

Socialist Challenge



Defend ASLEF against Tories

Don't get Lakered!

ONCE there was a man called Ken Livingstone who wanted to give the people cheap fares. He was poor but honest, and his aim was to give a service, which he did. Starting with the least subsidised transport system in Europe, he got 13 per cent more use in three months.

Sadly, this was a crime. Bromley council sued him, the press slagged him, and the Law Lords stopped him.

Now Sir Freddie Laker is in trouble, also for giving cheap fares. He is a rich pirate, and his aim was to make money, which he did. Starting with £500,000 of his war profiteering income, he made £20 million.

Nobody sued him, the press raised cash for him, and the Law Lords were far too busy to grant Ken to bother such a colourful buccaneer.

Ken's transport empire ran up a £125 million debt — impressive, till you realise it amounts to ten pounds per user.

Freddie's transport empire ran up a £25 million debt — impressive, when you realise this is five hundred pounds per user.

Nobody seemed to notice that Freddie's company was doing no better than Ken's. (Of course Freddie himself was doing fine — nice house, flash car, swashbuckling image, and other comforts of life.)

But money is money, and Ken and Freddie had to plead for subsidies — although the press didn't quite treat their pleas in the same way. The problem was that you can't make profits in a recession by cutting prices, except as a short-term measure to bankrupt your friends, grab a monopoly, and bleed the people dry.

This may be slightly unjust — poor people can't travel. And it may be inefficient — half your equipment isn't used. But it *does* keep alive the great virtues of dashing free enterprise, and if people are mug enough to believe you, they might *all* work for £30 a week like Sir Freddie's employees.

Of course nobody but Sir Freddie's friends would be able to travel anywhere.

BUT WOULDN'T THEY BE BLOODY STINKING RICH!!

SMASH ASLEF! That's the cry from the Tory wolves and their friends in British Rail who are baying for the blood of the train drivers. The BR Board is now considering *suspending* any driver who takes industrial action. They will only be allowed back if they join the National Union of Railwaymen.

If the Board gets its way, it will be a foretaste of what the Tories have in store for *all* trade unionists if and when Tebbit's Bill becomes the law of the land.

The train drivers have declared war on Thatcher and her anti-union policies. Gone is any pretence that the Tories are keeping neutral in this dispute. They are fighting back with every weapon at their disposal.

They have told BR that it can increase its short term borrowing beyond the present £100m 'to ride out the dispute'. They claim that a massive cutback of BR is 'now inevitable'.

The train drivers need all the support they can get from the labour movement. The Yorkshire miners are blacking lorries moving coal normally carried by rail. The miners' union is discussing national blacking this week.

Ken Livingstone, London Labour leader, has demanded that London Transport's £1m a week increased revenue from passengers who usually go by rail

should be handed over to the ASLEF.

The train drivers need more of these sort of actions, not the advice of 'friends' like Sid Weighell, whose slavish conduct suggests that he would be more than happy to see the militant ASLEF union smashed. His only response to the Board's threats was to ask for 'consultations' before it went ahead with its union-busting proposal.

Trade union leaders and the TUC should put their money where their mouth is. They claim to oppose Tebbit's Bill. They should put their speeches into action and throw the full weight of the labour movement behind the train drivers.

*All goods moved by rail should be blacked.

*Railworkers pickets should be supported and defended.

*Full support for the day of strike action called by representatives of rank and file NUR members on Friday 19 February.

London Transport workers should show their solidarity with fellow transport workers and respond to this call. Their livelihoods are also under threat from the Tory courts.

Such united action is the only way the train drivers can win. It is the only way to stop Tebbit and the Tories. A victory for the railworkers would be a victory for workers everywhere.

Are you still in the dark about flexible rostering?

Good — because that's where we at BR want you to be.

Footplate staff have an important part to play in the modernisation of the railway.

They're going to pay for it.

Here in Rail House we've dreamt up a way of getting something for nothing. It's called flexible rostering.

Flexible rostering is new. It's exciting. And it's different.

It has lots of advantages.

We can mess about with your hours.

It will save us lots of money.

Money we can spend on buying full-page advertisements in the national newspapers.

And there are advantages for train crews too:

- (1) a 3% increase we had agreed to pay you anyway
- (2) lots of variety — no two weeks will be the same
- (3) no more letters from Robert Reid

Part of the BR team (Sir Peter Parker) has already agreed to flexible rostering. He has agreed to work four days a week for an extra £12,000 a year.

So what's the problem?

Split shifts?
Redundancies?

How do you think you're going to get next year's pay rise?

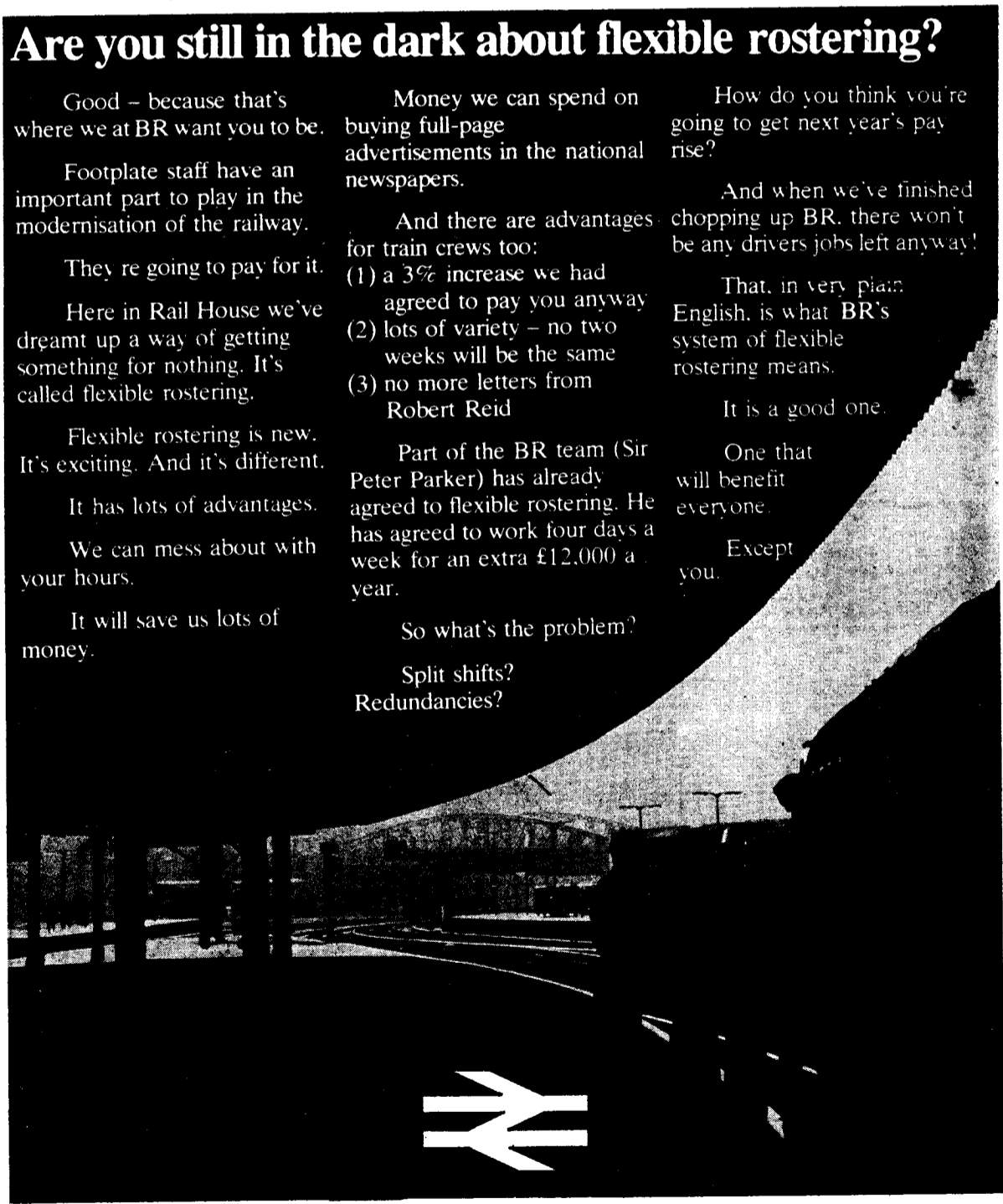
And when we've finished chopping up BR, there won't be any drivers jobs left anyway!

That, in very plain English, is what BR's system of flexible rostering means.

It is a good one.

One that will benefit everyone.

Except you.



KILL TEBBIT'S BILL

Editorial

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Reagan's Budget Millions more for war drive

THE FULL MEANING of this new arms race has been highlighted by the announcement of the new United States budget. Reagan's budget proposes:

★ \$268bn out of a total of \$758bn to be spent on defence — more than one third of the total. This compares with \$176bn last year.

★ The extra money for defence to be paid for with cuts in health care, food stamps, social services for the elderly, housing, and education.

★ A huge increase in money spent on the MX missile system, the B-1 bomber, the Trident submarine and the Stealth nuclear bomber. More money to be spent on the quick-action Rapid Deployment Force, as well as on the navy and airforce generally.

No one can now doubt that the United States is engaged in a huge re-armament programme. Faced with a growing threat to its prestige and power from the revolutions in Central America and political developments in the Middle East, the United States is strengthening its ability to intervene.

The key instrument here is the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). The RDF aims to put 100,000 soldiers in the field within ten days. The recent 'Operation brightstar' in Egypt involved US bombers flying from Colorado to drop bombs in the Egyptian desert and then flying back again. The training of the RDF in guerrilla and desert warfare leaves no room for doubt as to those regions of the world where it is designed to be used. It is not for confronting the Soviet Union in Europe, but aimed to strike a massive blow against revolutions in the 'third world'.

The defence of the United States power and wealth also involves a big build up of its nuclear capabilities. Since the second world war the US has striven for 'first strike' capacity — overwhelming nuclear superiority — over the Soviet Union. This becomes particularly necessary when the United States needs to use its muscle — or threaten to use its muscle — against all its opponents.

In the past six months the United States has engaged in military action against Libya, and upped its threats against Cuba and Nicaragua. According to Secretary of State Alexander Haig, the American government has not ruled out direct military action against Central America, including Cuba.

Apart from constituting a massive threat to world peace, the US's re-armament programme is also a savage attack on the American working class. The trade off between welfare services and defence has never been so open.

By announcing these increases in defence spending, the United States has given its reply to the proposal by Soviet leader Brezhnev for a reduction of two thirds in nuclear missiles in Europe by 1990.

For some time the Soviet Union has been saying that the disarmament negotiations in Geneva were bogged down because the United States isn't interested in serious progress. On this, at least, the Soviet Union is right.

This administration, despite its internal debates, is engaged on a drive towards military build up and war. Sooner or later all this armament is going to be used. For socialists, to counter this military insanity means stepping up support for the activities of CND and, especially, building a movement in solidarity with the struggles of the peoples of Central America, fighting US-backed dictatorships.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

Union/CLP (if any).....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Home News

London fares

Can't pay, won't pay ... won't work?

THE LAW LORDS' decision ruling London's Fair Fares policy illegal has thrown the Labour group on Greater London Council into confusion. It has voted for defying the Law Lords as a group, but in council the right voted against this policy. The left itself was split when council voted on the specific details of the cuts and fare increases. The GLC has launched a £200,000 campaign against the House of Lords ruling. Fares Fights groups have sprung up all over London and now a campaign is being launched — 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' — to take effect from 21 March, the date the new fares come into operation. Tessa van Gelderen spoke to GLC member, VALERIE WISE, on what exactly is going on in County Hall.

Can you explain what the Labour group's position on fares is at the present time?

On 12 January the council agreed to comply with the Law Lord's decision. 24 GLC members felt that it was impossible to comply with the decision. We were only defeated in the council by three votes.

We have had a further meeting at which we were asked to approve the specific fares proposals, and the cuts in service. Many of us in the Labour group still feel it is important not to be linked to the decision to put fares up and so continued to vote against every proposal. Consequently the council failed to make a decision.

What would it mean if you voted against the fares increase in the budget? There is an argument the left put forward, that is the fares policy is the most popular policy of the manifesto, if you don't go down fighting on this one you might as well give up. What do you think?

It seems that if we have a budget without any money for London Transport it would be illegal. Consequently the right would not vote for the rest of the budget. We would end up not passing a budget. In which case the Tories would put forward a budget. So we would end up losing control.

I am not 100 per cent committed to staying in this place at all costs. I want us to fight on the fares issue. I'm not sure how much defeating the budget and ending up in opposition would help the fight. The Tories would then be in control; they would make even worse cuts. The fact is we are using £200,000 in our campaign. It is useful having this building at our disposal. If we were not allowed to do this campaign then maybe we shouldn't be here.

What is the GLC campaign?

The GLC campaign 'Keep Fares Fair' is a campaign of public meetings,



Valerie Wise

leaflets, posters on the tubes and buses — although very wishy, washy. You might think we run London Transport but we're not allowed to put political posters on London Transport. But we are going to be doing lots of posters for people to put in their windows which will be quite good. And press adverts.

So what is the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' Campaign?

The GLC campaign ends on 21 March, whether it is successful or not. The idea of 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay', is just in case we're not successful by 21 March, some of us feel we must not give up the fight on that date. But you've got to plan for that now.

The campaign would involve people paying the old or the minimum fare, and then when they had completed their journey they would give the ticket collector or bus conductor a slip of paper with their name and address, which also stated why they refused to pay the increase.

This type of campaign is a last-ditch stand and will only work if the trade unions co-operate and if a lot of people participate.

We're inviting individuals, the fares fight organisations, rank and file London Transport trade unionists, Left MPs and GLC members to a meeting on 19 February to work out the details.

It would be great if all the trade unions behaved like all the Chalk Farm bus garage. The workers there voted that after 21 March they are only going to collect 10p fares. That's better than our campaign because that is more



Petitioning against the Law Lords' decision

organised.

If nobody does anything, or if the unions just have a one-day strike, fine for that one day but unfortunately it isn't going to win the battle.

I wouldn't just take the trade unions en bloc. The officials are opposed to this campaign, I know that. If the rank and file were opposed then I think we'd have good cause to be worried. The trade unionists I've talked to so far, via my Labour Party, have thought it's a good idea and do realise that it isn't just their fight; it does really involve the public.

But if rank and file trade unionists don't support the campaign it would be very awkward. Lots of people are pooh-poohing it because it's an illegal act. But lots of things are illegal acts. We often advocate rent strike. A rent strike is an accepted tactic. It's part of the struggle to break bad laws.

But the difference with a rent strike is that it is not isolated individuals. It is organised through tenants' — that is workers' — organisations. The 'Can't Pay Won't Pay' campaign does leave it up to isolated individuals.

How are you planning to take up the campaign in the wider trade union movement and also in the Labour Party itself? For example, are you going to go to factories and get commitments from trade unionists there and so on.

We're going to write to every constituency party. We have to organise from this meeting on 19 February. We do need people who will take it back to the trades councils and so on. It will help if we can get some prominent MPs on our side.

We're not interested in isolated individuals getting arrested. In fact I think that would kill off the campaign. You'd get a lot of publicity for those few individuals involved but then... But yes it is individuals. The ideal is having the unions involved because it stops being individual actions. This campaign is only if they don't do it.

How can you expect to mobilise the labour movement when the Labour GLC did not vote to defy the law itself?

I do think that's a problem. We are in close contact with the officials of the unions. The GLC has a campaign committee to which the trade union defence committee sends a representative. But I don't think we're necessarily in tune with the rank and file

feeling at the moment.

The unions will probably do something before 21 March.

The job losses are up to the unions. That is why they need to be part of this campaign in a very big way. Maybe I'm being unfair, but just talking to rank and file members, they're talking about a lot of jobs and they don't seem to be... you'd have thought already they'd have worked out what they're doing but they haven't.

People have accused us of not being very quick off the ground but the unions... all those jobs... they're the people to defend those jobs. We can give them support, we can act in solidarity.

We can organise as individuals, collections for the workers and so on but they've got to defend their jobs.

Next week Socialist Challenge supporters who work on London's buses and tubes will say what they think of the fares campaigns and what strategy is needed to save jobs and keep fares down.



Lobby

Mass meeting of LT unions
Wednesday 17 February 5.30pm
Congress House,
Great Russell St

Demand a one day stoppage now!
Unity with the ASLEF BR drivers!
No cuts in services, no job losses,
keep fares down!

