto power in Ireland by schemes of this kind.

South African Black workers fight for union rights

In the words of Jan Theron, a leader of the Food and Canning Workers' Union in South Africa, the murder of union organiser Neil Aggett marked a 'turning point in relations between unions and the state'.

The response of Black trade unionists to this 55th murder by the authorities in South African jails since detention without trial began 19 years ago, did indeed represent a watershed in the struggle against the racist regime.

Black workers took widespread action across the country, including 15 minute stoppages by dockers on February 11th in the biggest ports of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London. In East Rand the Metal and Allied Workers' Union organised strikes in no less than 23 factories.

The full importance of all this can only be seen against the background of South African law which effectively outlaws strikes outside of complex arbitration procedures. By law, all trade unions must register with the state. Many of the Black trade unions which took part in the strikes have refused to do this. *In other words they took illegal action over Aggett's death.*

A big demonstration, 10,000 strong, took place through Johannesburg. Marching 10 miles to Aggett's grave, they carried the illegal banners of the African National Council. These have not been seen in central Johannesburg since the ANC was banned 20 years ago. On the long march workers ripped down election posters of the white racist National Party.

It is precisely this link between industrial and political action which is sending waves of fear through the South African regime and leads to splits in the ruling elite. Leading liberal elements such as Helen Suzman have expressed regret at Aggett's murder. She read out a letter in parliament, detailing the



brutalization of Aggett in prison. This was an act without precedent.

Counterposed to this liberal stand has been the growth of a very hard right wing caucus from the National Party, which stands for an out civil war on the Blacks if necessary.

Black trade union membership in South Africa now stands at 200,000. The response of the racist to this working class threat has been naked repression. Neil Aggett was one of 17 held in dawn raids on November 27th last year. They were part of 306 held, mainly in the African Allied Workers' Union. Aggett, killed on February 5th, was Transvaal secretary of the Food and Canning Workers' Union. Also held are Phozamile Gqweta of the Allied Workers Union and Sisa Nkomo, its Vice President, with Sam Kibane, its secretary.

As the strikes and the mass were taking place 7 Blacks were jailed for refusing to give evidence in the trial of Khotso Seatholo, the former president of the Soweto Students Representative Council.

This is part of the biggest political show trials for years, announced by police boss Louis Le Grange in parliament on February 4th. These are being held to cover the regime's need to step up the repression to combat the increased and more successful guerilla war within South Africa. The upsurge of armed struggle, combined with the strike wave, is not accidental. There is a new stage of mobilisation of the South African masses, pushing for an end to the great bastion of imperialist racism.

The leading role of the urban Blacks and the working class in the upsurge shows graphically that the future belongs to them. The Black working class in South Africa is destined to be the flame of the workers revolution in the whole of Africa.



Demonstration in Soweto



IN DEFENCE OF TROTSKYISM



MARXISM AND THE STATE 2

Clarity on the nature of the capitalist state is a fundamental need for revolutionary Marxists. We have stressed many times in this column the need for the working class to destroy the bourgeois state — its army, police, courts and bureaucracy — and replace them with new forms of workers' power, answerable only to the working class. The parliament which exists now is that of the ruling class and must be replaced by a national workers' council, like the Soviets which were formed in Russia in 1917. Workers' power will give new meaning to democratic rights. For instance, 'equality before the law', supposedly guaranteed by British capitalism, is a sick joke to the masses of working class blacks and women who fall foul of ruling class judges and police. Freedom of the press is often a myth in a society where ownership of the mass media is in the hands of a tiny elite.

Revolutionaries defend the rights which the working class has won under bourgeois democracy against those who want to remove them. This defence is part of the battle for workers' power and is linked to the need to abolish capitalism as a whole.

Bourgeois democracy, for the working class, stops short of full control over the state — the forces of repression. This has been proven time and again, most tragically in Chile in the early 1970s. The ruling class simply will not allow the working class to 'extend' democracy so far, within the bourgeois state, that the working class can disband the army, throw out reactionary judges and change private property to social property, in the commanding heights of the economy.

It is a noteworthy political event to find John O'Mahony, main theoretician of the paper *Socialist Organiser*, which claims a revolutionary Marxist basis, writing an article in reply to Michael Foot, in which he says, 'What happens when the bourgeoisie begins to disrupt democracy and attack it? The Labour movement will fight back. We will not abandon bourgeois democracy or democratic rights.' The perspective outlined in O'Mahony's article does not take in the seizure of power by the working class. It would limit the actions of the working class to defending bourgeois democracy within a bourgeois state.

