

# Socialist Challenge

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Photo: JOHN SMITH (L)

## Train drivers vindicated

By Brian Grogan

THE McCARTHY tribunal report on the train drivers' dispute is a vindication of ASLEF's stand. It recommends the paying of the outstanding three per cent and the placing of the flexible rostering issue back into the normal negotiating procedure.

This favourable outcome is testimony to the determination and solidarity of the train drivers' strike action over the last four weeks.

ASLEF had a much more powerful voice in the Tribunal than the wretched Sir David Walker — even though ASLEF boycotted it.

British Rail thought they could break ASLEF as a union. Instead they got a bloody nose.

But McCarthy also demands that ASLEF give way, in advance of the principle of the eight-hour day.

To comply with this would allow defeat to be snatched from the jaws of victory. Strike action must therefore continue until BR pays up — without strings.

British Rail is still on the trail of carnage. Knowing what McCarthy was going to recommend came out on the eve of the announcement with the threat to axe a further 16,000 rail jobs. It blames this on the drivers' action — despite the findings of McCarthy.

The drivers have opened up the road for all railworkers to overturn the flexible rostering agreement forced down their throats by NUR general secretary, Sid Weighell.

United action of all railworkers is needed around the fight to save jobs — and Weighell's policy of destroying them overturned.

The flexible rostering issue is only the first step of British Rail's efforts to destroy 38,000 jobs.

There are six other productivity points including single person operation of trains and open stations.

The drivers have shown that this attack can be halted. This lesson now needs to be driven home.

See pages 4 and 5 for further information on the rail dispute.

## DEFEND LAURENCE SCOTT'S WORKERS

# THATCHER'S BRITAIN!

By Billy Partlan and Pete Rowen  
Laurence Scott strike committee

'THIS is Thatcher's Britain.' That's the verdict of Laurence Scott strike committee after police smashed up our picket line on Tuesday, the day the police occupied Openshaw in Manchester, where we've now been on strike for ten months.

It was the day when the forces of law and order showed what life will be like under Tebbit's law. The police aided and abetted Laurence Scott management to dismantle machinery and remove motors from the factory. All leave has been cancelled throughout Greater Manchester and 400 to 500 police led

by the Tactical Aid Group (the same as the Special Patrol Group) laid into our pickets as 10 lorries went in the back.

Denis Barry, convenor, was snatched from the 200 strong picket as a diversion and both he and TASS steward, Phil Penning, were arrested. The police made it quite clear whose side they were on despite pleas that they are 'impartial'. They wouldn't even allow the 'legal' six pickets.

Our boss, Arthur Snipe, hasn't only had the co-operation of the police — Tebbit's Territorial Army — but the active support of engineering union leaders, Boyd and Duffy. The

two of them have sabotaged every stage of our struggle. But after ten months fight for jobs, we're taking on Boyd and Duffy as well.

We have launched a campaign, using rule 14 in the union's constitution, to demand a ballot for the removal of the executive.

As rank and file support pours in, Boyd and Duffy have hit back. In a vicious red smear article in the *Sunday Express* and *Daily Mail*, they accuse us of trying to topple Duffy in order to establish a marxist Labour Party and replace Michael Foot with Tony Benn.

Denis Barry is not surprised: 'Boyd and Duffy have to go flying to the gutter press for

help. We haven't got leadership. They're about as useful as woodworm in a cripple's crutch. Duffy told one of us, "I'll tell you what democracy is: it's doing what I say." These people have got a lot to answer for.'

Too right. What happened on our picket line this week is the sort of Britain that the likes of Boyd and Duffy want. They're not concerned with fighting for their members' interests, in fighting to save jobs.

And the other trade union and Labour Party leaders? They've so much to say on Tebbit's bill but where are they when we need them? As Phil Penning said, 'Empty noises against Tebbit are not enough,

we need support for battles like ours.'

The best way to defeat Tebbit is here on Laurence Scott's picket line. We want labour movement support. We want the whole movement to get the engineers to support our rule 14 campaign. Everyone should raise the issue at every Labour Party and trade union meeting they go to.

We want the miners and other trade unionists to black Laurence Scott and Mining Supplies products. With that sort of support we can win.

