

# Socialist Newsletter



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## BUILD FIGHTING UNITY AGAINST THATCHER!

by Michael Keene

The return of Thatcher in the General Election with a large parliamentary majority and the most serious electoral defeat for the Labour Party, at least since 1931, sets the scene for the next phase of class struggle and poses a number of key questions to be resolved by the workers' movement.

Firstly, who is responsible for Labour's defeat? The Labour right is already giving its answer to that. According to Healey, Hattersley, Shore and Kinnock the reasons for the election defeat are to be found in policies and activity which is too 'left-wing'. Behind a facade of appeals to 'facing up to reality' and putting the Labour Party back in touch with the traditions of Atlee and Gaitskell, the right is preparing a full-scale onslaught on policies such as unilateralism and EEC withdrawal and an intensified witch-hunt against the left in the Labour Party.

### CRISIS OF REFORMISM

The reality underlying Labour's defeat is more complex and profound. Above all the defeat reveals the massive crisis of the politics and apparatus of reformism in Britain. Since its emergence as a mass party, Labour has formed an essential part of the means through which order and stability in Britain have been preserved. It is a party with roots deep in the imperialist position of Britain and the consequent existence of an aristocracy of labour. Labour could always be relied upon either to form Her Majesty's government or loyal opposition, never challenging the essential framework of the capitalist state.

The election result is the consequence of a process which has developed remorselessly over the last fifteen years. The class struggle has not only forced itself into the Labour Party in the form of the left-right battles that have always gone on, but it has shaken the very structure of the reformist

apparatus. The 'left' developments - from the reselection of MP's to conference policies challenging imperialist commitments to nuclear defence and the EEC, the split of a section of the apparatus to form the SDP, through to the protracted leadership crisis - are all expressions of this problem.



At a time when the long-term decline of British imperialism has become transformed into a fierce crisis, the agony of the reformist apparatus means that one of the props underpinning the state cannot be relied upon in the old way. For British capitalism a Labour government is an unthinkable prospect. That explains the function of the SDP as a weapon against the Labour Party. It also explains the drive of the Tories to 'gerrymander' the electoral boundaries.

### STRUGGLES BLOCKED

For the Labour Party leadership, the prospect of power is equally unthinkable. For four years they have done everything possible to prevent the mobilisation of the working class for the overthrow of Thatcher. Hand in hand with the TUC they have blocked workers' struggles. The reality is that the election was lost in every strike which was isolated and in every dispute that was dissipated or sold out over the last four years. The steelworkers, rail-

workers, NHS and carworkers and all the other sections who have sought to fight in unity against Thatcher, have paid in jobs, union rights and other ways for this treachery.

All the sections of the reformist apparatus have played their part in this blockage. Benn shut up shop after the 1981 Electoral College, in practice blocking the immediate possibility of a focus for the Labour left. This allowed the right to move against Militant. Foot opposes 'extra-parliamentary action' on one side, Benn sets himself against the kind of fight which would have challenged the normal framework of the reformist apparatus on the other.

### CALLAGHAN INTERVENES

The election campaign itself revealed just how far the apparatus was prepared to go in avoiding having to take governmental power. The Healey, Hattersley and Callaghan interventions on the nuclear issue were calculated to undermine Labours' chances, strengthen the hand of the SDP and lay the ground for an offensive against the left after the election. At the same time they proffered reassurance to the ruling class that its 'labour lieutenants' are still on hand.

The fact that the issue of national defence, raising as it does the link between the British state and the reformist apparatus was the point at which the right balked was not an accident. The issue drew a line which reformism dared not cross.



The result: eight and a half million vote Labour, two million less than in 1979. For the first time since the war a majority of the organised working class voted for openly bourgeois parties. Labour lost votes to the SDP in particular but in the urban centres the core of the Labour vote did not collapse.

There was no great resurgence of support for Thatcher, the Tory vote declining compared to 1979. Twenty-eight per cent of the electorate, principally working class, abstained.

We must never forget that elections to bourgeois parliaments are never favourable ground for the working class to fight on. The ruling class sets the parameters of the contest, which is designed to exclude the mobilisation of the class in struggle and the Labour Party accepts that in the election it must respect the framework of parliamentarism

and the state.