Trotsky states the opposite in the *Transitional Programme of the Fourth International*: 'The formulae of democracy (freedom of the press, the right to unionise etc.) mean for us only incidental or episodic slogans in the independent movement of the proletariat and not a democratic noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat by the agents of the bourgeoisie.' The working class must, even in defending democratic rights under a bourgeois state, go beyond the institu-

tions of the ruling class. To really defend democratic rights for the working class, a workers' dictatorship against the bourgeoisie must be set up. Lenin argued that recognition of the need for this dictatorship was the essence of Marxism.

In the same issue of *Socialist Organiser*, Martin Thomas writes about the place of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*. Thomas tries to prove that communism will be basically an extension of 'everything positive in bourgeois individual freedom'. Somehow he misses the need to smash the bourgeois state to get freedom for the working class. Does he fear that referring to these difficult questions will alienate those Labour lefts who preach that there is a 'peaceful' and reformist road to socialism?

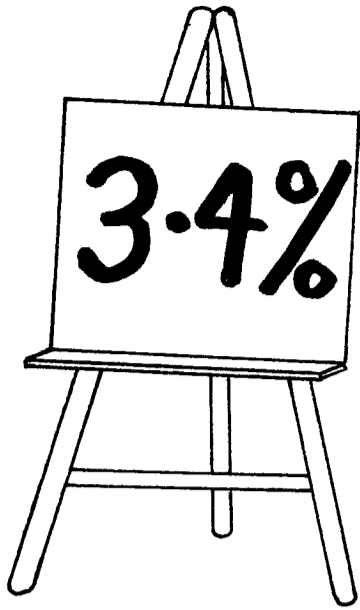
History proves that capitalism is a most brutal and violent system of class rule. There will be neither freedom for the working class, nor individual freedom for the oppressed, which is dependent on that of the class, without a revolutionary struggle. To speak of freedoms and socialism without reference to this is to wilfully distort the *Communist Manifesto* and Marx.

These ambiguities of O'Mahony and Thomas are compounded in *Socialist Organiser's* slogan 'for a workers' government.' Is this government to be one which breaks with the bourgeoisie — or a Labour government of the 'normal' type implementing 'socialist policies' within the House of Commons. The pro-capitalist leaders of the Labour Party will destroy it rather than let it come near to carrying out a 'socialist programme', which implies breaking up the capitalist state. Take note of the row surrounding the remarks of Pat Wall, messrs. O'Mahony and Thomas.

To deny this would be to support the reformism behind a Marxist mask which is the trademark of the *Militant*. The capitalist state is not an instrument that can be used by the working class to attack the ruling class.

In the days of Lenin and Trotsky such a view was called Kautskyism, after one of the leaders of German socialism, who was for a time a leading Marxist theoretician. Kautsky became an opponent of the Russian Revolution, based on his idea that it was not necessary to smash up the bourgeois state to achieve socialism. He would agree with the implication by John O'Mahony that bourgeois democracy could be extended to reach socialism.

All revolutionary workers who want to stay off the slippery slope into opportunism must put themselves on record in relation to the need to replace the capitalist state with a workers' dictatorship. Where does John O'Mahony stand on this question?



Teachers have been offered only a 3.4% increase in pay, at the cost of 11,500 jobs. The authorities told the teachers that they can have 4% if they accept the loss of 13,500 jobs. Presumably an increase of 12% to keep pace with inflation would mean 54,000 jobs have to go!

The leaders of the teachers' unions knew that a jobs and pay trade-off was on offer from the moment the Tories announced a 4% limit on public sector pay rises. They also know that teachers' pay has been falling since 1976 and quite dramatically since 1979.

To meet the government's insulting offer the leaders of one union, the NAS/UWT, started a campaign designed to force Keith Joseph to arbitration. Not to be outflanked, the NUT launched a similar campaign, only to leave out

An insult to teachers

the teachers in the big metropolitan areas once the Metropolitan Authorities urged the government to go to arbitration. The union leaders therefore left the two teachers' unions divided and then divided the teachers in the cities from the rest.