A voice for Irish unity, a voice for working people

By Geoff Bell in Dublin



'THE great debunker of the charlatans who claim to speak for the working class in this country' — that's how Matt Merrigan, one of Ireland's best known trade union leaders, described Bernadette McAliskey when Ireland's most prominent revolutionary socialist opened her election campaign in Dublin last weekend.

Bernadette is standing as a candidate sponsored by Peoples Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International, in the Dublin North Central constituency on 18 February.

The endorsement she received from Matt Merrigan was the first major boost for her campaign. As well as being secretary of the country's third largest trade union, Merrigan is also chairperson of the Socialist Labour Party whose candidate, Noel Browne, won a seat in the Dublin North Central constituency in the last election seven months ago.

Switch

This time Noel Browne isn't standing and Merrigan is urging all who voted for him to switch to Bernadette who is running for one of the four seats which the constituency returns under the proportional representation system.

Even the most innocent observers of the general election campaign would find it difficult to disagree that all the major political parties are in need of some sustained debunking.

Public attitudes towards the Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Labour Party were graphically illustrated in a public opinion poll whose results were announced last week.

This showed that over half those questioned said they believed 'little or nothing' of what the politicians of the three big parties said.

The need for candidates like Bernadette and the other PD candidate in Limerick, Joe Harrington, to stand and cut through the apathy displayed in these opinion poll results is underlined by the similarity of the three main parties.

Even though the election has been caused by the defeat of the ruling Fine Gael Labour coalition budget, there is little

difference in what the three parties are saying on the economy.

In the North of Ireland as well, there is unanimity with Fianna Fail's Charlie Haughey declaring at the very start of the campaign that as far as he was concerned 'Northern Ireland is not an issue'.

But the PD and other anti-imperialist campaigns of the Provisional Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Socialist Party are making a determined stand against such consensus.

The PD election manifesto begins 'Ireland is in the middle of a crisis. The worst in fifty years. The country is facing economic bankruptcy; politically the legacy of partition is coming home to roost.'

The bare statistics spell out the depth of the economic crisis. Unemployment stands at 12 per cent, inflation is running at 23 per cent and 17 per cent of the South of Ireland's gross national product is in hock to foreign bankers.

Mess

The Irish economy, dominated as it is by national and multi-national capital, is in such a mess that the influential *Irish Times* recently warned that 'Ireland is in danger of turning into a West European banana republic'.

The newspaper predicted 'a suspension of Irish economic sovereignty' with the International Monetary Fund taking over direct control of the Irish economy.

When asked at a press conference last Friday what her answer to the crisis was, Bernadette was refreshingly direct.

'It's the way things are organised in this country', she said, pinpointing an economy ravaged by imperialism.

And her answer — 'If you spend fifty years trying to bake a cake which when you put it in an oven won't rise, then the

best thing to do is tear up the damn recipe.'

Central to the current recipe is the partition of Ireland.

As Bernadette put it, 'We are divided among ourselves. We are treated as two opposing pools of cheap labour, to be sold to the first multi-national speculator who comes along.'

That is why opposition to participation and demands for British withdrawal from the North of Ireland are key features in the PD campaign.

The election manifesto explains that in the South of Ireland, 'each year £500m is spent on security to prop up a border which nobody wants.

Poverty

'This expenditure, in excess of £1m a day is more than is spent on education, housing or the creation of jobs. For the people of the South, partition means they live in poverty while hundreds of millions of pounds are squandered to protect the power and privileges of the Northern Unionists.'

This sort of message is getting a response. When Bernadette and her election helpers went walkabout around the shops and pubs of the constituency at the weekend, their reception was overwhelmingly friendly.

'God bless you,' and 'Nice to see you', 'Good luck, love', were the most common, often-repeated comments. Surprisingly perhaps the welcome was warmest from older people;

from those who had seen the Ireland they had fought for sixty years ago turning into a third rate speculators' paradise; from those who had seen the dream of a united, free Ireland cynically sold by the big-time politicians.

Woke

One woman, who must have been in her late seventies, told the crowd around Bernadette at one shopping centre, 'There's the woman who woke up Ireland after fifty years sleeping.'

An elderly man at the same shopping centre remembered his part in Ireland's war of independence, 'You don't know me Bernie, but I shot a few

Black and Tans in my time' he confided, referring to the British mercenaries of sixty years ago.

'You'll be alright, Bernie, how could I vote for anyone else?'

Yet it's not just Bernadette's reputation for her struggles in the North which attract enthusiasm, 'She'll fight for ordinary people, that's all I

know' was one comment. 'I'm not interested in politics but I'll vote for you because you're a woman and it's time we women took over this country' was another.

Of course, although many waited patiently to shake her hand, there was hostility as well. A stern-faced passer-by declared she should be hung.

Others looked angry that someone should be talking about British troops in Ireland as if it was a memory they wished to exorcise.

Need

But the commonest response during the first few hours in her constituency was optimistic.

'If she gets in, she'll give them hell. We need more like her', was the comment that best expressed the hope that Bernadette's candidature has aroused.

The odds in the bookies' are three to one against her winning the seat, but whatever the result the message of the capacity of ordinary people organised and fighting for what is rightfully theirs is being spread.

The election slogans sums it up — 'A voice for Irish unity, a voice for working people.'

Money rolls in for Bernadette's campaign

THE financial appeal for the two candidates sponsored by Peoples Democracy has produced an immediate response. But more is still needed.

Send crossed cheques to: Peoples Democracy Election Fund, c/o Plough Books, 16 Cape Street, Dublin or giro direct to: PD Election Fund account: 49147310, Bank of Ireland, Dame's Quay, Dublin. Socialist Challenge has so far have contributed: Manchester SC £10; Islington SC £40; Wandsworth SC £20; Collection at LCI AGM £40; Lambeth SC £43; Hackney SC £32

IRELAND: TIME FOR TORY POLICIES TO GO

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON IRELAND

SATURDAY 27th FEBRUARY 1982.
THE THEATRE,
309 REGENT ST LONDON W1.

Support grows for Labour Movement Conference on Ireland

OVER 100 delegates have already registered for the labour movement conference on Ireland to be held on 27 February in London. They represent a wide cross-section of Labour Party and trade union activists.

The conference platform includes leading figures of the Irish and British labour movements. Among those confirmed are Inez McCormack, Northern Ireland Regional Officer for NUPE; Matt Merrigan, district secretary of the ITGWU in Dublin; and Fergus O'Hare of Dublin Trades Council.

Representing the British labour movement will be Clive Soley, MP and Valerie Wise, GLC Councillor and chairperson of the GLC Economic and Industrial Committee; along with other trade union representatives.

The organising committee hopes that Bernadette McAliskey who had agreed to speak will not be too exhausted from her election campaign to also attend.

There's still time to apply for delegates' credentials. Observers also invited. Details from Labour Movement Conference on Ireland, 1 North End Rd. London W14



Garret FitzGerald



Fianna Fail's Charlie Haughey

PREPARE FOR ALL OUT STRIKE

London NUR members call strike action

By D Ellis, NUR member

RANK AND FILE railworkers in London have pointed a real way forward to beat the offensive of British Rail. Guards and station staff from over 25 British Rail depots in the London region met on Monday night to discuss how to coordinate a vigorous campaign to throw out flexible rostering in the industry.

It was overwhelmingly agreed after a full discussion to call a day of strike action on Friday 19 February, involving a lobby at Unity House, the head offices of the executive of the National Union of Railwaymen.

'There is lots to do between now and then,' explained the chairperson. 'Everyone will have to go back to their depots and win wide support for this lobby.'

And, as other speakers agreed, if Weighell's sell-out is going to be overturned, the day of action and the lobby can only be the first step in a broader campaign. A steering committee

was elected, with representatives from all the regions at the meeting.

Speaker after speaker stressed that the stakes in this fight are high. Jobs, this year's pay round, working conditions, and — in the case of ASLEF — the very existence of the union will go out the window if BR forces through the new rosters.

The rosters are just the first hurdle. Then the one-person operation of trains, the open station concept, and all the other productivity deals. Sidney Weighell is cooking up with BR will follow.

The secretary of Southend LDC (works

committee) made short shrift of the rosters. 'We received them. We didn't even look at them. We just shoved them back in the post box to Unity House. And that's what other depots should do too'.

There is no 'local' way out of the rosters. It's true LDCs have the right to reject them. But is this a new found concern of Sidney Weighell's for more democracy at the depots? Far from it.

When the LDCs reject the rosters, local negotiations are then taken by the union's sectional councils.

If, in the unlikely case, the council also backs the LDCs, who will be left to fight their battle with management? None other than the national executive committee! And we're back to square one with Sidney Weighell in the driving seat.

At least some members

of the executive recognise the deep felt hostility to Weighell's plans. An angry response greeted the announcement that three members were present at the meeting.

Ian Williams, a left-winger on the NEC, stayed throughout and agreed to answer questions.

'Do you support the proposed day of action?' the meeting demanded to know. Williams gave a clear 'yes' but wanted the meeting to consider using the union's machinery as well.

In the North West a similar meeting the previous night had agreed to campaign for a Special General Meeting of the NUR to discuss the rosters.

Support from 200 branches is required before such a meeting can be called, according to the union's rule book.

Geoff Hensby from Paddington agreed that every avenue should be explored but told the same history of his branch's attempts to get the very same meeting off the ground through union structures.

'We drew up a circular to appeal to other branches for their support. We have had letters going between my postal box and Sidney Weighell's until I'm sick of it. But his reply has been the same.

'Weighell refused to authorise it. It never even got to the executive committee. And if we take that road alone, the bureaucracy will drag us down in the sewers'.

As another Kings Cross guard replied, 'We must take the union's machinery to its limits, but when you've got such an undemocratic union and such important issues are at stake, then you are forced to call unofficial action as well'.

'If Ian Williams is opposed to the rosters, why doesn't he go public on it? Why was he silent when the screws were put on the Kings Cross guards to call off their unofficial action in the second week of the ASLEF strike?' asked other railworkers.

Hazel Macpherson, LDC from Paddington, wasn't happy with Williams' 'softly softly' approach.

'Ian is talking about the witch-hunt against left-wingers in the union. But the best way to fight the witch-hunt is to come out openly in support of your members' interests.'

If these left wing leaders aren't prepared to lead openly, then the meeting showed just how

Resolution to London LDCs conference

- 1 This conference is opposed to flexible rostering.
- 2 We call upon the National Executive Committee of the NUR to call immediate industrial action, alongside ASLEF, in opposition to flexible rostering.
- 3 This conference commits itself to organising a mass campaign against flexible rostering. This campaign will include:
 - a) A co-ordinated day of action on 19 February.
 - b) A mass lobby of the NEC at Unity House on that day.
 - c) Mass meetings in the depots to explain the issues and to mobilise full support for the day of action.
- 4 For the purpose of organising and coordinating this campaign conference will elect a steering group.
- 5 This conference will re-convene after the day of action in order to re-assess the situation.

many serious rank and file leaders are coming forward from lower levels of the union.

Guards from Cannon Street, Slade Green, Streatham Hill, London Bridge and other depots talked about the courageous actions they had taken to fight the new rosters.

But they also put the other side of the story. They explained how this time round, it would be that much more difficult to get their depots out when little support was forthcoming in their struggle.

Courageous actions, if they are isolated, won't be enough to get rid of the productivity plans.

Furthermore, things aren't going to stand still until 19 February.

Already, many depot managers have banned rest day working, in addition to the Sunday working that went a fortnight ago.

British Rail is threatening to withdraw the back pay of the three per cent from last year's pay round until each and every item in the productivity play is agreed to.

These actions will add fuel to the flames. They will anger NUR members further. Depots may consider reacting spontaneously.

The steering committee will have to try to harness this anger, convince the workers that a united effort is needed, and to put forward 19 February as one focus that can show Sidney Weighell and the BRB just what we think of what they are up to.

'Drivers liaison committee formed'

STEVE FOREY is a train driver at Kings Cross station in London. When the Sun newspaper issued a writ against drivers who were refusing to handle the paper because of its scurrilous attack on them, Steve was one of the two rank and file leaders named.

A fortnight later he led a flying picket to stop British Rail using National Union of Railwaymen drivers at Aylesbury for strikebreaking. Brian Grogan spoke to Steve about the next stages in the dispute.

Where do you think the dispute is at?

I think the strike is at a turning point. It's likely that the Board will this week announce measures which will lead quickly to a lock out situation. But whether or not it takes this decision, it is necessary for us to move to an all-out strike. This is the only way to win.

The Board is making a big fuss about how much it is losing because of the three day strikes. But we are not really hurting them.

Do you think there is a feeling for all-out strike among the drivers?

Well, the days of strike action in 1979 ended with the imposition of two rates of pay for drivers: one for long distance and one for

shunters. Then we relied on single days of action and we saw how inadequate that approach was.

Add to this that today most depots are operating a policy of non-cooperation (work-to-rule) in addition to the strike days. This shows that the days of strike are not in themselves enough.

Of course few people are openly opposed because they generally follow the Executive Committee. But there is a real danger of demoralisation setting in.

Is there anything you can do to press the executive to call an all-out strike?

There is only one thing that will bring that about: rank and file action. We have reformed a liaison committee.

Delegates from seven

or eight London depots are already involved. This is an unofficial action committee to organise support action for any depot under attack and, hopefully, to generate enough momentum for coordinated action on other days than those called by the Executive Committee.

An all-out strike will need the support of the NUR. What chance do you think there is of this?

Weighell is playing a dirty game. He is covering over the fact that his agreement to flexible rostering is go-

ing to cost tens of thousands of jobs.

Flexible rostering means nothing else.

Ray Buckton, our general secretary, should be more forthcoming about the role that Weighell is playing. He has a duty to defend his own position against Weighell

and this would allow him to appeal to the NUR ranks.

This is what the liaison committee will do.

What preparations has the executive made for a lock out?

Very little. Although all branches have now been sent cheques to establish a hardship fund, Kings Cross drivers have been down to the printers, Lon-

don Transport, the coach stations and the transport unions about lorry drivers.

On the whole we've had a good response.

But it's made more difficult to get definite commitments by the fact that no appeal has gone out from our executive for blacking action.

If you do have an all-out strike and go for blacking won't this come up against the Tories anti-union laws on secondary picketing?

In London, and I'm sure in most other places, we are quite prepared to face the Tories over picketing. It will be absolutely essential to defy Tebbit if we are to have any chance of winning.

You were very involved in the blacking of the Sun. What do you think you gained out of it?

I'd say it was a draw. That in itself signified a big step forward because normally trade unionists always lose at the hands of the press.

We cost Murdoch thousands of pounds. We showed him that workers will not always take scurrilous attacks lying down. Most important of all we have established a precedent for the right of reply. We only got an inside page. But this was unheard of before our action.



ASLEF strike — a fight to the finish

By Pete Grant, ASLEF

The traindrivers' strike has increasingly come to be seen over the last week as a fight not so much with the British Rail Board but with the Tory government. At a mass meeting of 120 drivers at Congress House last Saturday, Ray Buckton, General Secretary of the traindrivers' union ASLEF said that it was 'not just a fight for locomotivemen.

'We are taking the brunt of the attack on the trade union movement in this country,' Buckton added that in his opinion the government had privately told BR: 'we will pay for your losses if you smash this trade union'.

Les Huckfield, an ASLEF-sponsored MP, carried on this theme stating that the struggle was against Tebbit, Thatcher and the Tory government. The issue was one of the fundamental rights of any trade union to negotiate and organise within agreed procedures.

The same techniques were being used by BR as were used by British Leyland to defeat the car workers. Other managements were waiting to see if BR succeeds so they can try it on with their own unions. That is why it is important to support ASLEF.

Ray Buckton, speaking



Les Huckfield

the following day on *Weekend World*, said the dispute had become 'a class issue, a class struggle'.

The government are preparing — behind the

barricades of the BR — an all-out assault on the railway industry. They want to hive off the profitable parts and close down virtually all that's left. The only part of the

network they seem to be willing to run are the commuter lines into London, without which the capital couldn't survive in its present form.

Government supporters are openly canvassing ideas such as turning St Pancras into a large coach terminus and tarmacking the railway lines to provide a straight route to the North Circular and the M1. Some even go so far as to suggest that Britain could get on without any railways at all!

Support for the traindrivers has been flooding the union headquarters, and the TUC and Labour Party national executives have pledged their support. The right wing however have shown their

true colours. The 'gang of four' in the unions, Duffy, Boyd, Chapple and Weighell, all tried to stop the motion of support from the TUC. As this failed they now make scurrilous attacks on ASLEF in the press.

MPs sponsored by the transport unions appealed to the Labour Party NEC that before discussing support for ASLEF it should take evidence from the British Rail Board.