We're determined to stick it out. Without support, not only will we lose our jobs but what we have seen in Manchester this week will only be a foretaste of Thatcher's and Tebbit's Britain.

### Back the 24 hour picket

Laurence Scott, Louisa St,  
Openshaw, Manchester  
Tel 061 231 4434

Rush money and messages  
of support to G Fryer  
20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire

# Editorial

PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

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## SDP brought down to earth

THE Social Democratic Party was brought down to earth with a bang last week. Its main problem was not the party's precipitate decline in the opinion polls. Nor was it the series of defeats for the leadership at its first constitutional conference — a spectacle which put paid to its much vaunted image as a party above internal dispute.

What plagued the SDP was the unavoidable decision it had to make to vote for the Tebbit anti-union bill. By dexterous footwork, the SDP has so far avoided taking stands which bring it into collision with the trade union bureaucracy. However, the class struggle finally caught up with it.

The vote for Tebbit revealed the real objective of the SDP: to provide a safety net for the Tories ensuring that their attacks will persist into the next parliament. Even if the majority at the next election votes to throw Thatcher out, the SDP are offering themselves as a junior partner in a 'national government'.

The SDP has taken a systematically anti-working class stand ever since its formation. The Tory media's jibe that the SDP is a party without policy is only a half truth. SDP leaders have furiously attacked British Leyland workers, they have denounced the railworkers, given vociferous support to the Common Market and the British 'deterrent' and they espouse a host of other reactionary causes.

It didn't need the vote on the Tebbit bill to know where they stand. But now even the budding 'gang of four' in the trade union leadership — Duffy, Chapple, Weighell and Sirs — have been forced to attack the SDP. Sirs, who was only recently praising the SDP's virtues in his union journal, was forced to describe them now as 'nothing more than pale pink Conservatives'.

This is a body blow to the SDP and why the party split three ways in the Commons vote.

All those involved in the leadership battle are agreed that their task is to divide the Labour movement from top to bottom. The present electoral success does not even go half way. A rather bigger job is required. It has to break some of the unions from the Labour Party.

Such a task cannot be done without breaking the back of the organised Labour movement.

The SDP's problem is the failure of Thatcher to date to succeed in this. The Tories and the SDP are not alternatives. They are terrible twins.

For the SDP to be of lasting significance it depends on the working class suffering a prior defeat. Meanwhile, however, the class struggle doesn't wait. Choices willy nilly have to be made. This is why there is a battle over the SDP's direction.

Hattersley declared last weekend that the Labour Party should seek to destroy the SDP. Good. But if this is to be a serious rejection of coalition with them, then strong words are not enough.

The SDP policies which Hattersley and others spout out have also to be rejected — and the SDP fifth column inside the Labour movement moved from any position of influence. If the Labour leaders took such a road then the SDP would surely be marginalised.

# Labour Party

## Witch-hunt goes on

# No truce from Labour right

By Paul Lawson

OVER THE PAST ten days it has become perfectly clear that Labour's right wing has no intention of respecting any 'truce' in the party. On the contrary: the witch-hunt against the left is going to continue.

Last weekend Roy Hattersley, speaking to a meeting of the Labour Solidarity Campaign, spent his time attacking the left in the most vitriolic terms.

Michael Foot has made his intentions absolutely clear. First, he attacked the Sheffield, Heeley, CLP for not re-selecting Frank Hooley as their MP. Foot said it was a 'deplorable event'. For Foot and the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party the democratic reforms of the constitution are OK so long as they are not used!

The right wing of the party is continuing to pursue their campaign against the selection of Militant supporters as parliamentary candidates.

Meanwhile, the Organisation Committee, against the objections of the right wing, has given its endorsement to Militant supporter Pat Wall as the candidate for Bradford North. But it seems likely that the NEC will overrule the Organisation Committee.

In a long interview with Chris Mullin in Tribune, Michael Foot makes it absolutely clear that he is giving no guarantees that Militant will not be witch-hunted further after the report of the special inquiry.

Foot, Shore and Hattersley interpret the Bishop's Stortford 'agreement' as carte blanche for them to attack the left, while the left wing keeps its mouth shut.

The answer to those who argue that a 'truce' is necessary inside the party has been clearly given by the editors of Labour Herald, whose editors include Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone, in a special editorial.