Since the last meeting of the employers on March 18th, which held to the 3.4%, the NUT has urged all its members not to undertake lunchtime duties, after school duties or cover for teachers who have been absent more than one day. Threats of half-day action hang in the air. On the ground support for taking effective action is strong among teachers, even from areas not noted for past militancy. In the Metropolitan areas some schools continued to take action despite the NUT leaders' taking them back to the executive.

Will the actions being proposed by the leaders of the NUT and NAS/UWT win the full claim? The answer to this question is no. Rank and file teachers should build unity between the unions and areas now, calling on the leaders to prepare an all-out strike for the full claim. A strike levy of all members should be made now to prepared for such action. If past experience is anything to go by the leaders will use lack of funds as an excuse for dropping action.

Teachers have a lot to learn from last year's very long civil service dispute. A whole series of partial actions and arbitration did not help civil servants to get anything near their modest claim. The same will be the case for teachers if the nettle of beating the government is not grasped firmly by the hand.

Council rents: Freeze them!

By Sam Stacey

The Tory government's policy of making the harshest attacks on the least organised section of the working class is clearly shown by the proposed cuts in the Housing Subsidy. In Swindon the Labour-controlled Council has decided to raise the extra income wholly from rent increases. When these are added to inflation increases in both rents and rates, the overall increase for tenants averages at £4 a week — at a time when wage rises are being kept viciously low.

Tenants' organisations, some built in the last few weeks, have demanded that the Council defy the cuts and refuse to raise the extra money. Now that the Council has decided to put the rents and rates up, the Tenants' Associations will have to go beyond mere persuasion.

16,000 tenants in Walsall have been on rent freeze — that is they are refusing to pay the £3.20 increase — since last April. Despite trying to balance their books at the expense of the tenants, Walsall Council are now faced with rent arrears of £3½ million. Walsall Tenants have called for a national rent freeze this April, and one Tenants' Association in Swindon has already pledged its support.

Walcot Tenants' Association is trying to draw together all the existing Tenants' Organisations in Swindon to mobilise for the National Day of Action against the rent increases in late March and to agitate for a rents freeze amongst Swindon's tenants. Walcot T.A. believes that the call for a rent freeze, if taken up by enough of Britain's 15-20 million tenants can deal a very heavy blow against the government.



The Polish working class gives its answer to repression:

'Jaruzelski-it was your winter ..it will be our spring'

By Sarah Bennett

Under the battle-cry of the underground *Solidarnosc* - 'Jaruzelski, it was your winter, it will be our spring!' - resistance to martial law continues in Poland. The authorities cannot deny this. The official government paper *Trybuna Ludu*, of the 24th February, said, '...we have unfortunately too much proof that the political opposition has not been disarmed...' The journal of the army related that '...the class enemy, however paralysed, has not stopped its underground work.'

In giving details of the numbers interned up to February 26th, the Minister of the Interior pointed out that some of those freed from internment camps had been re-interned for engaging in 'actions detrimental to the interests of the state.' On the one side he announced the relaxation of some aspects of martial law, such as the possibility of limited movement between regions, with the important exception of Gdansk, and under military authority. On the other hand he announced that the occupation of factories by the military would continue, to 'maintain discipline'.

We have received extremely serious news about the condition of the internees and the imprisoned since the proclamation of the State of War and in particular about the situation of Edmund Baluka and his comrades of the PSWP interned in Wierzychow camp.

We bring to the attention of the international workers and democratic movement that PSWP members, among them Baluka, have suffered severe beatings. Some of them have been taken to hospital as a result.

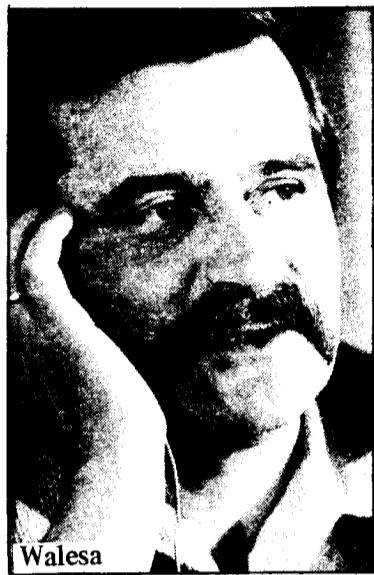
We know that the discredited PUWP, which is conducting a war against its own people, has dared to demand of Edmund Baluka, a founding member of our party, that he go into exile.