Les Huckfield told the mass meeting that 'some union executive committees, especially those representing the car workers, have stabbed workers in struggle in the back. If your EC does any secret deal behind your backs, get rid of them.'

The left in the Labour Party, especially Tony Benn, need to go beyond their public statements of support and begin organising their not insubstantial resources behind the train drivers. When BR lock out the drivers solidarity actions by other unions will be the key to success. The left must prepare the

ground now.

Mass picketing of the docks and power stations will be needed to deal a short, sharp shock to the Tory government. The Tories must not be allowed to starve the drivers into submission as they did in 1955.

Martin Meteyard reports from Glasgow:

'We can't hope to win the next election if the leadership stands on the sidelines in a dispute such as this.'

This was how Les Huckfield MP brought home the issue to a meeting of over 100 railworkers and other trades unionists in Glasgow last Sunday.

ASLEF Scottish organiser John Walker pointed out that all Weighell's statements attacking ASLEF in the media went right against the policy of the NUR executive committee to give full support to the traindrivers. And ASLEF executive member Charlie Rogers recalled how his union had had a similar problem when their general secretary had done a deal over the Beeching cuts in the early 1960s: 'We got rid of him — forced him to retire early.'

Where's the connection between Mr G Findlay, the general manager of the London and North Western Railways in the late 19th century, Peter Parker chairperson of British Rail and Sid Weighell, general secretary of the NUR? Well, as every Sun reader should know, they all expressed themselves on the virtues of flexible rostering.

Mr Findlay put it in a nutshell when he said: 'If an attempt were made to put a strict limit to hours, the railway companies would be obliged on such occasions either to refuse to carry the mail service and the passenger or parcel traffic; or to employ an immense additional staff of trained relief men, whose services would not be required at other periods of the year.'

Mr William Birt, general manager of the Great Eastern, was convinced that fixed hours for railway 'servants' was impossible. Further, he said that it would be 'the working classes who would suffer if hours were limited'. The Great Eastern ran 49 trains for workers daily in and out of Liverpool Street, but the margin of profit obtained from that traffic was so small that any increase in labour costs would force the directors to 'get rid of some of the accommodation'.

But at this point we get a bit of a discrepancy. In 1893 Mr G Findlay expressed the opinion: 'that you might as well have trade unionism in Her Majesty's army as to have it in the railway service. The thing is totally incompatible.' And, as everybody known, Sir Peter is in favour of the NUR — he only wants to smash ASLEF!

Socialist Challenge PAMPHLET FOR RAILWORKERS

What policies are needed to tackle productivity in the rail industry? Order now 'How to fight productivity', a Socialist Challenge pamphlet for railworkers. 35p plus 10p p&p.

Cheques/Postal orders to Cardinal Enterprises Ltd. Available from: Rail pamphlet, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



For an integrated transport policy

By R Reed, Kings Cross Guard

'RAIL cutbacks are now inevitable'. This is British Rail's response to the traindrivers' strike.

It is a barefaced lie and a crude attempt to divide the railworkers. The Tories' whole policy, worked out before the strike, is based on destroying the railways. A corner of the curtain has been lifted on this sordid plan by — of all people — the management of the West German railways. British Rail has decided to slash three out of four train ferries from Harwich.

necessary £40m, which was certain to produce a profit, as 'ludicrous'.

'British Rail used to make a lot of money out of Harwich,' point out the German bosses. 'They spent all their profits on road ferries and failed to re-invest in rail ferries'. Now, not surprisingly, they are uncompetitive.'

Lorries

As opposed to Thatcherland, a West German railways official declared: 'On the continent we believe in keeping as many

heavy lorries off the road as possible.'

Thatcher's intentions, are those of the madhouse. A freightliner driver at our depot explained. 'I regularly carry our 1000 ton limit. We go for part of the journey along the side of the motorway, and we speed past the lorries, averaging 75 miles per hour.'

'It would take 30 lorries with 30 drivers, pumping out all the pollution and destroying our environment to move the same amount of stuff slower than the three people manning the train.'

'This is known as "efficiency" by Thatcher and her BR puppets. And let's

remember that 70 per cent of all road building is carried by central government.'

An answer to Thatcher can't limit itself to proposals about the future of British Rail alone. What we need is an integrated transport system.

A recent Socialist Challenge pamphlet, *How to Fight Productivity*, written by railworkers, takes up this issue:

Services

Transport is a basic and essential service that has to operate in the interests of working people. It is the life blood of any industrial

society.

The inefficiencies and wastefulness of capitalism are highlighted by the present transport system which allows one section to compete against another, instead of utilising all the resources as fully as possible. An integrated transport system is needed that works for the benefit of people, not the profit of the capitalists.

A Labour government would need to take special measures to develop such a system, in particular a massive programme of public investment in transport, with no strings attached. It would also need to nationalise the

road haulage industry without compensation. Thatcher has sold off the freight traffic that once went by rail to her friends in the private road haulage sector.

Industry

Private firms are now legally entitled to operate passenger services while rail fares are deliberately raised, putting rail travel out of many people's reach and making the private services look more attractive. All transport workers — regardless of which sector they work in — have no interest in the privatisation of the transport industry.

The next Labour government should also renationalise all the privatised sectors on rail with no compensation. When rail was nationalised in 1947 massive compensation payments were awarded to the private owners, and we're still paying for it today.

But to commit the next Labour government to such radical policies means a campaign now inside the unions. Unfortunately the leaders of the rail unions, in particular the National Union of Railwaymen, have worked hand in glove with management instead of the interests of its members.

Reselection challenge to Neil Kinnock

RAY DAVIES is a well known figure in the South Wales labour movement. His activities span over 20 years. He has sprung to prominence over the past two as the Mid-Glamorgan county councillor expelled three times from the Labour Group for voting against spending cuts; as the JP bounced off the magistrate's bench for an arrest on a 1980 steel strike picket line; and as a leading member of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation who has fought for democracy in his own union and for resistance to job losses at the Llanwern steel plant where he works.

To follow his appearance in the Ken Loach TV film 'A Question of Leadership' Ray is likely to get national media coverage again.

This time it is his challenge to Bedwellty MP Neil Kinnock at the reselection conference in March. Ray has received backing from an ISTC branch in Llanwern and is canvassing for more nominations in the coming week.

He explains to Socialist Challenge why he is standing against Neil Kinnock and explains how he sees some of the issues facing the left in the labour movement.

Bedwellty constituency has always supported the idea of reselection so it will be a massive retreat if they don't accept my right to challenge Neil Kinnock and instead, go for a short list of one.

I feel my stand will represent the positions of the constituency. I feel my stand defends accountability that we fought for in the last few years.

Tatchell

The constituency party voted for Benn and the local general management committee voted to defend Tatchell's right to stand for parliament.

Hillhead by-election Labour campaign - recipe for defeat

By Des Tierny

THE date for the Glasgow Hillhead by-election has yet to be set. However, so important is this election that campaigning is already underway and the outlines of the campaign are clear.

Labour looks set to fight this election in the new climate established at Bishop Stortford. The emphasis will be on the unity of the party, Labour's alternative economic strategy, and a clear distance from any radical socialist remedy to the Scottish people's problems.

David Wiseman, a local councillor is the Labour candidate and despite his previous 'left' record in the party is fitting in well.

He stresses that he is a mainstream member of the Labour Party who both supports Benn and the Tribune group.

In this role he is receiving the full backing of the Labour and trade union leadership in Scotland and the rest of Britain.

Special

To underline this, a special meeting was called by Clive Jenkins of the staff workers' union ASTMS, and the Trade Unions for a Labour Victory.

Present were Alex Kitson, deputy secretary of the transport union; Jimmy Morrell, Scottish President of the

general workers and Gavin Laird of the engineers' union. They took the opportunity to declare that 'the error of internecine warfare is now over'.

Even on purely electoralist calculations their strategy of fighting to hold onto the middle ground is weak. A look at the last General Election results shows this.

1979 Glasgow Hillhead electorate 39,793	
Conservative	12,368 (41%)
Labour	10,366 (34.4%)
Liberal	4,349 (14.4%)
Scottish National Party	3,050 (10.1%)

The only predictable feature of this by-election is that the Tory vote will collapse. It is unlikely that it will collapse sufficiently nor will Tory voters switch to the SDP to take its vote above Labour's last election performance.

If this is so, then the key to a Labour victory is a bold, positive campaign which will increase support among working class people in the area.

macked roads from the tops of the valleys to Newport to be massacred by British troops in order that people like him can sit in parliament?

Wasn't this extra-parliamentary activity?

I also want to campaign for a leadership that is really committed to aspects of the alternative strategy like unilateral disarmament and withdrawal from the EEC.

Vehicle

Part of my challenge is to weld together the trade unions and the Labour Party into one vehicle.

That can only be done by making the trade unions far more democratic, not as some suggest by giving the trade unions less of a say in Labour Party policy and fewer votes at Labour Party conference.

We need to work out ways to make the casting of the trade union vote at conference more democratic.

This would centre around the trade union branches at grass roots level where the active members of our movement meet. Decisions should be given back to them.

I don't think the rank and file can let unelected leaders determine the role and positions of the trade unions on the Labour Party or any other issue.

All too often the trade union leaders have conceded everything. Because the trade union leaders

Fighting the SDP for the middle ground was attempted at Warrington and Roy Jenkins (who is the SDP candidate once again) almost overturned an enormous Labour majority.

Fighting the SDP at their own game gives their policies credibility in the eyes of the voters.

This is particularly true at the present time in Scotland. Major sections of the country's industrial base are being threatened.

Redundancies or complete

shutdowns have been declared at the British Aluminium smelter at Invergordon, the British Leyland tractors plant at Bathgate, Plesseys at Bathgate and the Lovable Bra factory in Cumbernauld.

However, workers at these plants are fighting back. British Aluminium, Plesseys and Lovable Bra are now occupied by the workers. Workers at British Leyland Bathgate are on strike.



Ray Davies seeks to weld together unions and Labour Party

have conceded to Labour leaders in the past, we've ended up with things like Wilson's 'In Place of Strife'.

This has laid the way to Tory anti-union laws today. When I look back at the last two years it is with sadness.

The trade union movement was warned in advance that the government would take political action to diminish their rights.

The Tories put this plan into action at first at Leyland's and then in

steel. The steel strike had strong political implications. The trade union leaders bent over backwards to prevent it being a political strike, even though there was strong feeling on the ground about the need to bring down the Tories.

Change

I joined the Labour Co-ordinating Committee because we need a vehicle to get a change of leader-



Neil Kinnock — a prime mover in witch-hunt against left

ship which will implement policies like unilateralism and withdrawal from the EEC.

The message that now seems to be coming from the LCC is that we should be putting the vehicle in the garage for the next two years.

Or if we take it out we should only go at 20 miles an hour.

We're not going to get very far this way and we'll end up with engine failure.

If the LCC is going to be a vehicle for change then its got to challenge all the way along the line or be replaced by something else. Perhaps Labour Liaison '82 can fit the bill.

We must challenge for the deputy leadership or else we will condemn people to another dose of stop-go.

The only part of the alternative strategy the labour leadership will im-

plement will be forms of wage restraint and import controls which are to the detriment of working people.

Dropped

The issue of control over the commanding heights of the economy will be dropped like a hot potato.

I think there is little value in what took place at Bishop Stortford. If anything, it has placed a barrier in the thrust for change.

This can only work against us in the long run. We are selling ourselves short if we don't continue our campaign.

Bishop Stortford has given the right wing the opportunity to stop the progress that has taken place in the last five years to reform our party.

This by-election should be used by the Labour Party to put forward the plans to ensure the success of these occupations and to build up support for a mass fight against the cuts.

At the moment, the best Labour will be offering is a promise to do better if they are returned to power in 1984.

At worst they will be seen by the working class electors as irrelevant or as part of the problem they face.

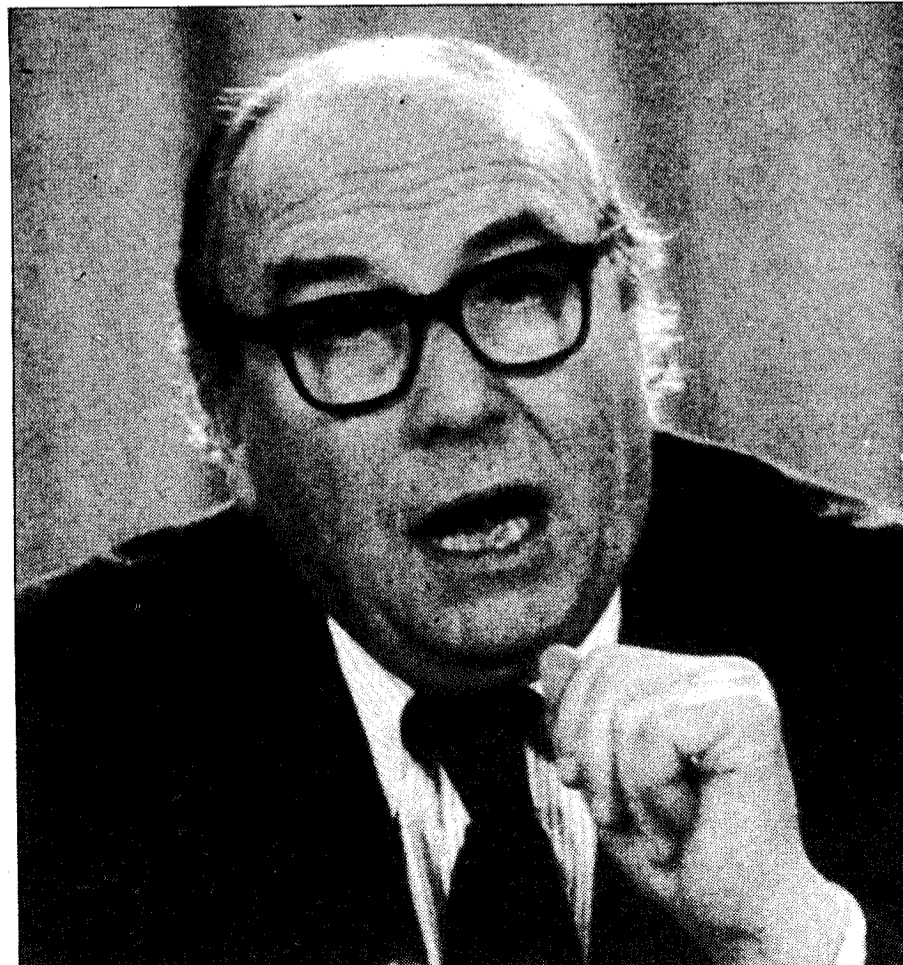
It is this weakness which the Scottish National Party looks set to accept. The SNP have taken the time since the last general election to re-equip themselves with demagogic populist politics.

They will praise the virtues of occupying workers. They will come out clearly for an end to nuclear weapons — they already claim that they are the only party in this election which is 100 per cent for

NATO

unilateral nuclear disarmament and against NATO.

A Labour Party committed to supporting workers in struggle, putting forward radical social measures to deal with unemployment and the decline in social services and committed to building a movement to remove the Tory



Roy Jenkins — could win by default

government would feel little threat from this direction and would begin the preparation for Labour victory at the next

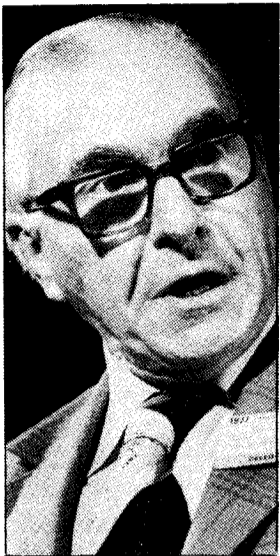
election. A Labour Party which refuses to face up to the real struggle that working people

are facing and attempts to hold back their struggles till a General Election in 1984 is preparing its own defeat.

Trade Unions

Witch-hunt against Laurence Scott continues

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



John Boyd confronting ...

By Pete Clifford

ENGINEERING union leader John Boyd has made a fresh attack on Laurence Scott strikers. In a three page letter to the union's 2,600 branches, he covers up for the executive's withdrawal of backing from the strikers back in July.

Boyd concludes that given 'the executive council's consistent support, at all times, when members decide to fight redundancies, we trust that our branches will not be misled into supporting what is now an irresponsible campaign'.

He even has the cheek to claim that Scott's strikers are attacking the union's democratic structures, when it was Boyd himself who broke four of

the union's rules in withdrawing official support and refusing to cooperate with the union's own appeals procedure. Since July, the executive council have organised a witch-hunt campaign inside and outside the union against the strikers, culminating in misleading the union's national committee into withdrawing support.