Elections are always no more than a distorted mirror of the class struggle. But petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries', the Stalinists and the Labour leaders themselves are invoking the election result as supposed proof of a 'right-wing' shift of the working class. It is but a short step from this to support for overturning aspects of Labour's policy, acceptance of a witch-hunt in the 'wider interests' of the movement, and even to the perspective of coalition with bourgeois parties.

The election reveals not an 'identity crisis' or the 'embourgeoisment' of the working class but a deep crisis of reformism and a questioning of its role.

The working class will have to find the road to a new type of workers' party, based on its independent mobilisation and a revolutionary perspective. That road cannot be taken without reorganisation and regroupment and massive shocks to the old structures of the workers' movement. In that sense, the crisis of the Labour Party does not take Trotskyists by surprise, it is a necessary part of the experience of the class on that road.

### THATCHER'S PLANS

The second Thatcher government will not be a simple repeat of the first. In 1979 the Tories were elected as a result of the defeat of Callaghan by the working class. In 1983 the election resulted from the blockage of that movement by reformist treachery. The conditions arise therefore which will enable Thatcher to take the offensive more boldly with an attack on many fronts. There are great dangers for the working class in this situation, the outlines of the attacks we face are already clear:

- attacks on the unions (both in the form of legal constraints and direct union busting)
- privatisation and loss of jobs.
- destruction of health, welfare and education.
- attacks on democratic rights and the strengthening of the police and repressive laws.
- increasing and centralising the powers of the state.

The Tories have no choice but to seek to defeat the working class in battle. But whatever the size of their parliamentary majority the outcome of this offensive will be determined in class struggle and not in parliament. The working class retains enormous organised strength and is fully capable of defeating Thatcher, if it is able to break through the blocking activity of its leadership.

### NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

Tackling these problems poses a set of problems before every militant and organisation in the workers' movement.

There can be no purely parliamentary opposition to Thatcher. The parliamentary perspectives of reformism are today demonstrably bankrupt. The only real basis for defence of the working class is mobilisation of our strength in struggle. Insofar as Labour MP's act as a voice inside parliament for

this struggle, the SLG stands unconditionally with them. But insofar as, in the name of the 'legitimacy' of the government, they block and fudge, we call for a merciless struggle to expose them.

#### REGROUPMENT NEEDED

The regroupment of militants who will fight and will want to find the means to win is going to be a vital aspect of these battles. The SLG will take its place in this regroupment.

In the Labour Party, there will be an intensification of the witch-hunt following on the foisting of Kinnock - Hattersley as the new leadership and the attempted overturn of policy on disarmament and the EEC. Without illusions in Heffer and Meacher, we call for the widest campaign around their candidatures as an axis on which the left can regroup and the witch-hunt be fought.

In the unions, a fight must be waged for a break with the collaborationism expressed by Murray the day after the election, when he declared the TUC's willingness to collaborate with the Tories. We have to fight to clear out all those leaders who stand in the way of mobilising to resist the Tories' attacks. Similarly, TUC chairman Chapple who called for an SDP vote and has gone further since in questioning the continued links between the unions and Labour Party, must be cleared out. This fight too poses the need for new regroupments in the unions, we must work to build fighting Broad Lefts as mobilising bodies and not simply pressure groups.

**Fighting unity in defence!** That has to be our watchword. In particular, workers in the public sector, coming under Thatchers axe, must be united in real initiatives to force unity on the leaders who have talked without acting for too long!

## THE FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

# In this article we look at the experience of a 'Broad Left' LESSONS FROM THE C.P.S.A.

by Frank Irvine

The 1983 Conference of the Civil and Public Services Association, Britain's biggest union for civil servants, marked the end of 12 months of Broad Left leadership on the NEC and the return of the right-wing.

The Broad Left had seized the leadership in the wake of the 1981 pay campaign which the self-styled moderates were responsible for. The Broad Left took power with the promise that they would lead a determined defence of wages and jobs.