We know that Edmund Baluka, who returned to the country to join his comrades in struggle, has refused this despicable offer.

We wish to tell those, who throughout the world have demonstrated their support and sympathy with our just cause, that one of the spokespeople of the PSWP at Szczecin, Andrzej Lipski, has been sentenced to three years' imprisonment by a special tribunal for his political activities and for having taken part in the general strike from the 13th and 14th December called by NSZZ *Solidarnosc*.

The repression intensifies as seen from the underground bulletin in Mazowsze (a *Solidarnosc* section in the Warsaw region).

At Wierzychow camp as in Bialoleka, Strzelce-Opolskie, the brutality and degradation against the internees increases.



Walesa

About the same time a strong attack on the character of Lech Walesa was opened up in the Polish press, calling him an extremist with whom dialogue was impossible.

Martial Law had clearly sent the independent workers' movement underground but not broken it. In these conditions the Seventh Plenum

of the Polish United Workers Party (Stalinist), met on 24th February. On the occasion of this an article was published in *Polityka*, the paper of the Central Committee of the PUWP. This attacked those within the Party who saw in martial law 'a means not simply to struggle against those opponents of socialism in Poland, but also to discredit the idea of change... including those changes decided at the last Congress of the PUWP.'

Opening the Plenum, Jaruzelski made a strong appeal for unity between the warring factions within the PUWP. It was made clear that the basis for this would be the crushing of *Solidarnosc*. Jaruzelski said a new 'independent' union would be allowed, which would 'strictly respect the socialist nature of the regime and the leading role of the Party'. In other words be a puppet union.

But *Solidarnosc* has not been broken. Not a single one of its leaders has gone over to the Stalinists. Jaruzelski was forced to say that 'those persons known for their destructive attitude would not be all-

Polish socialists issue Appeal

DECLARATION OF THE POLISH SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY (Delegation in Exile), 6th March 1982

... At Wierzychow and at Bialoleka there has been a hunger strike in protest against the treatment suffered by the internees.

In all the camps, thousands of political prisoners live in deplorable conditions, badly and insufficiently fed. And for the majority, their very lives are threatened. The agents of the political police threaten judicial proceedings, on any pretext, against those detainees who refuse to go into exile or to sign declarations of 'loyalty' to the discredited authorities of the PUWP. Their families also suffer harassment, particularly over their visits to the camps.

We could give much more information here but this is simply to expose the hypocrisy and testimony of the authorities who only allow access by the International Red Cross to some 'model' camps, whose only function is to dupe international public opinion.

Inside the country the repression increases also. There is only one language, that of repression, of intimidation, of sackings, of prison and trials, of such measures against the workers as the end to free Saturdays, price increases.

THE LIES AND SLANDERS OF THE JUNTA

In relation to his internment, Walesa wrote in his own handwriting: 'It is a deception of public opinion, at home as well as throughout the world, to suggest that I have not been interned. It would be right at this point to note the total lack of credibility in the authorities. This is what I ask you to do: Do not go backwards and do not allow them to destroy what we have, as this is what they want to do.'

We know now where many militants and leaders are imprisoned. We know that some of them are going to be tried or have already been tried.

We must do all in our power

Free Uwe Trieschmann

On January 10th, German socialist Uwe Trieschmann was arrested at Karlmarxstadt in East Germany. In jail since then, he has still to learn what he is charged with. He has no access to a lawyer. Only recently was he allowed to receive letters.

The Committee for the Defence of Democratic rights in East and West Germany is fighting for his release. Thousands of trade unionists and members of the German socialist party, the SPD, have signed

letters and telegrams calling for him to be freed.

Readers of *Socialist Newsletter* are urged to take up his case in the British Labour Party and trade unions. Send letters and telegrams calling for his release to the East German Embassy at 34 Belgrave Square, London SW1. As the bulletin of the German democratic rights committee says, 'No democrat, trade unionist or socialist can accept that this completely arbitrary situation can last a day longer.'

owed to return to political activity'. The Seventh Plenum also saw the opening of a push by Stalinist 'hardliners' within the PUWP. They called for the purging of the party.