Socialist Challenge endorses every word. The left must not disarm itself in the face of a continued right wing offensive.



Rees, Healey and Varley. They won't abide by a truce

## Labour Herald

AS THE Tory government prepares to confront the entire movement with its anti-union laws, the Labour Party must ask itself frankly whether it can meet that challenge without first taking on its own right-wing.

Everyone is for unity and working now for the defeat of the Tories at the next election. But the questions are: What kind of 'unity' and how do we ensure that a future Labour government will not betray its supporters?...

The first thing the Party must do is lend unconditional support to all workers engaged in battle against the Tories in defence of jobs, services, living standards and, above all, trade union rights.

The Parliamentary Labour Party does not seem to be able to make up its mind, but we must surely stand alongside the train drivers, the men striking against redundancies at Bathgate and Leyland, councillors and transport workers struggling to prevent the destruction of low fares schemes....

Lessons must be learned from what has happened at local government level since the Tories took office. A failure by the Party leadership to co-ordinate and lead that fight en-

couraged the Tories.

That is why the recent meeting at Bishop's Stortford and the supposed 'peace pact' is justifiably worrying the rank and file of the Party.

The right-wing see Bishop's Stortford as a 'victory'. Despite the denials of those present, there has been no authoritative statement to the contrary.

Therefore Bishop's Stortford adds to the confusion among the Left and in the ranks of the Party....

There can be no compromise with the right-wing on questions of policy or the witch-hunts which were started by the leadership last year after the intervention of the Social Democrats in Parliament.

The fight to confirm the selection of Peter Tatchell as Bermondsey's candidate and the lifting of the inquiry into 'Militant' must not become separate issues for decisions in committee rooms.

So the silence since Bishop's Stortford by some on these questions is worrying for the movement, and must not be allowed to continue.

For if we permit the witch-hunt to go on unchecked and unopposed, how can we ensure

that a future Labour government will be different to the Wilson/Callaghan administrations which so bitterly disappointed Labour supporters and led to the defeat at the 1979 general election?

The next Labour government will face enormous problems. Primarily, it will be confronted with a major economic crisis of capitalism, with devastated industries and millions out of work....

But there is no likelihood of these questions being fought out if the right-wing are allowed to dictate conditions for 'unity' which serve their interests only.

The Party must take sides with every struggle against the government. A failure to do will only lend comfort to a Tory government which grows more desperate every day....

Labour Councils throughout Britain should stand shoulder to shoulder with the unions as they battle for their very existence against laws aimed at taking them back to the days of the Combination Acts. This is the kind of fighting unity the Party needs. Bishop's Stortford should be repudiated and a strategy developed along the lines which leads to victory, not betrayal and defeat.

## 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

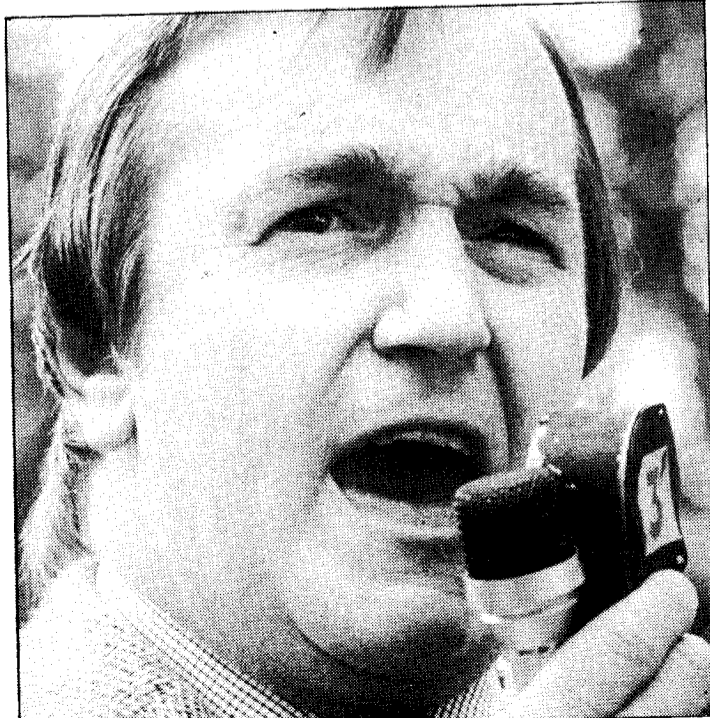
Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