The CPSA Broad Left is one of the biggest of its kind in any union. Membership runs into several hundred and includes all the major political tendencies on the left with the exception of the SWP, who have taken a position of sectarian abstention from the organised left.

#### C P STRATEGY

Traditionally, the Communist Party dominates union Broad Lefts. This was true in CPSA for some time, but in recent years the Militant has held a commanding majority in the CPSA Broad Left.

As an integral part of the union bureaucracy, the Communist Party have never accepted this situation where they must play second fiddle to Militant, which describes itself as a tendency based on the ideas and writings of Leon Trotsky.

The Broad Left won the 1982 national elections under a Militant leadership and from day one of this situation the Communist Party began their preparations to hit back. However, with the CP at national level in a deep crisis, they needed to develop different tactics to regain lost ground. In the last few years the CP has increased its pressure on and work in the Labour Party as well as developing a close relationship with many middle-order union bureaucrats. At the Broad Left Conference last November, a new creature appeared calling itself the Labour Left. This was the tactical expression of the Stalinists' strategy to win back control or at least redefine the Broad Left so as to isolate or even exclude forces they regarded as Trotskyist.

#### SOCIALIST CAUCUS

The third dimension in this complex situation is a grouping called the Socialist Caucus. This was formed in 1978, by elements breaking from the sectarianism of the SWP. It opposed the bureaucratic methods of the CP. It also opposed Militant's ultimattistic approach to joint work between different tendencies. The Socialist Caucus included non-Militant Labour Party left-wingers, supporters of Socialist Organiser and supporters of the Socialist Labour Group.

1982-83 has been a very difficult period for the labour movement as a whole. The civil service has been no exception. The new Broad Left leadership faced the stern test of having to defend the jobs, wages and agreements of members looking for a bold lead after the right-wing betrayals.

### NO MOBILISATION

The strike over staff cuts at DHSS Birmingham and Oxford was the first instance. Members of the DHSS section had narrowly voted earlier in the year for all-out action to defend jobs. The very slim majority for action prevented the strike from going ahead but rather than build on this vote any national perspective for a cuts campaign was dropped. During the Birmingham/Oxford strike, although the Broad Left leadership did not instruct the strikers to return to work or threaten their strike pay, from the beginning of the dispute they argued that the 1983 pay campaign was the priority and that a quick return to work was necessary. The NEC proposed a deal including a five-month no-strike clause. From this point it became clear that the defence of jobs was not going to be co-ordinated nationally and linked between the DHSS and the dole offices, but instead left to local outbursts.

No serious attempt was being made to organise the mobilisation of members in defence of jobs and against the opening shots of Tebbit's legislation. This was seen through the victimisation of members who struck in support of the Health Workers. All questions had to be subordinated to the pay campaign. These two failures were sufficient to seriously damage the members' confidence at the very time when all-out action over pay was being debated.

The Broad Left, even under **Militant** leadership does not play the role of mobiliser of the rank-and-file. It is still fundamentally an electoral machine and in this respect there is an essential link with the methods of the CP. Broad Lefts that operate only on a propaganda and electoral level are of extremely limited use to the rank and file. Union members need to use Broad Lefts to prise the unions free from the bureaucrats, to throw out traitorous leaders and to draw the political lessons of this experience.

### FOREGONE CONCLUSION

The 1983 pay campaign was crushing confirmation of these points. Having decided in December 1982 at the special Pay Conference to go for all-out strike action if the Tories rejected CPSA's £12 demand, the leadership had three months to prepare for the April 1st deadline. But the passivity of the previous seven months continued. The absolutely necessary preparations, including serious pursuit of forming a public sector workers' alliance through the TUC, were not carried through. So when the strike call and ballot occurred in April the result was a foregone conclusion with the majority of the union abstaining.

It was these failures that laid the basis for the return of the right-wing to office, even though the

Broad Left vote held up quite well despite the mass abstentions.

### STALINISTS JOIN WITCHUNT

As the year unfolded the witch-hunt against **Militant** began in the Labour Party. It also took a form within the CPSA. Right-wing General Secretary, Alistair Graham attacked **Militant** through the union journal **Red Tape**. Within the Broad Left a more subtle and dangerous form of witch-hunt reared its head at the 1983 Conference.