In contrast, the determination of the Scott's strikers to stay out on

strike has won the support of rank and file engineers across the country. Last year a protest resolution to the executive, backing the strikers, won the endorsement of over a thousand of the union's branches.

Now the same type of support is building up for the strikers latest campaign. Branch resolutions from all over the country are starting to arrive at the union's national HQ calling for a ballot for re-election of the executive council.

The Scott's strikers are not going to go away because of Boyd's attacks. The same day Boyd wrote to the branches they

drafted out their reply. Their message was: the fight goes on.

Patrick Sikorski adds: The experiences of the Laurence Scott fight for jobs will be highlighted by Labour MPs in the coming parliamentary fight against Tebbit's anti-union bill.

This is just one of the steps to be taken as a result of a briefing meeting held in the House of Commons last Thursday which was attended by among others Tony Benn, Ernie Roberts, Dennis Skinner, Michael Meacher, Stan Orme and the MPs for Doncaster and Norwich in whose constituencies there are other factories in the Mining Supplies and Laurence Scott group.

Tony Benn proposed to

issue a statement of support to gain signatures from MPs, leading trade unionists and other labour movement figures. He also announced that a short bill will be published calling for the nationalisation of Scotts and Mining Supplies into the National Coal Board.

Both measures are aimed at highlighting the continuing fight for jobs by the Scotts workers in Manchester and to expose the asset-stripping role of Mining Supplies boss Arthur Snipe who has made his fortune off the backs of the miners and the nationalised mining industries. As works convenor Denis Barry told the meeting, under a Labour government they would have expected the government to step in and save their jobs through nationalisation.



Denis Barry

Leyland Vehicles Support grows

By Pat Hickey

The fight against BL management's plans to sack 4,000 workers in the Leyland Vehicles division took another step forward at an emergency meeting of the BL Combine Committee in Birmingham on Saturday 6 February.

The meeting, the largest for some time, was attended by over 50 stewards from the cars and heavy vehicles division of the company.

The Leyland Vehicles delegates — Jim McLean from Albion Glasgow and Mick Coyne, convenor from Leyland, Lancashire — reported that the strike was growing stronger in the face of management's threats of closures. Mass meetings at the Leyland plant in Lancashire had given increased majorities for continuing the struggle and extending it. The management's line that the only way to save the company was to accept job loss and speed up has been heard once too often. The Edwardes' plan is facing its first big fight.

The job now is to win the whole of BL to support for the Leyland Vehicles struggle. The workers in the cars division have to be won to understanding that Edwardes has not finished with the jobs massacre there either. This unity will be central to a successful struggle.

The company is planning to move engine blocks to the Radford plant in Coventry for the Jaguar, and tooling equipment for the Jaguar engines to Beans Foundries in Tipton. This work will be taken from the Farringdon plant which along with the other four Leyland Vehicles plants in Leyland and Chorley is on strike. Unfortunately these two plants have indicated that they will accept the work.

The Combine decided on a number of steps to deal with this problem. Moving this work is vital to the continued smooth production of the Jaguar which is making big profits for the company in the American market at the moment. Fresh attempts will be made to persuade the workers in Coventry and Tipton to black the equipment and the blocks, and a special leaflet will be distributed at the plants.

The Combine is also to take the struggle to the other car plants. 50,000 leaflets will be distributed to car workers explaining what is happening and collections will be organised.

In addition to these steps, the Combine agreed to organise joint shop stewards meetings in all plants to be addressed by delegates from Leyland Vehicles and a special conference of all shop stewards will be called at the Vehicles division's request.

These steps towards unity have long been needed. But the cars division have to be prepared for strike action to support Leyland Vehicles if BL's attacks on the workforce are going to be stopped.

Prepared

The ground has to be prepared for dealing with the national trade union leadership. John Boyd has stated in the AUEW Journal that the BL Board are the 'stewards of the nation's assets' and must be supported. His record in BL is one complete backing for Michael Edwardes and betrayal of the workers.

The Transport Union leadership has been no better. When the company steps up the pressure, as they undoubtedly will, these 'leaders' will be running for cover. It will take determined action from the membership to stop them.

It is essential to implement the Combine decision as rapidly as possible. Around the pay claim and over the 39 hour week the car workers have shown a renewed willingness to take on the company. The struggle in Leyland Vehicles can be the basis for building on that.

Support Leyland

THE Lancashire Association of Trades Councils passed the following resolution in support of Leyland workers. Socialist Challenge calls on all its supporters to get their union and Labour Party branches to support this resolution in an appropriate form.

'This Regional Council of the TUC pledges its support to the LV Leyland workers engaged in dispute against the re-organisation and redundancy proposals of management.'

'Recognising the importance that a victory against Edwardes would have for the whole trade union and labour movement we therefore urge that the trade union and labour movement gives the maximum moral, financial and active support to ensure that the Leyland workers are not defeated by the tactics of Edwardes and this Tory government.'

'We call on the North west group of MPs to raise this issue in the House of Commons on an emergency basis. We call for financial support throughout the North west for the strike committee and resolve to circulate the collection sheet.'



Edwardes faces his first major attack on his plan from the BL workers

Photo: MORNING STAR

Striking for jobs

By Patrick Sikorski

BRITISH Leyland Vehicles plants in Leyland and Chorley have overwhelmingly endorsed the decision to strike against proposed redundancies. So too have the office staff in APEX.

Although the unions are making the dispute official, the strikers are well aware of the record of the engineering union and the transport union leaders as far as Leyland workers are concerned. Over 80,000 jobs have been lost throughout the Combine since 1978.

No further talks are scheduled until 15 February when the company negotiators will present their position.

Last week's negotiations were completely abortive with the company refusing to seriously discuss the union side's position and the broader proposals in the Trade Union Alternative. The union side continued to make it absolutely clear that there will be no retreat

from their demands which includes the complete withdrawal of all proposals for redundancies.

The attempts so far by the company to isolate the strikers from other workers in Lancashire have completely failed despite the threats of closure from Edwardes and full page adverts in local newspapers taken out by Leyland Vehicles management.

Between 30 to 40,000 leaflets were distributed to the whole workforce and the people of Leyland and Preston explaining the strikers' case and the union demands. By the end of the week Leyland Vehicles bosses were having to admit in the very same local papers that there was massive support for the strike throughout the area.

The support is there and the pickets are getting bigger and stronger. But the labour movement, particularly locally, has yet to be organised to throw its full weight behind the workers of Leyland Vehicles.

**Defend Jobs
Support Leyland
Vehicle Workers
Smash the Tebbit
Proposals**

**Demonstration
and Rally
Saturday 27
February**

Called by
Lancashire Association of Trades Councils and the
North West TUC
Supported by
LV Leyland Strike Committee; CSEU No 30 District
Confed; Lancashire County Labour Party; Lancashire
County Labour Group of MPs

ASSEMBLE
12 noon Leyland Civic Centre,
Leyland, Lancs.

Speakers: LV Leyland Strike Committee; Tam
Dalyell MP West Lothian; LV Bathgate speaker.

All Socialist Challenge supporters from the
Midlands and northwards should mobilise for
this demonstration

Training youth for the dole

IN TWO YEARS youth unemployment has doubled. Thousands of school leavers head straight for the dole queues with no hope of ever finding work.

In January there were 150,000 unemployed school leavers, but another 192,000 were on special unemployment schemes. The biggest is the Labour government's Youth 'Opportunity' Programme (YOPs), which the Tories have greatly expanded.

YOPs has let the government hide the real extent of youth unemployment. But there has been widespread opposition to YOPs working conditions.

On £23.50 a week, working with little or no training for a year or half a year, youth are exploited and have no guaranteed jobs when they finish. A YOPs 'trainee' can be working beside someone doing the same job for twice as much money.

As if this wasn't bad enough, 'On yer bike' Tebbit, claiming to be worried by youth unemployment, has come up with new schemes. The 'Young Workers' scheme will pay bosses £15 a week to starve youth. It guarantees low wages, being aimed at employers who pay youth less than £40 a week.

His 'compulsory training' scheme is even worse. If you leave school in September 1983, you face a choice between a training scheme which will pay your parents £15 a week, or nothing at all.

School leavers' dole has already been cut and can't be claimed straight away when you leave.

Tebbit is bringing in industrial conscription. It benefits no-one but the employers, who get cheap non-union labour with a £60 million subsidy thrown in.

Sections of the labour movement are taking steps to expose YOPs for what they really are. Fights for wage increases and travel allowances have been taken up by NUPE and the TGWU locally. In some cases YOPs workers' frustration has led to local strike action.

The Labour Party Young Socialists have launched a campaign to unionise YOPs, which will be lobbying parliament on Thursday 25 February for trade union rights for YOPs workers.

They call for a decent wage, better job prospects and trade union monitoring of conditions, as well as unionisation.

These are positive steps, but they don't get to the root of the problem. It's no good just 'improving' YOPs conditions and prospects.

We need full trade union rights and rates of pay for all YOPs workers, and a guaranteed permanent job.

The wage issue has to be taken into the trade union movement with these demands. Len Murray's commitment to the YOPs — which he helps promote — is bad enough.

He lets his own members lose jobs while youth are exploited. But the root problem is that the trade union movement has never really treated youth as 'real' workers.

Youth face the same problems in many other jobs — low wages, no union rights, bad conditions, no training.

Neither will the Right to Work's 'Jobs not YOPs' campaign stop this.

There has to be a fight for a minimum wage, job guarantees for youth, employment quotas for young people, with priority for young women and young blacks who are the hardest hit by unemployment.

But this has to be taken up everywhere — including in YOPs itself, which employ 50 per cent of all school leavers.

This doesn't mean accepting that YOPs are the answer. Even Tebbit has been forced to concede the failure of YOPs. But his new proposals make matters worse.

The TUC has rejected them, but look for small improvements in YOPs conditions by pushing wages up to £30 per week, and asking for Manpower Services Commission funding for 15,000 apprentice places.

This falls well short of what is needed to actually reverse high unemployment and give youth a guaranteed job. The job of the TUC is to ensure that youth are given the chance to fight for their own rights by being accepted as part of the unions with equal rights and pay to other trade unionists.

Training for the Dole — that's what the Tories offer young people. It's time, alongside the LPYS campaign to unionise YOPs, for the trade union movement to organise for union rights, union rates of pay, massive public expenditure, and place responsibility for youth unemployment where it belongs — on the shoulders of the employers and their government, not on young people who need 'training'.

YOP Trainees
Union Rights Campaign

**Join the YOPS Lobby
of Parliament
Thursday 25 February**

Festival Hall, Belvedere Rd, SE1
(opposite Waterloo Station)

2pm-5pm. Speakers include Tony Benn MP, Dennis Skinner MP

- *No to Tebbit's proposals
 - *Trade union rates of pay for YOP trainees
 - *35 hour week and five weeks holiday
 - *A guaranteed job for all trainees
- Supported by LPYS, Labour Party and NUPE

PLANNING

TUC to save Laker?

WITH three weeks to go to the budget, the TUC has produced its own proposals for the economy. Its *Programme for Recovery* is a 44-page, detailed plan which is likely to be a major topic of discussion in the run-up to the Labour Party conference.

A fight for a plan is an essential component of the fight for an alternative to the policies of both Thatcher and the last Labour government.

Despite our strong disagreement with the spirit of the TUC's policy, we think that any proposal for planning should be discussed seriously.

This week, therefore, we assess the TUC's plan and explain how a fighting campaign for a plan could be developed.

THERE ARE now four million unemployed in Britain, says the TUC's 44-page *Programme for Recovery*, launched this week. Aimed at the next budget, the report says there are 672,000 'unregistered' unemployed and calls for £8.3bn to be spent to create 677,000 new jobs.

Len Murray calls for the report to be used for a 'new deal between government, TUC and employers to plan the path back to full employment'. But despite the TUC's pleas the report doesn't hold out much hope of a Tory U-turn. The TUC is betting on a new government.

The detailed plan, which includes proposals for youth, women and blacks, extends the TUC's 1982 'Plan for Growth'. It has been 'test-run' on

the government's own forecasting model, and the TUC claim it will cut government borrowing by £28m and raise inflation by only 1.1 per cent.

With its 'Plan for saving capitalism', as the *New Statesman* slightly cynically dubs it, the TUC sets out some pretty thorough homework to convince Britain that there is an alternative to Thatcher.

One result is a damning indictment of Thatcher's policies and with it the crazy logic of unemployment. Productivity, which she says she will raise, has fallen. Inflation, which she would cut, is in double figures. Remember the tax cuts? Taxes are higher than ever except 'for the very rich'. Investment is 21 per cent down and unemployment is costing the government £8.5bn — more than it borrows!

Unemployed workers with no

money, and idle factories that can't sell their product — this is the vicious circle the TUC wants to break by spending in the public sector so as to expand production by four per cent.

Expansion always causes inflation and hits the balance of payments, so the TUC proposes import controls and a 'National Economic Assessment' to regulate costs. This should 'take a view on the movements in costs and prices which will support and sustain expansion', and try to iron out inequalities.

In 1975 the employers said that wage cuts were needed to sustain expansion — but what should be done if they make the same demand again, the TUC doesn't say.

However, since they want a mutual agreement with the employers and the government, and since the employers can sabotage the economy if they choose, we won't be giving out prizes for the answer.

The real problem, however, is what happens after the first year.

Every attempt to deal with unemployment by spending money since 1964 has foundered on British industry's failure to invest. The core of the report deals with this problem.

Tory lies exposed

Their claim

WE had to have unemployment because the government was spending too much money

The truth

EVERY unemployed worker costs the government £4,300 in benefits and lost taxes. The total cost to the government is more than it borrows.

Their claim

OUR policies are making industry more efficient.

The truth

EVERY unemployed worker costs the country the equivalent of £14,000 in lost production.

Their claim

WORKERS are pricing themselves out of a job.

The truth

BRITISH wage levels are now the lowest in Europe after Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

The TUC's package for 1982-3

Programme	1982-83 cost (£m)
Public sector investment	2,100
Education and training	1,700
Industrial strategy	600
Nationalised industries' current spending	200
State pensions	750
Social benefits	700
Local authorities	220
Extra health spending	60
VAT reduction to 12.5%	2,000
Total cost	8,300

The TUC proposes a 'five year strategy' and devotes eight chapters to it. Assuming its 35-hour week target is met, it claims a growth rate of four per cent will cut unemployment below a million by 1986.

To achieve this it calls for 'economic planning on a large scale in order to regenerate the economy', reasserting the TUC's demand for £2bn of public sector investment including a million new council houses, rail electrification, Telecoms investment, new power stations, roads and sewers.

Such a programme could indeed

NG FOR JOBS

Fighting now for jobs

By Alan Freeman

THERE are two things the TUC says that everyone can agree with: Jobs must come first; and the economy needs a plan.

The report proves beyond any doubt that controlling the money supply won't stop inflation; profit isn't the key to efficiency; and holding down wages doesn't improve growth.

How can we begin to put forward an alternative?

Thatcher says Britain needs efficient and well-organised industry. Well, so do we. But we have a different idea of efficiency. Along with nearly everyone except Mickey Mouse and the Tories, we don't think it is efficient to have four million people with no work to do.

The starting point of any government policy has to be the idea that everyone should be allowed to work.

This isn't just a basic right — it's the only thing that makes economic sense.

Why isn't this happening? It is because of the crazy logic of profit and the market economy. Only such a stupid system could sack workers because it can't sell goods that the workers can't afford because they haven't got any work.

Investment decisions — including employment — are in private hands. A handful of investors, commanding

billions of pounds, have wilfully squandered investment resources in pursuit of quick profits to create this crisis. They do not have the right to own or control the wealth that we produce.

Even the nationalised industries are being forced to adopt this logic. 'Commercial' decisions have thrown 30,000 British Leyland workers on the dole and forced the GLC to drop the first half-sensible London transport system since the horse.

for the extra steel and buses — and so on.

If this was known there could be a proper campaign for transport subsidies in which workers in all these industries could be made aware of the job benefits.

Conversely British Leyland workers now fighting for jobs need an alternative that shows not just where their product could be used, but what other work would need to be done elsewhere to make proper use of their resources.

But this is just where the TUC plan falls down. It doesn't set out to give this kind of lead. For example, although it calls for 1,200,000 new houses, it doesn't explain how much steel, concrete, glass or paint this would use. Indeed, it is forced to fall back on import controls precisely because it doesn't foresee taking any detailed control over the economy.