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

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



Ted Knight, and Ken Livingstone two of the Labour Herald editors

## McAliskey election campaign

# Time to start a fight

By Geoff Bell

**THE ELECTION SLOGANS** of the three main parties in the Southern Irish general election are 'Give us the go-ahead', 'We work for all' and 'We do a better job' — in other words meaningless apolitical banalities. Yet when the results of the election are known this weekend they will bring to a close what many commentators have described as the most crucial election in the history of the southern Irish state.

One statistic illustrates why: the foreign debt per head of the population in the south of Ireland is higher than Poland's.

So why the meaningless election slogans, and why are many voters apathetic and cynical about the whole business? The answer is that even by the standards of capitalist parties there is little difference in the recent records or promises of the Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour parties.

Fianna Fail is the traditional Republican party and it will win most seats this weekend. That does not mean that it will form the government.

It won most seats at the last election seven months ago, but ended up in opposition to the coalition between Fine Gael — the most conservative and former fascist party — and Labour, whose politics make Denis Healey appear to the left of Leon Trotsky.

### Fate

The coalition fell from office by the votes of two independents who had previously supported the government. It seems that the new Dail will be similarly evenly balanced. In that respect the fate of independent candidates will be particularly important.

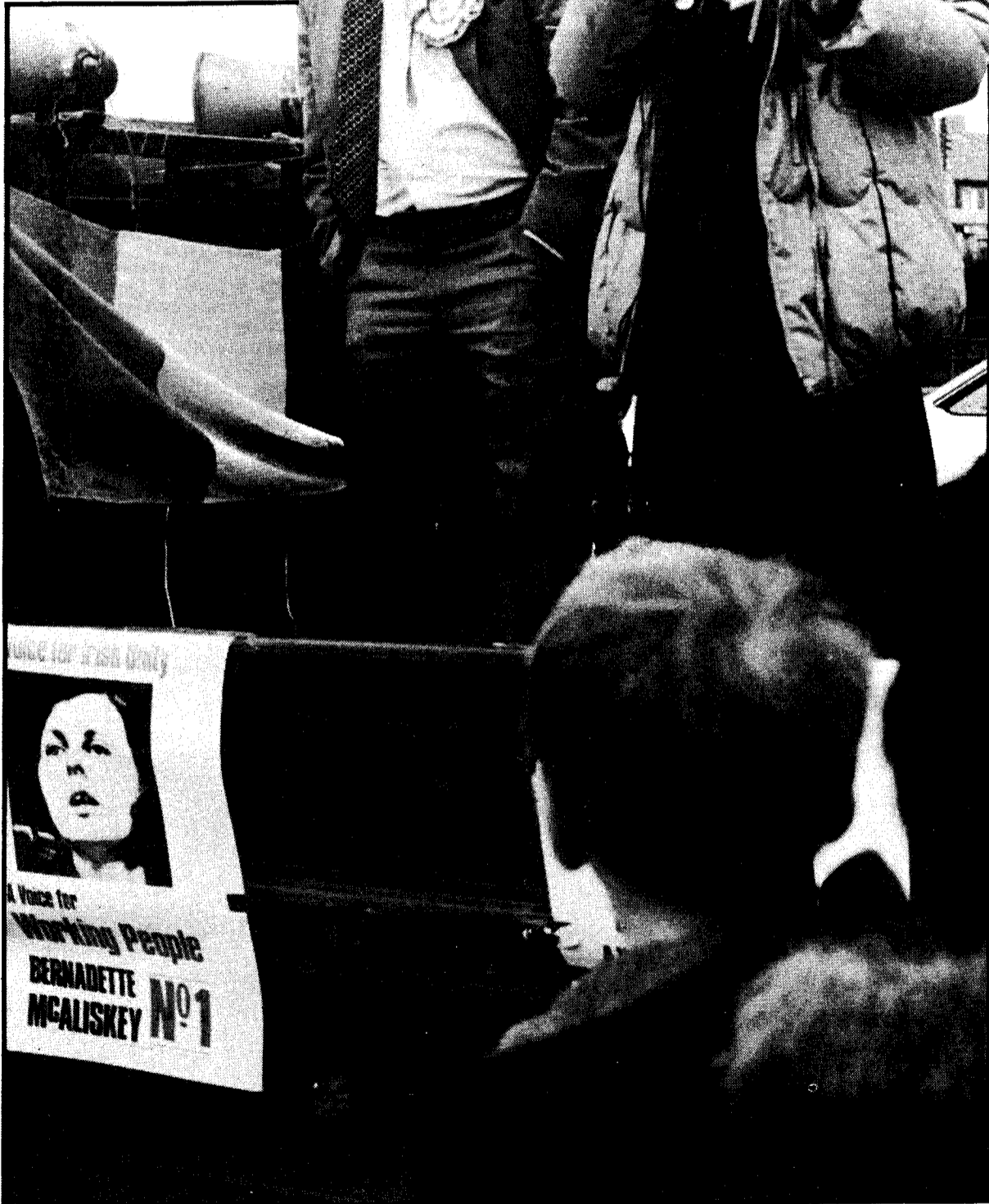
Of those, Provisional Sinn Fein with seven candidates is fielding the largest number. But their chances of success are greatly hampered by a policy of abstentionism, which insists that if elected the candidates won't take their seats.