The Stalinists and their friends including some defectors from the **Socialist Caucus** took the opportunity presented by the electoral defeat of the Broad Left to launch an attack on the **Militant's** position within the union. The conference saw the launch of the **Broad Left Labour Group**, fronted by the opportunist Jonathon Baume and well known Stalinists like Roy Lewis. The meeting posed as an open forum for Labour Party activists. It developed into a virulent witch-hunt of **Militant**.

The **Broad Left Labour Group** is a Stalinist project which at this stage is utilising the skills and rightward shift of slick bureaucrats like Baume to attack the **Militant** in what they consider the favourable circumstances inside the Labour Party.

### SOCIALIST CAUCUS IN CRISIS

The **Socialist Caucus** has drifted into serious crisis since the 1982 Conference. At the heart of the problems are the politics of **Socialist Organiser**. They have never taken seriously the task of seeking to turn the Broad Left into a campaigning organisation. They have operated through the Caucus by manoeuvring with left bureaucrats, usually about election slates. For **Socialist Organiser** the Caucus is not a united front of different tendencies on particular questions but a passive extension of themselves. Consequently it cannot grow, has no mass appeal and rots around them.

Militants of the SLG struggled to hold the Caucus to its claim of being a united front to organise the rank and file. But we found that any actions taken by the Caucus were invariably proposed by and exclusively supported by SLG members and their supporters. S.O. boycotted the Caucus in classic sectarian style whenever the SLG initiated any action.

### OUR FIGHT

It is clear that the **Socialist Caucus** is at a dead-end. The SLG will continue the work of fighting for a genuine rank and file campaign within the Broad Left, whose number one priority should be to defend all those including **Militant** and the **Socialist Caucus** from the witch-hunting of the Stalinists and their newly acquired apprentices. This is a vital precondition to building a movement to wrest the union back from the likes of Losinska and begin the job of mobilising the membership to increase pay, save jobs, defend agreements and the independence of our union from Tebbit.

# CENTRAL AMERICA REAGAN'S BACKYARD IN REVOLT

by Sam Stacey



The revolutionary struggle of the Central American masses has defied the attempts of the imperialists to defeat them and to stabilise the situation. Parts of the US ruling circles have gone so far as to say that the war in El Salvador is "lost". At the same time dissention within the ranks of the US ruling class has been expressed that Reagan's policy will only serve to fan the flames.

The rebellion within the Salvadorean army which led to the "resignation" of Garcia, the Defence Minister, signalled the approaching breakup of the regime faced with its inability to crush the revolution. It is fear of disintegration of the state which had led to the heightening of the offensive against Nicaragua from US backed base camps in Honduras. Should the people of Salvador smash the regime and link up with the Nicaraguan people this would ignite the whole region.

Hence the attempt to destabilise Nicaragua by a combination of economic, diplomatic and military pressure, up to the point of invasion. But this has served to strengthen the resolve of the Nicaraguan masses to smash the counter-revolutionary forces and deepen their political and military mobilisation. In this critical situation the sabotage of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie has deepened the anti-capitalist dynamic of the revolution. In mass demonstrations against the military aggression the main slogan has

been, "Capitalism is counter-revolutionary".

Reagan has stated that the fire in his backyard has to be put out as an expression of the "east-west conflict". Certainly it is not only Central America which is at stake, for the rise of the workers' and peasants' revolution is sweeping the whole of the Latin American sub-continent. This can be seen in the instability of the Argentine regime, the new rise of class struggle in Chile, the mobilisation of the powerful Brazilian workers and mass demonstrations in Uruguay. Virtually every regime is being challenged by the masses of the region.

Such a precarious situation requires desperate measures from imperialism. Yet Reagan has been faced not only with divisions inside the US ruling class but with mass opposition in the US itself to intervention in Central America. The 'VietNam syndrome'.

In April the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs sub-committee voted to reject Reagan's plea for more military aid to El Salvador and against giving aid to the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries unless this was approved by a joint meeting of the two houses of the US Congress. What lies at the root of these divisions is not of course disagreement over actually fighting the threat of revolution, but concern that Reagan's policy will serve only to radicalise the peoples of the region and thus will not serve the interests of imperialism.