But this kind of information can be obtained. During the 1974 miners' strike, for example, the Labour Party set up a special monitoring service to gather information about stock levels and refute Tory lies about the fuel crisis. Why not do the same thing on a much wider scale as part of preparing a proper plan?

No-one knows better what is happening in an industry than the people who work in it. If the TUC and Labour Party were to get shop-floor workers from different industries together to help draw up detailed proposals, even for the implementation of their own plans, it would have a tremendous impact in building a campaign for the right to work because it would prove, in every industry and factory that was affected, just why jobs should be preserved.

Clearly a campaign like this, which would have to mobilise the resources of the Labour Party and unions at every level, would need a simultaneous fight over information disclosure. But what better context for a struggle?

The problem is that this is clearly not what the TUC has in mind. The whole idea of a 'new relation between government, unions and employers' rules out the idea that the labour movement should fight. In 1974-79 the employers simply refused to cooperate with the government until it dropped its industry proposals.

This is why the danger in the TUC proposal is that it will open the way to exactly the same sell-outs we saw under Wilson — the 'National Economic Assessment' will become another incomes policy, 'saving the pound' will be the excuse for cuts and unemployment without end; and the plan will go back on the shelf it came from.

The TUC wants to use its plan just as the *New Statesman* claims — to save capitalism. The labour movement should demand that the TUC and Labour Party take steps towards a real plan by bringing together shop floor workers in all the affected industries, not to arrange discussions with the government, but to discuss action to save jobs and the production of a detailed plan as the spearhead of the fight.



The crazy logic of unemployment

The idiocy of a system under which it is 'efficient' to have four million people out of work: Unemployment is part of a vicious spiral in which falling profits lead to wage cuts and job losses; workers cannot then purchase goods which remain unsold, leading to factory closure and further sackings.

There is no way out while investment is still controlled by private owners looking for the highest profit. Only planning can end this insanity.



lead to a big expansion of jobs and services. The problem is how to do it, how to overcome the employers' resistance and how to stop any future government giving in. The TUC wants a 'revitalised National Enterprise Board' to act as a public sector holding company.

This can be used to 'lead and direct' investment in the rest of the economy.

The problem is that this is just what the Wilson government was asked to do by the Labour Party. What should be done when the bosses refuse to play ball? It is here that the report dissolves into the same vague 'carrot and stick' proposals that shipwrecked the Industrial Strategy.

It is full of 'government incentives', 'more democratic involve-

ment' and special government agencies, but doesn't say how to organise the one special government agency which could implement a serious plan to save jobs and living standards — the working class itself.

One glaring conclusion leaps from the report — a conclusion the TUC doesn't draw. If the bosses won't invest to save jobs then workers themselves must take over their factories and banks, so that they can themselves plan for their own needs and for the needs of everyone in Britain — except the rich whose crazy logic has created this mess.

When planning is a more and more urgent demand for those whose jobs are daily sacrificed to the god of profit, the TUC's proposals risk being little more than another burnt offering.

TUC proposals for public sector investment

Item	Cost (£m)
House construction and renovation	1,000
Nationalised industries	500
Energy conservation	125
Road building	50
Education capital spending	65
Health capital spending	60
Urban programme	300
Total	2,100

The proper way to use the economy's resources is to plan — not with bureaucrats, but by letting working people themselves decide how to use the factories they work in and the wealth they produce.

Can it be done? Using the government's computer, the TUC has proved the obvious: that the resources are there if we want to use them.

So any proposal — however limited — to take control of these resources and get them out of private hands should be welcomed.

A plan should not be a wild scheme for the distant future. Workers facing the sack need to show how their jobs could benefit society, expose the criminal waste of closures and put forward serious alternatives in order to win support. This is the value of plans like the Lucas Aerospace alternative plan.

The limitation of most 'alternative plans', however, is that they deal with one sector of the economy. They either give in to the argument that 'there is no demand', or fail to link up with workers in other parts of the economy.

What is needed from a plan is an account of how production and use in different industries fits together.

For example, we should know how many buses would be needed in a proper system of subsidised transport; how much steel is needed for the buses, how much electricity and coal

Solidarnosc - new national resistance formed

By Davy Jones

A NATIONAL commission of resistance has been established in Poland by leading members of Solidarnosc who have escaped the regime's military crackdown. At a secret meeting in Gdansk one month after the imposition of martial law the twelve most senior members of Solidarnosc still at liberty in Poland set up the new commission.

In documents recently released to the West the commission reports that it will 'act as the chief organising body of Solidarnosc until:

★ The withdrawal of martial law and the restoration to full legal status of Solidarnosc;

★ All imprisoned and interned Solidarnosc members, students and intellectuals are freed;

★ A meaningful dialogue is undertaken between the ruling body and Solidarnosc members under the leadership of Lech Walesa.

'The Solidarnosc Resistance Commission is the natural progression of the National Commission convened in Gdansk and takes upon itself the responsibility to co-ordinate the conspiratorial activities of the union throughout Poland.'

There are further reports of a growing resistance movement. In Wroclaw a number of factories went on a go-slow on Friday 29 January to protest the proposed price rises in consumer goods. On 13 January, one month after martial law, workers at the Elwro plant observed one minute's silence.

The authorities have sentenced more than one hundred persons for their participation in the riot in Gdansk at the end of January. New information on the riots reveals that more than 3000 mainly young people took part, throwing molotov cocktails at the riot police, who

responded with water cannons and tear gas.

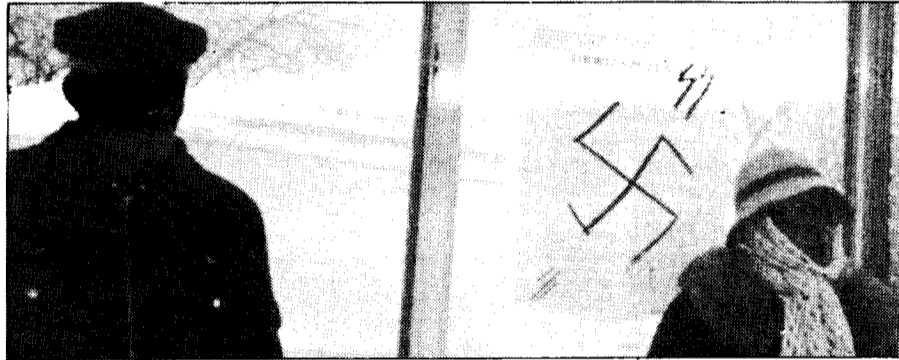
The clampdown continues in the universities. The students who have been allowed back to college face extremely harsh new regulations aimed at stamping out political opposition. Students will now be liable to face instant call-up to the armed forces at any time, and expulsion from the college on missing just one class without a medical certificate.

The ruthless purging of dissidents is continuing in every workplace and within the Communist Party. Officials have admitted that at least half a million members have left the party in the last six months, most since the imposition of martial law. Hardliners in the party grouped around Stefan Olszowski and Albin Siwak are orchestrating a purge to remove anyone with even a trace of 'liberalism' such as deputy premiers Barcikowski and Rakowski.

Despite the appeals from Archbishop Glemp for 'moderation' the Polish workers are under no illusions: the regime has no intention of allowing Solidarnosc to re-emerge as a nationally organised independent movement. It will take the mighty strength of the international labour movement and the unstinting resistance of the Polish workers to force them to back down.



Miners carry out a dead comrade from the Wujek mine, murdered by the security police in December



Martial law announcement poster defaced in a Warsaw bus shelter

Solidarnosc visits Brum

By Val Coultas and Chris Palmer

IT IS Thursday morning at the Grand Hotel in Birmingham, and the two Solidarnosc representatives, Piotr Kozlowski from the Ursus tractor plant and Marek Garztecki the deputy chairperson of the Polish jazz association, have just arrived for a press conference fresh from their tours of Manchester and Scotland.

The Manchester Massey Ferguson plant had passed the same resolution as at Coventry where the workers have agreed to black all spare parts coming from the Ursus plant. The *Evening Mail* correspondent asks eagerly if the management is supporting the workers in this action. Marek replies that he doesn't know, but wouldn't it be a good idea if the parts came from Bathgate in Scotland instead which they had just visited.

The Socialist Challenge and Revolution press representative points out that unfortunately Britain doesn't have a planned economy, so the bosses can do what they like here. The Solidarnosc representatives stress that they are collecting money not just for human aid as the official agencies are doing but for the families of internees who are not receiving any help in Poland.

They point out that these families know that

the word Solidarity really means something. Marek explains why they are asking trade unionists to support them: 'We are not politicians, we are not asking them for support as trade unionists. Our general aim is simply for people to be released and for Solidarnosc to be allowed to operate.'

Asked about their views on Reagan's satellite show, Marek replies that the Hollywood bonanza does not have a single person from Solidarnosc on the programme. Solidarnosc was not asked if it wanted the programme. 'We have met people from El Salvador and Turkey and martial law is a bad thing wherever it is. It doesn't matter who makes the guns.'

Referring to the resistance movement they point out that Solidarnosc is far better organised underground than many people think. 'We're optimists', explains Marek. 'The military may be good

at taking power but they're no good at producing. They're desperate to find someone from Solidarnosc to talk to them. They've not been able to find a single member of the Solidarnosc executive that's willing to.'

They also enlarge on the resistance going on in the factories. Two days before 18 January no cars were produced at all at the Polish Fiat car plant. Then on the third day up to 150 were produced. Kawenka prison is a stone's throw from Fiat, so it seems they were using prisoners from Kawenka to make the cars. When you buy a Polish Fiat you're buying some part of slave labour.

Finally the Solidarnosc representatives are asked by Socialist Challenge if they think free trade unions will emerge in other Eastern European states

Marek says that Polish people know that strikes have been going on in the Soviet Union since last summer. One third of Polish territory has become part of Russia. 'We have lots of Polish relatives in the Soviet Union. As long as the working class exists the workers will demand their rights. I hope Solidarity is contagious.'

Solidarity Committees with Solidarnosc

Birmingham Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Roger Murray, 28 Blackford Road, Birmingham 11. Ring 021-773 5396.

Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd, Glasgow, G43. Ring 041-632 1839.

Greater Manchester Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Jon Silberman, 51 Montrose House, Crete St, Oldham, Lancs. Ring 061-620 2885.

Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, 10 Park Drive, London NW11. Ring 01-458 1501.

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.

Polish Solidarity Campaign, 69 Edinburgh Rd, London E13.

Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group in UK, 64 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, London SW5. Ring 01-373 3492.

Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Co-operative Bank, 110 Leman St, London E1.

Oxford Labour Committee on Poland, 468 Banbury Rd, Oxford. Ring 0865 58238.



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Solidarity with Solidarnosc

Open annual general meeting of Lancashire County Association of Trades Councils

Saturday 13 February, 1.30pm

Speakers include: Piotr Kozlowski, Solidarnosc trade union working group in UK and Oliver MacDonald, Labour Focus on Eastern Europe.

Revolution/Socialist Challenge Solidarity with Solidarnosc

Huddersfield: Thur 11 Feb, 8pm at Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St.

Oxford labour backs Solidarnosc

ALMOST 200 people attended a rally in defence of Solidarnosc in Oxford on 21 January. The meeting, called by the Oxford and District Trades Council, was addressed by Michael Koslowski, a member of the Solidarnosc trade union working group and a shop steward from near Warsaw. There were also speakers from the East Europe Solidarity Campaign and the Trades Council.

The speakers stressed the importance of the workers in the big British Leyland car plant in Cowley to establish links with their fellow workers in Poland. They also emphasised the need for unity in action between those fighting NATO and the nuclear arms race through CND, and those fighting to defend the Polish workers against the Kremlin and Warsaw Pact bureaucrats.

The rally established a local defence committee, the Oxford Labour Committee on Poland, and called for a demonstration in the town for Saturday 20 February. A tour of the Oxford colleges is planned for a member of the now banned Polish student union, the NZS.

Solidarity with Solidarnosc

Oxford 20 February 2pm Cowley Rd hospital March to Ruskin college for rally

300 march in Brum for Solidarnosc

Some 300 people marched through Birmingham last Saturday to support Solidarnosc. There were contingents from several Labour Parties, from COHSE and NATFHE. The march ended with a rally chaired by Roger Murray of Sparkbrook Labour Party, where Paul Mackney of the Trades Council pointed out that we had to support the struggle against Tebbit if we are to support the Polish workers. He read the 21 points of the Gdansk agreement, and pointed out that only six would be acceptable to Thatcher!

He was followed by Les Felton, national executive member of ASLEF who presented the ASLEF strike as a symbol of workers' struggle in Britain. He was interrupted by members of the Polish community who wanted to know what this had to do with Poland. Next came Piotr Kozlowski from the Solidarnosc trade union working group. 'We do not want a capitalist system in Poland. We want rule by the workers, democratic rule.' He received a standing ovation.

After a speech from a representative of the Polish women's group on the position of women in Poland and a vague speech about freedom from Ernie Hunt, district secretary of the AUEW, the final speaker was Marek Garztecki.

He spoke about the aims of the movement in Britain, reading out the demands of Solidarnosc for an end to martial law and for the prisoners to be freed.

Solidarnosc was 'obsessed with democracy'

PIOTR KOZLOWSKI and Marek Garztecki have spent the last few weeks touring Britain to build support for Solidarnosc in the labour movement. Kozlowski was a senior steward in the Ursus tractor plant; Garztecki a journalist and broadcaster with Warsaw Radio, and also a shop steward.

One of the points they are most anxious to explain is that Solidarnosc was a genuine mass workers' organisation under the control of its members. As such it could not be manipulated by anybody.

This is how they described the emergence and development of Solidarnosc in an interview with **DES TIERNEY** and **MARTIN METEYARD** for Socialist Challenge.

Piotr, can you explain how Solidarnosc came into existence in Ursus?

PK: Ursus is about eight kilometres outside Warsaw. So in one sense it is a bit cut off. But Warsaw, although it's the capital, has never been a main centre of working class activity. It was actually from Ursus that Solidarnosc sprang up throughout the central Mazowsze region.

You have to go back to the 1976 strike, in which workers from Ursus played a leading part. In general, Solidarnosc took root most quickly where these problems had already been aired.

Another thing you should know is that we were all pretty young at the time of the 1976 strike. We hadn't had to bear so many years of repression, and so we were more prepared to do something about it.

There were a group of us who started to meet for discussion. People like Zbigniew Bujak, who became the regional chairperson of Solidarnosc; Zbigniew Janas, the head of Solidarnosc in Ursus; Arkadiusz Czerwinski; as well as myself. We got literature through the KOR.

Strange to say, the most important things KOR gave us were official documents like the Polish constitution and the Labour Code. It was the first time we'd been able to read them — the authorities just used to quote extracts at us out of context. This was the first chance workers at Ursus ever had to find out about their real rights. We also got information about the level of official corruption, Poland's debts to the West — that kind of thing.

So a lot was going on at Ursus well before August 1980. For instance, we had three strikes earlier in the year which were never reported. We held meetings during the stoppages, and from talking about basic living conditions we rapidly got on to more political questions. The fundamental one of course, was who was selling out Poland.

When the workers of Gdansk went on strike, we were organised enough to avoid the problem of separate unco-ordinated stoppages. Instead we sent delegates to Gdansk who took part in the meetings that agreed the 21 demands. We decided to wait for them to report back before going on strike. The threat was enough.

After the Gdansk Agreements were signed, it was suggested that the right to form free trade unions only applied to the Baltic Coast. That's when we had to act quickly.

What we did was to set up a 'Founding Committee' for the union. Our small group went round the whole factory — that's about 18,000 workers — and in each section we addressed mass meetings to explain the situation. Each time we asked the meeting to select two or three delegates (depending on the size of the section) to go to the founding committee.

One thing we asked them to make sure was that these delegates had not been involved in corruption in any way; also, that they should not be people linked to the official unions. So most of them turned out to be very young — Janas for instance, whom I mentioned before, is only 28.

Within a couple of days the committee was together and functioning. We had to do it very quickly before the government had a chance to react and clamp down again. So that the union existed.

How did the union develop then?

MG: After that the crucial thing was waiting to see if they would agree to register the union officially and recognise its statutes. As you know there were a lot of problems — but finally it was done.

PK: In Ursus we set a date in mid-December for proper union elections. Each section held a mass meeting to elect representatives to function at three separate levels: the section, the department, and the factory as a whole. So the committees at each level

were all made up of directly elected representatives, and no one could hold a post at more than one level. There was too much work involved for anyone to do more than one job properly.