The best-known independent, Bernadette McAliskey, who is standing as a candidate sponsored by Peoples Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International, has not been so dogmatic. Throughout the campaign she has made it clear that if elected she would take her seat.

But this did not prevent her opponents contending the opposite. Indeed one feature of Bernadette's campaign has been a series of slanders directed against her.

### Secret

It began in the first few days with a report in a Dublin newspaper that she and 400 of her supporters had held a secret meeting in which people were frisked and at which promises were made of illegally obtained money from 'northern sources'. No such meeting ever took place and Bernadette was not even in Dublin on the reported evening.



**Bernadette's campaign has become a focus for the left's opposition to austerity measures in the 26 counties. The campaign ended with the canvassing team having swollen from 20 to 200.**

The next story carried in most papers suggested that Bernadette has asked to be able to carry a gun while canvassing. The allegation had originally come from members of the Unionist party in the north. But that did not prevent it being reported as fact.

Again the story was complete fiction. As well, the McAliskey election headquarters and the election agent have had their phones cut off periodically during the election campaign.

In one way this is all a very big compliment to

McAliskey. The Irish establishment are very worried that she might get in. She is standing in a constituency in which four members are returned and by the middle of the campaign most observers were agreed that she would either win the election or come very close.

### Fight

The message that Bernadette has been hammering home was summed up at a public meeting on the weekend before polling. She said: 'The backs of the

Irish working class are to the wall. If I get elected they'll know we're coming out from that wall fighting. The one enduring instinct working people have is to know when to turn and start a fight. The feeling I get going from door to door is that that time is now.

'I've met people who heard James Larkin speak and haven't forgotten what he stood for. I have met young people who looked at the ten young men who died on hunger strike and that changed and affected them deeply. And so our campaign

has become bigger every day. We started with 20 canvassers and ended up with 200. We are not knocking at doors making promises. We are saying "come and join the fight". We are standing on a ticket to build a democratic organisation which says that the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour.'

The McAliskey campaign has generated much interest from the world's media. Bernadette has been filmed by Belgian, West German, Canadian and US TV. This is not just because she is interna-

tionally famous, it is also because her candidature is one of the few noteworthy stories in an election in which the main parties are to outside observers indistinguishable.

This in turn means that the outcome of the election will mean little change. The only possible

unity and independence.'

In that context, however well Bernadette does there will be a major opportunity after the elections for organising the fightbacks which are bound to come.

As Bernadette told the press conference last week: 'If you go on telling people



new development on a national scale will be the further decline of the right wing Labour Party, whose coalitionist policies have over the last decade lost what substantial working class base Labour once had.

who can no longer have ends meet: that they must pay for the crisis. It is only on telling them that there are no jobs and that they are going to have to stay unemployed, and that even on telling people that their children can't go to



As union leader Matt Merigann said from Bernadette's platform at the weekend: 'The working class are totally bereft of any political leadership. Our campaign is to try to give a lead to the anti-imperialist struggle and give a class dimension to the struggle for national

school, then some day they'll turn on you. As they say in Poland: "A hungry nation eats its government".'