Consider this comment by Congressman Berkeley Bedell after a visit to Nicaragua, "If the American people could have talked with the common people of Nicaragua, whose women and children are being indiscriminately kidnapped, tortured and killed by terrorists financed by the American taxpayers, they would rise up in legitimate anger and demand that support for the criminal activity be ended at once."

There are signs of such anger in the US. Polls recently taken have shown a big majority opposed to Reagan's policy. A good response was gained on a speaking tour organised for Salvadorean trade union leader Alejandro Molina Lara. The depth of opposition within the labour movement is reflected by the fact that the AFL-CIO trade union federation last January opposed certification by Congress that the human rights situation in Salvador was improving. In the past US labour leaders have been noted for their unquestioning support of US foreign policy. At the same time three trade union leaders wrote a joint letter to Congress calling for negotiations with the Salvadorean opposition and for an end to all military aid.

The opposition in the US has been fed by numerous leaks of classified information. Everybody knows the administration is lying. Reagan first authorised \$19.5 million for covert military operations against Nicaragua, directing the CIA to begin training a 500 person paramilitary force to be based on the Honduran border. This plan was made operational in November 1981. Soon after that incursions into Nicaragua began. This plan also called for stronger economic pressure against Cuba and a policy of encouraging "factional strife" within the "extreme-left" in Salvador. The document admitted, "we continue to have serious difficulties within US public and Congressional opinion which jeopardises our ability to stay the course."

Direct intervention by Reagan under such conditions would create an explosion at home. Intervention by proxy, the possibility of war between Honduras and Nicaragua for instance, is more likely but even this would serve to deepen the mobilisation of the masses of Central and Latin America. This would endanger all the imperialist "client" regimes. Even if for the moment Reagan is held in check by dissent in US ruling circles, in the last resort US imperialism must act. It cannot afford to stay out of the area.

Consequently it is the duty of socialists in Britain to help build the international movement against US intervention and especially to oppose the open and unequivocal support that Thatcher gives to the policies of Reagan and even to the government of El Salvador.

The task of Trotskyists in particular is to raise the issue as one of international working class solidarity, fighting for the Labour Party and trade unions to come clearly out against Reagan and Thatcher. This solidarity would be greatly taken forward if the Labour and trade union leaders mobilised a massive demonstration for "US hands off El Salvador and Nicaragua" and "Boycott the junta in El Salvador".

# CLASS STRUGGLE IN FRANCE

## STUDENTS

By Joe Redfern

Two years after Mitterand's Popular Front government came to power the situation in France has reached a new turning point with attacks on all major aspects of working class life intensifying.

There are plans for further massive redundancies in the steel industry, especially in the Lorraine region. Living standards have dropped by 5% due to wage controls combined with rising inflation. The education system is short of thousands of teachers whilst government money is being poured into the private - mainly Catholic sector.

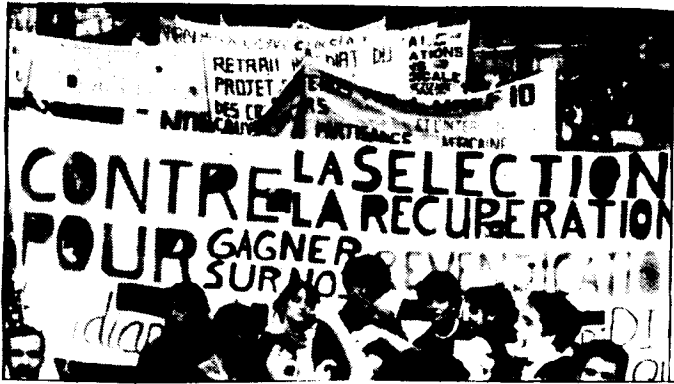
The same situation exists in the health service, where patients now have to pay a daily "fee" during hospital treatment. Unemployment and other social benefits have been reduced and the right to free abortion eludes working women.

Meanwhile the government has given massive hand-outs to the bankers and capitalists in the form of tax concessions and debt cancellation.