For instance, each departmental committee had separate commissions to deal with health and safety problems; pay and conditions; culture and sport; and housing. And the factory committee had no less than twelve commissions dealing with specific questions. Then there were the commissions, which meant you had to go to the regional office in Warsaw....

MG: It was the same with us. I was on the commission dealing with music and that alone meant meetings once a week for the whole evening.

What was happening with the old official unions while all this was going on?

MG: They still existed. After all, they had a huge apparatus with hundreds of paid fulltimers, and they hung on to most of their old wealth and resources.

PK: We didn't have a closed shop, but I represented about 1,180 out of the 1,200 workers in my department. That's quite a few CIA agents, isn't it?

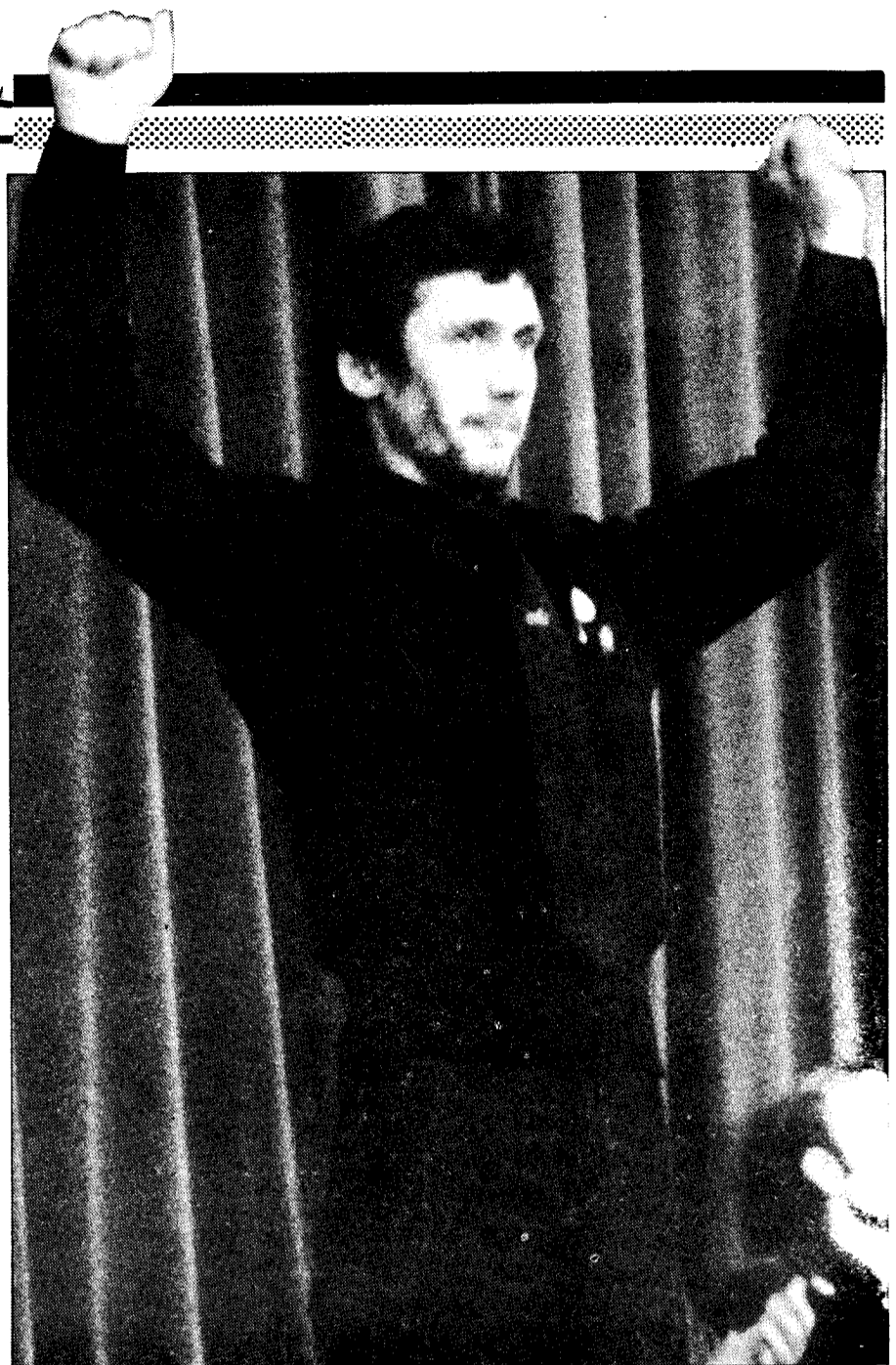
Overall I would say that around 15,000 out of the 18,000 workers in Ursus were in Solidarnosc and many weren't in any union at all. By last summer perhaps 500 were still members of the official union. But of course Ursus wasn't typical — it's a stronghold of the working class.

In smaller factories the official unions were perhaps stronger. As a general rule, you could say that the bigger the factory, the more support there was for Solidarnosc.

MG: That really underlines the character of the union. I would say that something like 90-95 per cent of industrial workers were members of Solidarnosc. But the proportion was much less among white collar workers — perhaps only a half.

How did you make sure that no bureaucracy developed in Solidarnosc?

PK: We did everything we could to make the elected representatives responsible at all times to the members of the union. So no one could hold office for more



Piotr Kozlowski

than two two-year terms. For the first term, you could not be declared elected if the position had been uncontested. And you had to win fifty per cent of the votes plus one to get in. For a second term, you had to get seventy five per cent of the vote plus five!

We could get paid time off work for union business, but this certainly wasn't a privilege. For example, as a representative at the departmental level I was paid by the company for sixty hours' union work a month. The rest of the time I did my job as normal.

But my wage dropped by a quarter because I didn't qualify for bonuses or anything like that. In fact some of my colleagues who worked quite a bit of overtime ended up with almost twice what I got. There were no perks, believe me.

One other thing I should mention: at every

level we also elected a body known as the review commission which acted as a sort of watchdog on behalf of the members. It had free access to all documents, books and so on. This was true even at a national level. The national committee had to make its documents available if just one of the fourteen regional review commissions asked to inspect these papers.

MG: I myself was a member of such a review commission. I was elected in mid-term — the old review commission was recalled and replaced by the members.

PK: That's another point — elected bodies at every level could be recalled on the demand of only twenty five per cent of their electorate. That's because we thought that making it fifty per cent would make it much easier for people to

take advantage of apathy to hold on to their positions. It would have made the union vulnerable to manoeuvres.

Of course, you can say that perhaps we were taking things a bit too far. But after thirty-six years of no democracy at all, we wanted to go as far as possible towards total democracy.

MG: It had some fairly startling results, too. Three months after Solidarnosc was formally established, no more than fifty per cent of the workers who had originally been elected still held their posts. If they did the slightest thing wrong they were out. The workers simply weren't prepared to settle for anything less than total democracy.

Elections were held on the basis of who would best defend workers' rights. You presented yourself and would then be grilled on all sorts of questions — sometimes very personal, such as your drinking habits! It would take up at least an hour of the mass meeting.

In some ways Solidarnosc was obsessed with democracy. The smallest question could lead to a meeting lasting hours. People were tasting freedom at last, and they tended to go overboard a bit. It was a reaction to the past. For instance, when decisions about strategy were passed down from the regional committee, the normal reaction was to reject them and make your own decisions!

But all in all I think the democracy of Solidarnosc was a very good school for the people, because it taught them how to exercise their rights. That's something they won't forget no matter how hard the repression.



Kozlowski, third from right, links arms with Ellen Monaghan (Lee Jeans)

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Continuing our extensive coverage on the Polish events, Socialist Challenge is holding a special educational school for supporters this weekend in London.

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BRIGHTON: The Public House, Little Preston St.
BRISTOL: Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.
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MILTON KEYNES: Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.
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LEICESTER: Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Leicester, and V Karia, 53A London Rd, Leicester.
LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1
LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays

What's Left

RATES for What's Left: 5p per word or £4 per col inch. Deadline: noon Sat prior to publication. Payment in advance. Phone 01-359 8180.
NAC/LARC Trade Union Cttee. Public Meeting on DHSS restrictions on abortion rights. Defend the doctors! Stop the prosecutions. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, 7pm, Fri 22 Feb. Speakers invited include Terry Marsland, Judy Mallaber.
LABOUR Committee on Ireland. Discussion on southern Ireland election. Thurs 25 Feb 7.30pm, Briton's Protection pub, Gt. Bridgewater St, Manchester 1. Open to all LP members.
SOCIAL for Republican Socialist Prisoners Fund at Hackney Labour and Trade Union Club, 96 Dalston Lane, London E8. Sat 13 Feb 8.30pm. Irish traditional music by An Rince and guests. £1.25, 75p unwaged.

SC Events

EMERGENCY fraction for Socialist Challenge supporters to discuss the situation regarding the prosecution of doctors for giving abortions on non-medical grounds. Friday 5 Feb, national centre. All London branches to send a representative.
SCHOOL on women's oppression and the fight to build a women's movement. Sponsored by Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth. 13-14 March, County Hall, Waterloo, SE1. Creche provided. Open to all Socialist Challenge supporters. Tickets: £3 for rally and school. Write to J Arkwright, PO Box 50, London N1.

MANCHESTER SC sold 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.
NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. Every Friday outside Newcastle University between 1-2 and outside Newcastle Polytechnic between 12-1 every Monday.
OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel: 061-682 5151.
OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.
SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.
STAFFORD: SC on Sale Market Sq Sat lunch-time.
STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).
SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat, Regent St (Brunel Centre).
TESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Midlandsbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.
WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; and Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.
YORK: on sale every Thursday, dole office Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Coney Street 11-1.

London

BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.
EALING: SC sold Thur, Ealing Broadway tube, 4.30-5.30pm.
ENFIELD: SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.
HACKNEY: SC on sale on estates throughout Hackney, at public meetings, and local factories. Contact us c/o PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NF or phone Megan or John at 359 8288.
HILLINGDON: SC sold Fri, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; Sat 10.30-12.00 outside Woolworths, Uxbridge shopping centre.
ISLINGTON: SC sales every Wed, 5.30-6.30pm at Highbury tube; every Fri 8.15-9am at Highbury tube and Holloway Road tube.
KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.
LAMBETH: SC sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
NEWHAM: SC sold Sat 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Mkt, Upton Park.
PADDINGTON: SC sold at Portobello Rd market Sat at noon.
WEMBLEY: SC sales Fri 6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

Inn Rd; Colletts, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn High Road, NW5; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centerpiece, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC, Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's; Village Books, Streatham; Tethric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk.
SOUTHAMPTON: October Books, Onslow Road.
YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

SHEFFIELD CND/Latin America Solidarity Front public meeting 'Central America, Peace or Holocaust?' Speakers: Jon Snow (journalist); FMLN/FDR (El Salvador) representative; Richard Caborn (Euro MP). Thur 11 Feb 7.30pm AUEW House, Furnival Gate.
'POPULAR MUSIC': 'Black Labour in Britain', 'Racism and Commonsense', 'Women in the Media' - these are just a few of the subjects from our list of stencilled papers, average price, 50p. Free list and order from CCS (SPI), University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.
WANTED: young man to join family team and live in, all needs found: The Monkey Sanctuary nr Looe, Cornwall. Must like animals, music and be a socialist. Please write. State age, phone no and send photo. Len Williams.
FREE the Bradford 12 national mobilising conference Sat 27 Feb, County Hall, London SE1, 10-5. Details from Azim, phone (01) 328 4523. Social follows at Africa Centre, Covent Garden, with live band and disco. £2.
SOCIALIST CHALLENGE RALLY FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY Fri 12 March Camden Centre off Euston Rd. Doors open 5.30pm. Meeting starts 7.30pm. Invited speakers include: Mary Vinns - United Mineworkers of America, Socialist Workers Party; speaker from Nicaragua women's movement. Bookstalls and displays on show. Light refreshments. Entrance £1; 50p unwaged.
RAIL FRACTION: Saturday 13 February 1.30pm, venue to be announced.

Review

Joyce: 'The finest Irish genius that no one can read'

By Terry Eagleton

'CAN YOU not see, James Joyce once wrote to his brother, that a deferment to the proletariat, a reaction to clericalism or aristocracy or bourgeoisie would mean a revulsion to tyrannies of all kinds.'

These words weren't exactly over-quoted in the carnival of media adulation which last week greeted the centenary of Joyce's birth. For the cultural establishment, Joyce is a precious example of the writer's remoteness from politics - a high priest of art, cloistered and esoteric, whose incomprehensible novels provide intellectuals with a rather more elevated version of the *Times* crossword puzzle. Since he also wrote about Ireland, this snobbery can be mixed in with a good dash of patronage. Earthy, drunken Irishmen with thick brogues fall amusingly around in his books, and he wasn't averse to a quick tittle himself.

It's a pity he didn't fit the stage-Irish bill more exactly by actually dying of drink, but he was certainly a freak, as how could any major artist produced by tin-pot Ireland not be? He did however have the good sense to leave his clodhopping compatriots to their bacon, and cabbage and head for the high cultural centres of Europe, where, oblivious to the rest of humanity he holed himself up with a typewriter and produced two enormous novels, which few of us have read but which all of us agree are, not least for a peasant, superb.

Different

The real story of James Joyce is rather different. Born into a Catholic lower middle class Dublin family in 1882, he was part of the class which spearheaded the Republican movement. But when he wrote of the need for a 'deferment to the proletariat', he was criticising, as a socialist internationalist, the most negative aspects of Irish Republicanism.



James Joyce was born 100 years ago last week. He is one of the great masters of English prose, who revolutionised the form and structure of the novel. The setting for his writings was his native Ireland which banned his works during his lifetime.

From adolescence, Joyce struggled against the stranglehold of religion, sexual repression and sentimental nationalism over his country, and saw just how these were entwined with Republicanism. He satirised the Church relentlessly, debunked the pretensions of upper class Irish patriots who idealised the 'indomitable Irishry', and scandalised Trinity College Dublin, by fiercely defending the radical, sexually candid art of Europeans like Ibsen against the pious pap which the Irish censorship allowed.

Exile

Forced into defiant exile, by the bigotry and oppressive backwardness of his own nation, Joyce did indeed trek to the high cultural centres of Europe but his early friends there were often enough socialists in exile from

their own countries, and he praised the work of the Italian Marxist Labriola. Unable to overcome the contradictions of Ireland in political action, he proceeded to lay bare those contradictions in his art.

His two great novels, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, mockingly undermine the sedate realist fiction beloved of bourgeois England. They play havoc with a language - English - which was not originally that of his own people and rip apart the assumptions of conventional middle class readers. *Ulysses*, which was widely banned as obscene, is both a blistering satire of Irish provincialism and in its hero, Leopold Bloom, a celebration of those who refuse such limits. *Finnegans Wake*, which the *Daily Express* of the time describes as worse than a journey through the 'alien territory of Soviet Russia', respects no linguistic

boundaries and strikes against the power of patriarchy in its subversive explorations of the unconscious.

Inertia

Joyce was aware enough that the stagnancy and spiritual inertia of Ireland were the products of British imperialism. If he satirised that condition, he is also the comic humanist who affirmed what was still vital in Irish culture. If he retreated from Ireland to exile, he also kept in the closest touch with political developments at home. If in the end he had nothing left to him but his typewriter, the fault should be laid finally not at his door but at that of imperialism and the Church. Joyce wrote part of the real history of his nation, and by leaving Ireland, for literature put his country indelibly on the international map.

The Ballad of James Joyce

By Terry Eagleton

To the tune of Home Boys Home
 Well now who'd be taught Jesuits, unless you have no choice
 But that's the fate that lay in store for little Jimmy Joyce
 They lashed him and they smashed him though he could hardly see
 Until he turned around and said 'two fingers Lord to thee'

Chorus:
 Well it's Bloom, boys, Bloom
 Bloom I'd like to see
 Tucked up in bed with his sweet Molly
 For the Pops and the dopes and the petty bourgeoisie
 Made his life a hell in the south country
 Well Jim's daddy was a drinking man who idolised Parnell
 And his mammy was a pious lass who lived in fear of hell
 But neither hell nor Parnell struck Jimmy as much cop
 Compared with Nora Barnacle but there I'd better stop.

Chorus:
 Well he had a spree at TCD proclaiming Ibsen trumps
 Till pious professors landed him some spiritual thumps
 'You're a traitor to your country Sir and your religion too'
 So Jimmy turned and growled again 'two fingers Sir to you'

Chorus:
 What with clerics and Sinn Feiners our Jim was in a mess
 So he upped and off to Paris and to Zurich and Trieste
 With love and hate for Ireland at war within his heart
 He learned what can't be done in life can still be on in art

Chorus
 So he settled down in Trieste town and produced a mighty tome
 It's all about two geezers one a Jew and one ex-Rome
 And a buxom lass called Molly who's quite a little duck
 But the High Court didn't like the way she kept on saying...