The Irish general election has seen no such feast; but has at least ensured that the knives and forks have come out of the drawer.

## IRELAND: TIME FOR TORY POLICIES TO GO

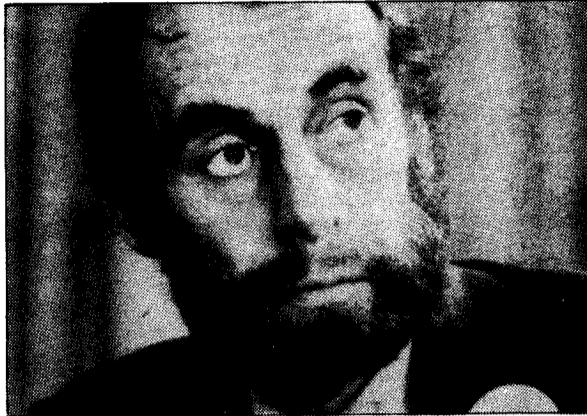
### LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON IRELAND

SATURDAY 20 FEBRUARY 1982  
THE THEATRE,  
309 REGENT ST LONDON W1.

Bernadette McAliskey speaking

# The train drivers need your help

**LES HUCKFIELD** has been the main parliamentary spokesperson for the traindrivers' union ASLEF. He has spoken up and down the country defending the drivers' case. He is actually sponsored by the Transport Workers union but speaks for the drivers' union in the House of Commons because ASLEF doesn't have a sponsored MP of its own. Brian Grogan spoke to him.



**Les Huckfield** their general secretary has been doing and saying and act accordingly.

**Are you supporting ASLEF mainly because it's your parliamentary job?**

No. I fully support the stand that ASLEF has taken. But it's also because my father was a member of ASLEF for 46 years.

**Do you think the dispute is broader than the issue of flexible rostering? It's been suggested that the aim of the Rail Board is to smash ASLEF as a union.**

There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that from the very beginning what BR has been trying to do is, first of all, to isolate ASLEF by doing some sort of cobbled together deal with the NUR and then going for a direct confrontation after

that. The difficulty has been that much of the argument has been on a very technical level and most of the press has been working overtime to conceal the real issues in this dispute. Which is quite simply that last August BR committed itself to paying an additional three per cent unconditionally. They have now ratted on that deal.

**Since a part of the whole plan is to isolate the drivers from the rest of the railworkers, what do you think of Sid Weighell's role? He has consistently taken the side of the Board and tried to put the responsibility on ASLEF.**

Well, far be it from me to intervene in another union's internal affairs. But I do hope that both the executive and the membership of the NUR will take very careful note of what

**But isn't something more serious needed? The drivers are fighting against flexible rostering and job loss as it affects them. But the attack is on all railworkers. Shouldn't ASLEF be making appeals to other railworkers to come out in their support, against Weighell if necessary?**

Let's look at the origins of the dispute historically. First of all, the Board turned down a tribunal

award last July for the three per cent. They then reneged on the ACAS agreement of last August in favour of the three per cent and now Sir Peter Parker has let it be known that he may not abide by the current inquiry headed by Lord McCarthy if that goes in favour of the 3 per cent being paid.

This means that the Board three times running will have turned its back on and rejected an arbitration award in favour of ASLEF. I would hope that this would merit not only support from other unions but also support from the trade union movement as a whole in favour of ASLEF against a management

which has a chronic difficulty in sticking to any understanding or agreement.

There is no doubt that this is not just an isolated dispute of one union against one management. It is a principled stand being made by ASLEF on behalf of the trade union movement as a whole. No union, nor the national executive of the Labour Party, nor the shadow cabinet, nor any part of the wider range of the labour movement can stand on the sidelines. They will have to get involved because fundamental principles for which we have fought over the years are now in jeopardy.

**What should the Labour Party and Labour Party members be doing?**

It would very much help if we could get a declaration of support from the parliamentary party and the shadow cabinet. So far they have been ambivalent if not positively muted on the affair, although Albert Booth, shadow industry minister, has come out of late and declared some support. What needs to be remembered is that the TUC General Council has

given its unanimous backing as has the Labour Party NEC. But much more important have been the many resolutions which have come in from shop stewards committees, district committees and rank and file members of many trades unions.