The Popular Front government came to power on the basis of a massive electoral victory. The working class threw out Giscard and replaced him by what it considered as "its" government, charging the Socialist and Communist Parties with their aspirations. But the SP and CP have instead made concessions to the capitalists who only use this to demand even more.

Trotsky described the Popular Front as "the last resort of imperialism against the proletarian revolution, along with fascism". The Mitterand-Mauroy government came to power on the basis of a deep crisis of the institutions of the Fifth Republic, installed by De Gaulle in 1958. Those structures, condemned by Mitterand in the past as totally undemocratic, enshrined the power of the President over the legislature. The Fifth Republic represents the form of domination of the working class by the bourgeoisie. All its institutions centre on the power of the presidency. The SP and CP leaders well know that to break with these institutions would create a situation of open crisis. Therefore they try to bring in reforms without attacking the system of the Fifth Republic. But this system can only be used against the masses. This is clearly evident from the experience of the past two years.

The anti-working class policies followed by the government led to a large number of workers abstaining in the March 1983 municipal elections, especially



## CONFRONT MITTERAND

in the large urban areas. This should not be interpreted as a shift to the right in the working class. Where candidates of the workers' parties were under threat the working class rallied around them in the second tier of the election.

During the campaign, the PCI (Internationalist Communist Party) French section of the FI(OCR), centred its agitation around the slogan: "Abide by the mandate of the people", addressed to the SP-CP leaders. Within its campaign the PCI put forward lists of candidates in which it played a leading role, in 200 areas. The PCI withdrew such slates in a number of towns where the local SP-CP leaders gave an undertaking to fight in the interests of the working class. Apart from achieving a large vote in some localities the PCI campaign had a wide impact and resulted in a growth in the membership of the PCI.

Mitterand refused to draw political conclusions from the municipal election results. Economics minister Jacques Delors was given prominence within the government to introduce an austerity plan of attacks on the standards of the working class. Delors has been closest to the capitalist class of those within the government. His austerity plan, now in full swing, aims to place the burden of the capitalist crisis on the backs of the working class.

Recently students all over France mobilised to stop an education bill which would have meant more selective barriers at different stages to students during their university courses. The students were able to inflict a defeat on Savary, the minister for education, forcing him to withdraw the clauses in his bill relating to selection. French Trotskyists of the PCI stood at the head of the mass demonstrations of students led by their union UNEF (democratic and independent). While this was going on and more than 10,000 marched with UNEF a small demonstration called by the LCR (French affiliate of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International which is supported by the Socialist League here, was called on the demand 'Don't let the right have the streets' This overlooked the fact that the vast majority of those actually on the streets were in no way right wing supporters but rank and file students fighting for the maintenance of their courses. What's more, the LCR echoed publicity which the government and the bourgeois press chose to give, each for their



own reasons, to the activity of relatively small groups of extreme rightists trying to exploit the students' grievances.

The PCI has always clearly fought against the policy of Popular Frontism. It fights for a break with the bourgeoisie by means of the slogan "Carry out the full mandate given to you by the people in 1981". But this requires the Socialist and Communist party leaders to break with the old Gaullist constitution and with Popular Frontism. As an example, we quote from 'Informations Ouvrieres', the weekly paper of the PCI (Socialist Organiser take note), "By following the same path since 1981 and endorsing a second austerity plan the parliamentary groups of the CP and the SP will only bring about their own downfall sooner or later. Not at this moment though, because the bourgeoisie and its parties, the UDF and the RPR, want to compromise the CP and the SP fully by demanding they impose directly anti-working class plans before openly calling for their downfall.

Since 1981 the country has been in a state of confusion. The 1983 elections have begun to make things clearer. We have entered a situation in which things will be sorted out one way or another by and through the class struggle. But if the SP and CP say they really want to restore democracy, they must first recognize the anti-democratic institutions for what they are, as well as the need to establish a real democracy. Achieving democracy can only be done by satisfying the aspirations and demands of the working class. That means firstly that in accordance with the principles of democracy the government must be from now on entirely answerable to the National Assembly in which the SP and CP groups hold the majority. In other words such a government would have to drive out of its ranks Delors, Rocard and all the direct and indirect representatives of the bourgeoisie."