Moscow television has hinted at the need for stronger measures yet from the Polish military. A spokesman said that 'while martial law saved the socialist regime by decapitating the counter-revolution it had not been exterminated'.

At the same time as his ridiculous television programme on Poland went out President Reagan underwrote a loan of 71.3 million dollars by US banks. Imperialism wants to see Poland restabilized. Reagan is pushing the line of 'dialogue' between the Stalinists, the Catholic Church and *Solidarnosc*, based on the acceptance of the continued political monopoly of political power by the Stalinists.



Glemp

Archbishop Glemp, leader of the Catholic Church in Poland takes the same line. But there will be no 'dialogue', unless the leaders of *Solidarnosc* cave-in. Militants in the British Labour and trade union movement should not fall for this line of 'conciliation', which would mean to practice the end of *Solidarnosc* as a free trade union.



Baluka

to defend them all! It is more than a duty: it is the very existence of our union, *Solidarnosc* which depends on it!

WORKERS: We must secure the release of KOR leader, Jacek Kuron, from Bialoleka camp. We must get Anna Walentynowicz, a worker from the Gdansk shipyards, released from Goldap camp. We must secure the release of Edmund Baluka, a founder of the PSWP and a shipyard worker from Szczecin, from Wierzychow camp. We must free all the political detainees.

All peoples have a legitimate right to freedom. Today, Poland struggles to defend its right to freedom.

All workers have a legitimate right to join together in their own independent unions and parties. Today, the Polish workers fight for this right which no-one can deny them.

Today, because they have fought, thousands of women and men are in prison. Whether

they be members of workers' or farmers' Solidarity, students of the NZS or NOWA ('free') publishing house; whether they be members of the ex-KOR or the KPN, the PPD or the PSWP, they have paid for fighting at the cost of their freedom and for some of them, like the Wujec miners or the demonstrators in Gdansk, with their life.

WORKERS, THEY NEED YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT TODAY.

Freedom for everyone!
Freedom for Walesa, Kuron, Mocsulski, Walentynowicz, Baluka!
Freedom for all our comrades of the PSWP!

We say to you: There can be no solution so long as the state of war continues. There is no possibility of negotiations through the two sides of the barbed wire.

There is no possibility of negotiations so long as those detained are in captivity!

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Polish socialists suffer in camps

GET THEM OUT!

Newspaper reports here have suggested that after the first weeks of martial law conditions in the internment camps improved and now are not too bad. Information from Solidarnosc underground in Poland paints a different picture.

The bulletin *Solidarity Mazowsze* (Warsaw region), dated 3rd March, details the privations suffered by internees which bear a resemblance to the conditions in Nazi concentration camps or the labour camps of the Stalin era. In Wierzchowo camp in the Wroclaw region, 40 internees were beaten up by guards for protesting the placing of another internee in solitary confinement. A few days previously, they discovered a bugging device in an air vent and put it out of action. In Strzelce Opolskie camp near Katowice, a leader of Solidarity, Antoni Lenkiewicz, described conditions there: internees are placed in groups of three in cells three metres square; their hair is cropped like criminals; many, including