Chorus
 Well one day there came his way, a catchy tune from Dublin town
 About a man call Finnegan who's dead but won't lie down
 Now Jimmy said to Nora 'well the air is pretty rough
 But it would make a dandy piece of writing sure enough'

Chorus
 So he took ten tons of paper and twenty parts of ink
 And he took the Oxford dictionary and flushed it down the sink
 And he wrote the quarest book Sirs that you will ever find
 Two sentences are quite enough to make you blow your mind.

Chorus
 Well it's mostly 'bout this woman called Anna Blourabelle
 But it might be about Mao Ze dong for all that I can tell
 It's the book of books, the myth of myths, it's really rather fun
 It's the English language rolled into one great stupendous pun

Chorus
 Well now since Jim went to heaven his fates been sad indeed
 He's the finest Irish genius that nobody can read
 But he took old Ireland by the scruff and put her on the map
 And there's few of your Sinn Feiners that can say better boys than that

Leopold Trepper

I WAS disappointed to see no mention in the paper of the recent death of Leopold Trepper.

Trepper, although not a Trotskyist, nevertheless ranks as one of the heroes of our movement. Repelled by the crimes of Stalinism in the 1930s, he did not desert to imperialism but instead rallied to the defence of the Soviet workers state in the world war which he (unlike Stalin) could see was approaching.

As head of the 'Red Orchestra' spy ring he provided key information about Nazi war plans which, despite the criminal bungling of Moscow, laid the basis for the eventual halting of Hitler's offensive against the Soviet Union, and thus changed the course of history in favour of the working class.

His reward from Stalin for this service to humanity was to be thrown in jail on his return. In criticising the bureaucracy for its errors, Trepper had been too loyal to the workers state. Only in 1954 was he released.

Trepper's autobiography, *The Great Game* (Available as a Sphere paperback), is a fascinating account of how a communist militant survived and resisted as best he knew the betrayal of the revolution by the Stalinists. It should also make us proud of our own movement. In Trepper's words:

'All those who did not rise up against the Stalinist machine are responsible, collectively responsible. I am no exception to this verdict.'

'But who did protest at that time? Who rose up to voice his outrage?'

'The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honour. Following the example of their leader, who was rewarded for his obstinacy with the end of an ice-axe, they fought Stalinism to the death, and they were the only ones who did...'

'Today, the Trotskyites have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed.'

Continuing to cling to and fight for that programme today in the spirit of the Trotskyists of the 1930s is the best tribute we can pay to the memory of Leopold Trepper. His struggle was not in vain!

TOM MARTIN
Scotland

Changes in rape laws

JANUARY 1982 has seen unprecedented media coverage on the question of rape — on television, radio and in the newspapers.

In Glasgow — 'the rape case' where three youths charged with rape and attempted murder, have escaped prosecution, the papers have led with the story for about ten days.

It is not enough for us to be outraged and appalled at the unfairness of the Scottish legal system (and there are important dif-

ferences here). We have to say what we want done.

The Women against Violence against Women group picketed the Procurator Fiscal's (the public prosecutor) office in

We were asking the basic question, still unanswered — why were the charges dropped?

We have to be very careful in supporting the changes in the law which have been sug-

gested by various groups. If I might first dispose of one option — that of a private prosecution. At present, the steps are being taken for the raped woman — Carol X — to pursue a private prosecution against the accused youths, and everyone would be happy if she succeeds — although it is very dubious whether the youths could now have a 'fair trial'.

Summary justice has already been dished out to one youth, who had his ear cut off.

A private prosecution costs an enormous amount of money (although I am sure this will be forthcoming, from one of a number of sources) but it will only help one individual. It cannot be used as legal precedent.

Another option, supported by Judith Arkwright in Socialist Challenge 231, for a minimum custodial sentence for rapists is very much on the wrong

to be such a change in the law, juries would be less likely to convict knowing the accused would definitely go to jail.

And it means 'bargaining' could be done, whereby the accused could plead guilty to a lesser charge — say serious assault. It also gives the police another lever to dissuade a rape victim from pressing charge. It also centres the discussion around the accused man, rather than concentrating our efforts on making the ordeal of reporting a rape easier for the woman.

Another suggestion for changing the law is that the woman is allowed to give evidence in writing. This is a very delicate situation.

The only courts which allow written evidence just now are the Diplock Courts in Northern Ireland — and this facility is abused all the time by the police, since no cross examina-

tion is allowed.

But there is no doubt that a number of women do not press charges because they cannot face the ordeal of the court, especially the often brutal cross examination.

There is surely a case to allow the woman to submit her evidence in writing and any cross examination would be conducted with only the judge and jury present — clearing the court of press and public.

We must always remember, however, that the most disturbing factor in rape cases is that only one in four women ever reports her rape to the police and substantially fewer cases ever come to court.

The Rape Crisis Centres have called for changes in the police procedures in treating women who have been raped. We must continue to publicise the way rape victims are treated and try to change attitudes towards women who have been raped or assaulted.

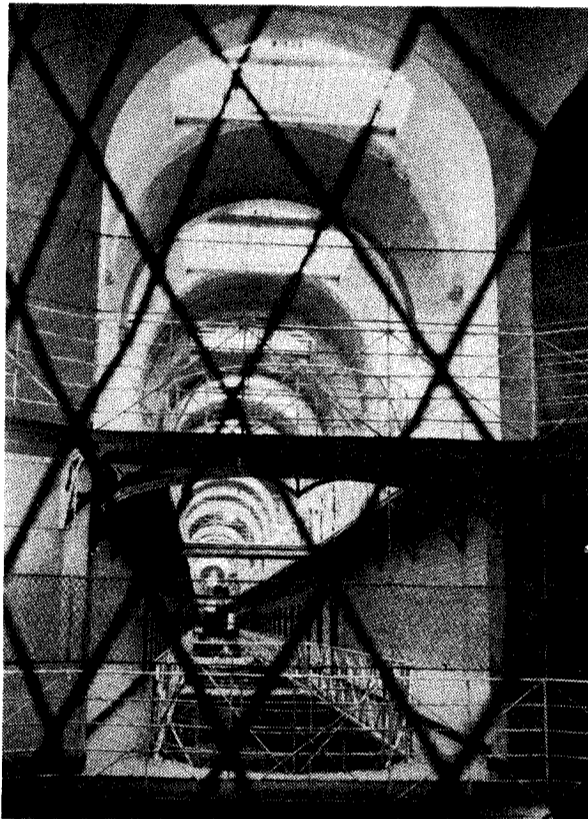
No amount of changes in the law will change a society which treats women as second class citizens and as somehow responsible for the violence perpetrated on them by men.

These kinds of changes will take far more than tinkering with the law.

MARION KEOGH
Glasgow

Letters letters LETTERS

Glasgow on Friday 22 January, and got favourable coverage.



gested by various groups.

If I might first dispose of one option — that of a private prosecution. At present, the steps are being taken for the raped woman — Carol X — to pursue a private prosecution against the accused youths, and everyone would be happy if she succeeds — although it is very dubious whether the youths could now have a 'fair trial'.

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The political formation of the bureaucracy

By Ailean O'Callaghan

Last week we established the existence of the labour bureaucracy — a privileged layer with its own interests against those of the working class. This week we look at the political background to the emergence of this bureaucracy.

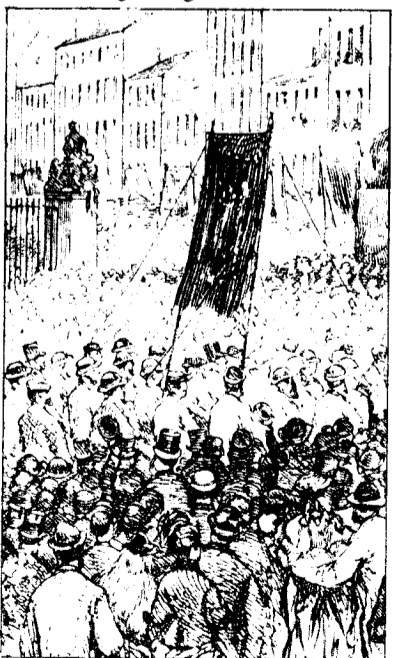
Freidrich Engels wrote of the labour aristocracy to Marx in 1858. He said, 'The British working class is actually becoming more and more bourgeois so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat as well as a bourgeoisie. Of course, this is to a certain extent justifiable for a nation which is exploiting the whole world'.

It was with this labour aristocracy that the political traditions of the modern union bureaucracy were born. The skilled workers who remodelled their own family life in imitation of the capitalists, who made a national chauvinistic outlook and anti-Irish racism part of their own ideology were the same ones who formed the first, really stable trade unions, the great 'Amalgamated Societies' and 'Friendly Societies' of the last century with their large and comprehensive benefit schemes for members. The motto of these societies was 'Defence Not Defiance'.

As in economic affairs, so in politics. Their political allegiance went to one or other of the two capitalist parties, usually the Liberals. The Reform Act of 1867 and the Ballot Act of 1872 which extended the

franchise to the labour aristocracy and no further, cemented this alliance between the top section of the working class and the employers more closely.

Disputes did occur and strikes did happen, but by and large negotiations were enough to get a settlement for



this upper layer. Consequently although these unions had salaried staff they were almost entirely for the administration of the benefit and financial affairs of the unions. There were some exceptions. Those unions which employed salaried staff for the conduct of trade disputes quickly marked themselves off from the rest

and served as a prototype for the organisation of the later general unions.

The number of full-time trade union officials is tiny and insignificant in relation to the vast army that is the British trade union movement, two or three thousand bureaucrats in relation to some twelve million organised workers. The strength of the bureaucracy is not its social but its political weight as a transmission belt for the pressures of the ruling class into the working class.

The historical basis for this is a split in the working class which developed in the second half of the last century, in the second phase of the development of capitalism. In the preceding period the bosses extracted surplus value by driving down the general conditions of the workers.

Workers were forced to work very long hours for as small a wage as possible. All available labour power was utilised — female and child labour outside the home became extensive for the first time. Exhausted or sick workers were simply replaced from the vast reserve pool of unemployed agricultural labour.

Wages were clawed back by the 'truck system' in which the employees were forced to buy their goods from stores owned by their bosses at vastly inflated prices, and by a system of fines whereby, for example, a worker could be fined half a day's wages for being 'dirty'... or for washing in the factory!

All attempts to combine against these barbaric conditions were met with the most vicious state repression. Such was the pauperisation of the workers that in a period where the

'nation' grew enormously rich, a male worker in 1850 could only buy 90 per cent of what his ancestor could buy a hundred years earlier.

In these conditions there was a general levelling down of wages. In the most technically advanced and dominant industry wages fell faster than elsewhere, this created the material basis for the mass politicisation of the working class. During the last decade of this first phase, the infant trade union movement and the Radical movement led by bourgeois progressives merged to form the great, revolutionary Chartist movement. Strikes were transformed into political rebellions. It called strikes in support of political movements, and conceived the idea of the political General Strike, and consciously sought political revolution.

The political tradition of the labour bureaucracy was however born in the succeeding period, the second phase of capitalist development and as the polar opposite of the revolutionary Chartist tradition. The Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 which ushered in an era of cheap food first stalled the revolutionary movement, and then new methods of labour exploitation undermined it completely. The factory system was extended to industry in general. A division in function between a minority of highly-skilled workers and the unskilled mass lay at the root of the development of machine-based production in iron, steel and allied industries. The skilled workers dictated the work pace of the majority and through a system of pay differentials



were used by the bosses to establish work discipline in the factories and mines.

As the metal-working trades became the dominant industry the ruling classes developed this labour aristocracy as an instrument of general social and political control. The bosses encouraged this upper stratum of workers to believe they had more in common with the employer than with the working class.

The enormous profits the capitalists were deriving from their monopoly position in world markets and their superexploitation of labour in their vast colonial possessions gave them the capacity to create a privileged minority whose loyalty could be quite literally bought.

Pioneered in the organisations of the labour aristocracy, the emerging trade union bureaucracy learned how to organise, and learned its collaborationist politics at the same time. Next week we will look at the third phase of British capitalism, when Britain lost its monopoly position, the unskilled workers organised, and the bureaucracy became practiced in the art of betrayal.

Cuba and Nicaragua back Polish clampdown

By Phil Hearse

In the wake of the declaration of martial law in Poland, the United States has been quick to seize on the events to whip up anti-communist sentiment. Reagan's crude TV spectacular shows this clearly. The meaning of this degrading spectacle was made clear when the filmed contribution by the pop group *Abba* was taken out because they denounced US intervention in El Salvador as well as the clampdown in Poland.

Menaced most of all by the United States' bellicose response to Poland are the developing revolutions in Central America. Jaruzelski's military *coup* makes it easier for the United States to take military action, even if by proxy, in that region. It is therefore ironic and tragic that both the governments of Cuba and Nicaragua have chosen to firmly ally themselves with the counter-revolutionary actions of the Polish bureaucracy.

Immediately after the Polish coup both the Nicaraguan and Cuban press confined themselves to reprinting the despatches from the Soviet news agency *Tass*. But the Cuban paper *Granma* of 27 December referred to '...measures adopted by the Council of State of the Popular Republic of Poland, conforming to the constitution, in order to get the country out of the economic crisis in which it finds itself, to defend legality and re-establish public order'. This quote refers to the military takeover!

An editorial published in the weekly *Bohemia*, written by the official Cuban press agency *Prensa Latina* talked of the 'subversive and counter-revolutionary activities of Solidarity' that 'parallel union manipulated by a cabal of extremists to provoke economic, social and political chaos with the single and obsessional aim of seizing power'.

Cynical

Prensa Latina, in the issue of *Bohemia* dated 25 December went a stage further: '...the leaders of Solidarity who have no scruples and other illegal organisations continue their destructive activity. The action of these elements has claimed its first victims. On 16 December seven people were killed and thirty nine were injured in the Wujek coal mine, when the forces of order were forced to resist the attacks of provocative elements who were attempting to prevent the workers from going to work...'. Thus the cold-blooded murder of striking miners is cynically

justified in phrases reminiscent of the worst methods of Stalinism.

Press reports indicate that Fidel Castro justified the imposition of martial law in Poland in his speech of January 31, 1982. If this is indeed the case, then it would be no surprise. He justified such action, including a possible Russian invasion, *in advance* in his speech to the 2nd Party Congress held in Havana in December 1980.

Speaking of Poland, he argued that: '...in Poland imperialism is orchestrating a sinister act of provocation directed against the socialist camp' and that 'there is not the slightest question about the socialist camp's right to save the country's integrity and ensure that it survives and resists at all costs imperialism's onslaught.'

The position of the Nicaraguans is no better. The Ministry of Propaganda and Information sent a circular to journalists advising them how to cover the events which states: 'In Poland it is not the working class which is being repressed but counter-revolutionary elements who wanted to deliver Poland to imperialism.... It should not be said that strikes are banned. What should be said is that the regime demands that the economic crisis be solved. The positive elements of the situation should be stressed — the calm and stability and order.'

The Sandinista newspaper *Barricada* states that General Jaruzelski's actions are 'a new policy to preserve socialism' against the 'conspiratorial plans of Solidarity' to take political power. There is no doubt



Fidel Castro

that the Nicaraguan government has taken its lead from the Cubans in adopting this line on Poland.

The Cuban position is within the framework of their foreign policy orientation outlined by Fidel Castro at the 2nd Party Congress. This sees the world divided into two 'camps' — on the one hand the socialist countries, the 'progressive countries' and national liberation movements — and on the other hand world imperialism, led by the United States. At the 2nd Party congress Castro hailed the 'growing family of progressive, revolutionary countries'.

Bloc

Among the countries which he suggested had 'opted for socialism or adopted a socialist orientation are Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Benin, Sao Tome, Guinea, Algeria, South Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Libya. The optic of seeing everything within the framework of the struggle between two 'camps' leads to the designation 'socialist' for a whole series of regimes which are in fact led by bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist regimes, in many cases bitter enemies of the working class.

Moreover, once the 'socialist bloc' rather than the international working class is seen as the main bulwark against imperialism, then anything which is seen as weakening the regimes in these countries, is also seen as aiding imperialism.

The 'two camp' theory not only disarms the Cuban leadership when faced with anti-bureaucratic movements in Eastern Europe. It has implications for every sector of the world revolution. At the 2nd Party congress Fidel Castro referred to 'our brothers and sisters the French and Portuguese Communists who embody the most consistent posi-

tions and ideas of the workers and revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries'.