## **IV INTERNATIONAL** *International Centre of reconstruction*

### LIFE OF THE SECTIONS

# ARGENTINA

Below we publish extracts from a recent statement by the Fourth International Group (GCI), section of the Fourth International (ICR) in Argentina.

"Argentina is undergoing the deepest crisis in its history. Seven years of bloody dictatorship have plunged the people into misery and handed the country over to imperialism.

During these seven years, the dictatorship has trampled the people's rights underfoot, assassinated thousands of young people and carried off more than 30,000 citizens.

From Videla to Bignone their watchword has been: attack the people, repress them and serve the interests of capitalism at all times.

But the people's resistance is growing daily and has again thrown the military government into crisis

Today, huge demonstrations chanting 'The military dictatorship must go' express the people's deep and widespread hatred and are forcing the dictatorship onto the retreat.

To save itself, the dictatorship is promising elections for a government in January 1984. They are now talking of consulting the people's will. The people have already given their answer in the streets:

"No more dictatorship!"

"Kick out the military immediately!"

The top military commanders have said that they admit collective responsibility for the disappeared. The government recognizes therefore that it is a bunch of assassins. They must all be condemned for crimes against humanity and suffer the same punishment as the leaders of the Nazi regime.

The general strikes of December 6 and March 28, the "resistance march" demanding the reappearance of the 'disappeared', the local demonstrations and the rally of over 100,000 people on December 16 showed our tremendous power: the growing power of a people united against dictatorship.

The military clique is isolated and weakened, with its back to the wall. The whole people are being mobilised against it. We must strike the final blow and finish off this murderous regime:

"Down with the anti-democratic elections!"

"Bring down the military government now!"

# IRELAND

## Tax Campaign

The tax campaign has been snuffed out — for the time being — by the trade union leaders who have succeeded in killing off the initiative of the Waterford Glass workers who sacrificed £350,000 in wages in their attempt to give a lead to a national campaign. Matt Merrigan was the only national trade union leader to support them.

The ICTU leaders refused to do anything in the campaign, claiming they were leaving the matter to the trades councils. But they then prevented the Liaison Committee of trades councils from taking any decision of the campaign.

The only party in Ireland not committed to the maintenance of Partition and therefore of the 26 county state is Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein, using its growing support in the North, could command widespread support in the South for a campaign against the government linked to the need to free the whole country from foreign domination, both economic and political. A fight against poverty and exploitation in the South and British occupation in the North, for a united and fully independent and sovereign Ireland, could give the working people of the 26 counties the lead they need in the battle against this government.

But in the course of the tax campaign Sinn Fein did not mount such a campaign, and the workers felt that there was no political answer to the campaign.

### FIGHT FOR ALL—IRELAND WORKERS' PARTY

The collapse of the tax campaign underlines once more the need for a party based on the fight against both British imperialism and Free State collaboration, a party which will oppose the exploitation of the workers and the poor whatever the consequences for the political stability of the Free State, a party uncompromisingly committed to the defence of the working class.

The LWR is totally committed to the fight for such a party. That is why we organised a forum on the subject which was addressed by a number of leading trade unionists. The meeting agreed to organise a broader discussion on the need for a new political answer.

We are continuing to campaign for such a party, a party which can unite all those who believe in Connolly's position that the cause of labour is the cause of Ireland and the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour. We need your support to make this a reality.

# PORTUGAL

Last April's elections in Portugal saw severe defeat for all the bourgeois parties. The Socialist Party got the biggest vote, with 36%. Together with the Communist Party it now has an absolute majority in the Portuguese Assembly. But it has been Cunhal, the general secretary of the Communist Party, who has argued that the government should be "broadly based" thus giving Socialist leader Soares the excuse he needed to open negotiations with the bourgeois social democratic party.

The United Socialist Workers Party (POUS), Portuguese section of the Fourth International (ICR), stood a number of candidates and polled 20,000 votes in the election. It is now carrying on its campaign for a government of the Socialist and Communist parties without representatives of the bourgeoisie.