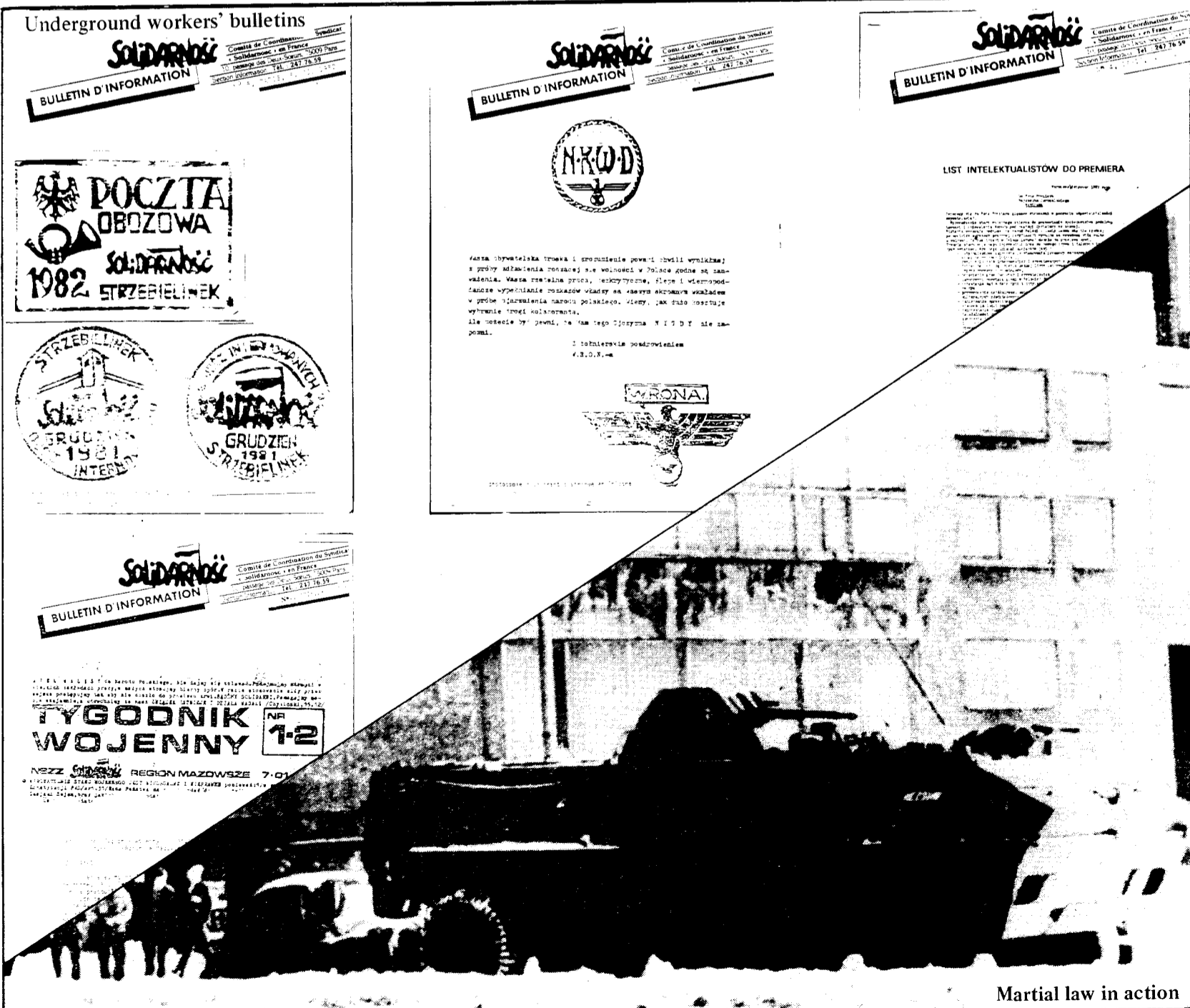
Lenkiewicz, have been beaten up by guards. In the Suwalki camp, according to relatives of internees, internees have been forced to undress and walk a gauntlet of guards. The food is universally bad in the camps, any kind of social life is denied the internees and those who are made to do work have to walk miles to and from their living quarters.

Despite the repression, even in the camps, there is resistance. For example, in Grodkow camp, near Wroclaw, the internees went on hunger strike to demand the opening of their cells during the day, that there should be fewer people in each cell and that their own statements be taken account of, in the trials. Similarly, in Bialoleka camp, near Warsaw, a hunger strike took place on the 13th of February to mark the day when martial law was proclaimed. Many internees there have now decided to mark the 13th of each month with a hunger strike. As for the 'offer' from the regime to go into exile, even the official press has admitted failure, saying that only 15 have so far taken up the offer – and those they don't even name!

POLISH SOCIALISTS' APPEAL

We produce inside an appeal from the delegation in exile of the Polish Socialist Workers Party. Formed only a couple of months before the declaration of martial law, the PSWP had already 17,000 members and was the first independent workers' party to emerge in Stalinist Poland. Like the independent students' union, NZS, the PSWP has been banned, its members interned or hounded by the political police. The information makes clear that what is needed in the Labour Movement here is a redoubling of efforts in solidarity with the Polish workers.

Take this appeal into your Labour Party, trade union or student organisation; organise delegations from your workplace to the Polish Embassy; send letters, resolutions of protest to the embassy. For Labour Party members one of the crucial issues now is to build a campaign against the invitation of the Polish United Workers Party, the butchers of the Polish workers, to the Labour Party Conference.



Martial law in action

Turn to page 7