Fidel's singling out of the Portuguese and French Communists is no accident. He chose them because they are the most pro-Soviet, the most faithful defenders of the so-called 'socialist' camp.

Aims

Despite the distortions wrought on Cuban foreign policy by the two-camp theory, it is true that the Cubans do support the extension of socialist revolution in Central America. They understand, albeit empirically, that the extension of socialist revolution in Central America is the best way to break their own isolation in the region.

This position is in contradiction with the framework of Soviet foreign policy — peaceful coexistence — which aims to preserve the status quo and thereby holds back and strangles revolutions, Central America included.

The foreign policy orientation of the Cuban leadership is a product of the material pressures upon it, and the ideological evolution of this leadership over twenty years. The most important material fact of the Cuban economy is that it is dependent on the aid received from the Soviet Union. Every position adopted by the Cubans has to be taken with the position of the Soviet Union in mind.

Aid

The material dependence of the Cubans has had a profound impact on their ideological evolution. The close ties with the Soviet Union has more and more made its mark on the way the Cubans see the world.

It is because of this process that the Cubans

have adopted as their ideological framework the two-camp world outlook. It is also why they have adopted positions on major questions of the world revolution that are in agreement with the view of the Kremlin.

But because the Cuban leadership is not the same sort of bureaucratized leadership that exists in the Soviet Union, or the Eastern European states they take positions in favour of the promotion of revolution in Central America which they see as the best way of extending and defending the revolution in Cuba.

Therefore the Cubans take a revolutionary position in relation to Central America, seeking to defend and extend the revolution. But at the same time do not take a revolutionary position in relation to all questions of the world revolution. They do not provide a revolutionary leadership on a world scale.

Since the Cuban leadership is not completely subordinate to the Soviet bureaucracy, and indeed supports socialist revolutions in Central America against the line of the Soviet leadership, it would be quite wrong to define them as Stalinist. Nonetheless, they have internalised a crucial element of the Stalinist world view — the 'two camp' theory.

Thus on Poland, the influence of counter-revolutionary Stalinism has succeeded in splitting important elements of the leaderships of the two crucial arenas of the world revolutionary process. Revolutionary socialists, in the framework of complete solidarity with the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions against world imperialism, will not flinch from criticising their positions on Poland. The line of the Cubans and Nicaraguans represents a blow not only to the Polish workers but also to the workers of Central America, and a grave step in the political evolution of these leaderships.

El Salvador elections fraud

By Megan Martin

THE UNITED STATES and the Salvadorean junta are planning to hold elections on 28 March. But no one should believe that these elections are honest or fair, or that they will put an end to the grisly daily death toll in that country.

The only parties 'campaigning' in the run up to the elections are the extreme right wing parties led by people like Major D'Aubuisson, notorious as a leader of El Salvador's death squads. Some squabbling is going on between the far right and the Christian Democrats over the details of the electoral law.

The far right complains that the Christian Democratic Party dominates the election commission and that this, together with the decision not to use the 1978 electoral register but instead to rely solely on identity cards leaves the way open to massive fraud by Christian democrats.

Other observers have pointed out that the army, which will be supervising the elections is in a better position to perpetuate a fraud. El Salvador has a history of electoral manipulation — the results of the last election in 1977 were never even announced!

The present electoral system requires that any political party wishing to participate in the electoral process must present a list of 20,000 members. For anyone but the extreme right wing this amounts to giving over a 'hit list' to the death squads.

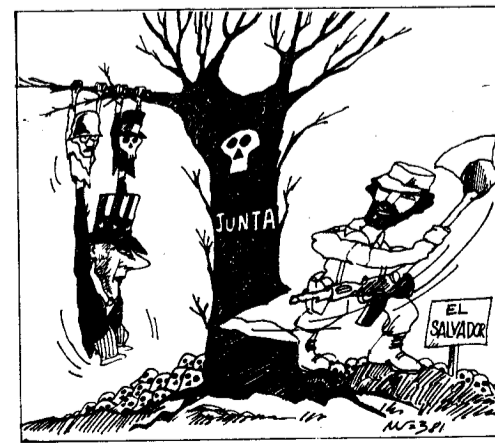
The proposal to hold elections has clearly nothing to do with any 'transition to democracy'. It is an attempt to convince the international community that the situation in El Salvador is 'returning to normal', while at the same time the US pours in massive military aid and re-arms the junta.

The only resolution of the conflict in which the United States is interested is one in which the popular organisation — and in particular the guerrilla organisation of the FMLN — are destroyed. Thus the United States has consistently refused to discuss all proposals for negotiations put forward by the FDR/FMLN.

The United Nations general assembly voted on 3 December for a resolution calling for a negotiated solution to the Salvadorean conflict before elections are held. Even the former US ambassador to El Salvador Robert White has said that it is impossible to discuss elections in the midst of a civil war.

Britain abstained on the UN resolution, and it seems likely that the British government will send official 'observers' to the elections — which will be used by the junta to legitimise its operation.

Our aim must be to force the Tory government to end its support for American foreign policy in El Salvador and follow the example of the French and Mexican governments in recognising the FMLN/FDR as a legitimate political force.



Plessey workers defy order to quit

By Neil Cruickshank

ON MONDAY 25 JANUARY, the workforce at the Plessey plant in Bathgate, West Lothian, responded to the company's intention to close the factory by occupying the premises. But on Thursday 7 February the Plessey company took the workers occupying the plant to court where they were granted an order to end the sit-in.

On Friday, a copy of the court order was mailed to the factory gate by Sheriff officers so that all those occupying would know of the court's decision.

Plessey is a multinational firm, which produces components for electrical circuits, with plants in Italy, West Germany and the USA. Despite the world recession, Plessey's profits are still very high.

The Bathgate plant once employed 2,300 people, but now only 330 remain — including management.

75 per cent of the workers and 90 per cent of those involved in the sit-in are women. The factory does not have a militant tradition but now they are determined to fight to save their jobs. Mounting factory closures in the area — including the threatened closure of the British Leyland tractor plant at Bathgate where the workers are striking means

that there will be no other jobs for them to go to.

George Wilson, the TASS convenor at the factory, told Socialist Challenge that although they would have fought for their jobs anyway, the victory of the Lee Jeans workers was a morale booster for the workers at the plant. He acknowledged the advice which the Lee Jeans workers had given to the Plessey Action Committee.

Decision

He also told us that the determination of the Plessey workers to fight for their jobs had been strengthened by knowing that many of those who had accepted redundancy

at Talbot, Linwood now bitterly regretted their decision.

Redundancy money for the Plessey workers would all have gone after 18 months, but finding another job in the area — where there is 30 per cent unemployment — would be next to impossible.

Plessey workers met last Saturday to discuss the court order, and it was decided overwhelmingly to continue the sit-in, which had the backing of the major unions at the factory. It is clear that the workforce will not be divided or intimidated into submission.

As George Wilson told us, the workforce has shown remarkable

Women fighting back...

A woman's right to work...

Women workers are fighting back up and down the country...

★ In Plessey, Bathgate, women workers have voted to defy the injunction granted to stop their occupation for jobs (see the article on this page). Shop stewards declared that laws which prevented occupations were 'out of step with the needs of working people'. These women like their sisters before them at Lee Jeans are fighting to win.

★ 'Underneath they're all Loveable'. Well women at the Loveable bra factory in Glasgow are showing just how wrong this is. They're fighting back to save their jobs and they're certainly not meek and mild.

★ Divide and rule tactics by management must be fought. Women at the Hoovers factory in Merthyr Tydfil have won their case against discriminatory lay-offs — in law. But the union chiefs who are doing nothing to fight the redundancies are stirring up the male workers against this decision; a thousand workers went on half day strike in opposition to the Equal Opportunities Commission

decision against discriminatory lay offs last week. It's a pity the union leaderships didn't put their energies into fighting the redundancies instead of fighting the women workers.

★ 20 February is a day for everyone's diary. The action committee for a woman's right to work is holding a planning day to build for the 5 June Labour Party day of protest on women's rights. Trade unionists, Labour Party activists and women's organisations will all be represented on 20 February, helping to plan the biggest event on women's rights this century. The planning day is at the University of London Union, Malet St, WC1 — starts at 10am.

A woman's right to choose...

The threat of prosecution against two doctors for giving 'illegal' abortions is just one in a line of attacks on democratic rights. Women are already organising up and down the country for a day of action on 9 February. Make sure you are represented at the NAC/LARC/trade union meeting at Conway Hall, Monday 22 February to plan the next stage of the campaign.

courage in the face of intimidation. One of the women workers, Karen, told us that they were new to industrial action of this

kind and were learning as they went along — but that made them all the more determined. Money is urgently needed.

Send donations to Plessey Fighting Fund, c/o Mary Murphy, 30 Main St, Fauldhouse, West Lothian.

NUS elections: which way for left?

By Ann Henderson

IN THE PAST YEAR, students have been involved in campaigns to defend their right to organise, against the education cuts and college closures, and for a decent grant. Thousands of students have demonstrated against nuclear weapons, joining with young people and trade unionists who have marched against the Tories' policies.

But much of this activity has been undertaken quite independently of the leadership of the National Union of Students, dominated by the Communist Party/Liberal bloc.

Two years ago, this leadership forced through the notion that the union should be primarily concerned with 'student issues'; in this way they cut themselves off from many of the most important campaigns of students and other young people.

The CP/Liberal bloc wants a strategy based on 'negotiation' and compromise with the Tories, which inevitably means retreat and acceptance of some aspects of the Tories' attacks on education. It has prepared the way for important defeats particularly on student union autonomy and more recently on grants.

This year's elections for the national executive of NUS clearly illustrate the options. The Communist Party, although rapidly declining in support among students, is contesting for the post of President on their 'Left Alliance' slate.

The Alliance still involves the Union of Liberal Students at a national level, which wants to continue the policy of compromise and 'negotiation'. Last year the CP duly held on to the Presidency by capturing the votes of Tory students — and doing everything possible to distance themselves from socialist students.

NOLS

An important element in the elections will be the role of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS), which is gaining support in the colleges — 9000 students joined Labour clubs last year. NOLS candidates are standing for some of the executive posts — including President — and have a real chance of winning.

However, the role of the NOLS leadership over the last year does not guarantee that they will organise around socialist policies, placing

elections will be the rise of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The SDP have gained support rapidly among students, capturing a similar audience to that of the Left Alliance. They will be putting up a slate of candidates for the election, and this has split the Liberals. Some want to continue to participate in the Left Alliance, some to ally with the SDP. One member of the SDP slate will be a Liberal.

In any event, it seems likely that the policies of the CP-dominated Left Alliance will not be much different from that of the SDP.

In this situation the NOLS leadership must make a clear

break from the policies of the Left Alliance and the SDP. This means NOLS fighting on the basis of socialist policies, for mass action to defeat the Tory attacks on education, and for NOLS to take the leadership of the union. Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth supporters in NOLS will fight for the adoption of these policies.

Moreover, NOLS should be fighting for a clear policy of alliance with the working class, and against all class collaborationist fronts with the Liberals and Tories. It means a complete break with the Left Alliance, refusing to support any of its candidates, and a fight for the CP to break

with such policies as well.

Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth supporters in NUS believe that the best way to promote the fight for a socialist leadership of the union, to link up with the fight for socialist policies in the labour movement, and to break with all collaborationist alliances, is to be part of the National Organisation of Labour Students, to fight for its victory in the election, and to campaign for it to adopt socialist policies.

Growth

We think that the student supporters of the SWP (SWSO) and the students who remain in the Socialist Students Alliance (SSA), both of whom are standing their own candidates, are cutting themselves off from the most important development in the student movement — the growth of Labour Clubs.

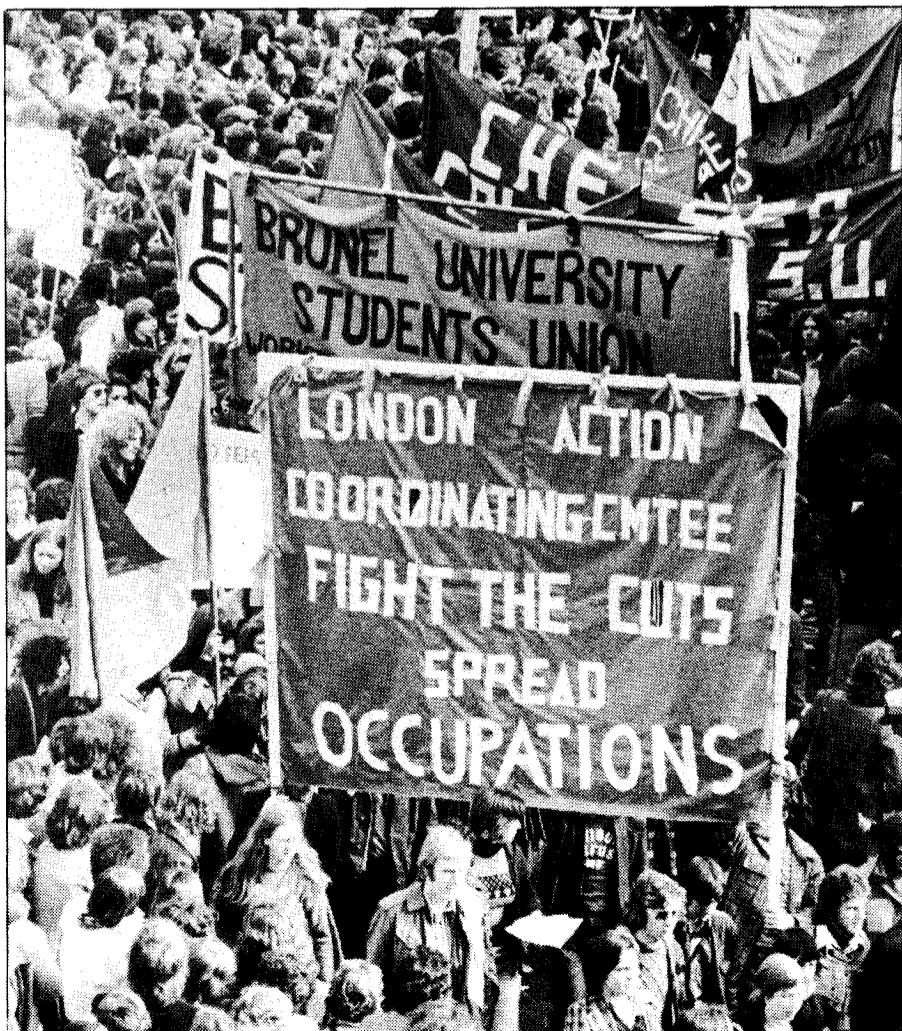
We believe that their 'independent' stance is not the best way to fight the Tories and the Left Alliance. We shall therefore not support their candidates, except where NOLS candidates are not standing. In those two cases we shall support the SSA.



OVER one hundred supporters of Newton Rose, the black youth in London sentenced to life imprisonment for a murder he didn't commit, picketed Wormwood Scrubs prison.

In an unusual development Rose and three friends, who were sentenced to six months for perverting the course of justice have been granted the right to appeal and the three were released on bail pending appeal.

Rose and the others will have their appeals heard in open court on 8 and 9 March.



Mass action way forward for students

Bristol millworkers occupy to save jobs

By Jon Lovibond

ON FRIDAY 5 February the workers in the rusk mill of the T Lucas factory in Kingswood near Bristol occupied against 53 redundancies planned for the end of March.

The factory divided into two sections — rusk production and seasoning — is part of the massive Dalgetty-Spillers corporation.

Management intend to close down the whole Kingswood rusk operation to clear the way for the opening of a modern replacement plant at Birstwith near Harrogate, employing probably one third or less of the present numbers.

T Lucas showed over £2m profits in their October 1981 accounts and a 20.1 per cent return on investment over the last financial year.

Transport union convenor Colwyn Jones described the situation: 'This spice empire was built up by low wages, high investment and 16 hour days, then milked dry by old man Lucas; now they're trying to do the

same thing again. 'It's the typical old capitalist game. All the right wing media — *Evening Post*, *BBC Bristol*, distort the picture. We need to put over the workers' case and to spread the dispute to all the industry in Kingswood and Bristol. Our struggle today is theirs tomorrow.

'It's all part of the Tories' picketing Bill, fighting unemployment and building a socialist future.'

Socialist Challenge supporters in Bristol are organising a solidarity meeting with Tony Benn and leading Bristol militants to build city-wide and national support.

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