Despite the usual murmurings from right wing engineers' leader Terry Duffy, there has been the constant volumes of support from many engineering union district councils up and down the country.

The initiative by the Manchester Labour Party including the Labour group on the council to organise a major rally in City Hall is the kind of attempt to secure wider involvement from the movement that will be needed for ASLEF to succeed.

**Would you support the call for a coordinated one day stoppage by NUR members in London?**

Well, this is not the first of the actions by NUR members. If it is going to be more coordinated so much the better. There is no question that this type

of action will help defeat the Board.

**If ASLEF is to win an outright victory, it will have to take all-out action. This will involve it in secondary and flying picketing as well as developing blacking in a way that challenges the Tory anti-union laws. Would you support this?**

There is no doubt about it. It may be necessary to break the law in defence of fundamental trade union principles. The whole movement should back the drivers in this eventuality.

**You are involved in Labour Liaison '82 - a campaigning caucus in the Labour Party which attempts to group Labour Party activists and trade unionists. What should this formation be doing in relation to the ASLEF dispute?**

One of the main functions of Labour Liaison '82 should be the coordination of the various Broad Left movements in the trades unions. I certainly think that the traindrivers would benefit from this kind of liaison.

## ASLEF needs you!

## Manchester Labour Party calls solidarity rally

By Duncan Edwards

**'We can't afford to lose!' said Peter Gunn, (ASLEF Manchester No 1) speaking in a personal capacity at a meeting organised by Manchester Socialist Challenge.**

The speakers, Peter Gunn, Bob Barrow (chair Newton Heath ASLEF) and a Kings Cross guard all agreed the Board and the Tories set the thing up. Like workers at Leyland and British Steel the railworkers had been picketed out.

### Services

'The Tories call us Luddites,' explained Bob. 'It is they who are the Luddites. They want to smash-up British Rail. It is they who want to take us back before 1919 when we won the 8 hour guaranteed day. It is not us that want to go backwards.'

'In the last 30 years the number of footplate men has fallen from 90,000 to 24,000. Any more cuts in staffing levels and there won't be a service at all. 10 per cent of drivers are on the sick because they can't take the stress of the job. In the same period that the workforce has fallen by over 20 per cent the number of middle and senior management has increased by over 30 per cent. It is the workers that are paying for "efficiency" improvements.

'The Tories give British Rail as much cash as they need to smash ASLEF. But when it comes to laying out money to improve the service, they don't want to know. The Board have reneged on their agreement to pay the wage increase, saying it must be linked to productivity by which they mean redundancies. Sir Peter Parker gets a 24 per cent wage increase and only works a four day week. Who's paying for that? It comes out of a cut in our wages and conditions.'

'If we lost the eight hour day, it will mean the loss of 4000 drivers' jobs by 1985. But this is only the thin end of the wedge. With the proposals on the

one-man trains and the open station concept, tens of thousands of NUR jobs are also up for the chop. We are standing up for all railworkers. We need a united fight back.

### Industry

'If the drivers lose, all workers will lose,' explained the guard from Kings Cross. 'A union will be smashed. This dispute is being used to pave the way for Tebbit's anti-union laws. £20,000 for each scab and an attack on the very right to strike.'

All the speakers agreed that unity and solidarity are indispensable weapons. The news that Manchester City Labour Party is to sponsor a rally to help the railworkers get the support they need was warmly welcomed.

### McCarthy Tribunal: It's the small print that's the problem

By Fred Orton-Jones, chairperson Birmingham ASLEF (personal capacity)

The strike is still 100 per cent here. The Tribunal can't come out with any other decision than it came out with previously. It's difficult to prejudge, but I can't see how they can go back on what they said about the 24 per cent. It should be granted separately from any discussions on productivity. The problem is the small print on the productivity issue. If they recommend go-

ing back through the negotiating machinery to sort this out, the executive has got firm directives. They are not allowed to make any agreement that worsens conditions. The problem arises if the Tribunal insists on a commitment by ASLEF to flexible rostering or an abandonment of the principle of the 8 hour day. Then I think the executive will have to consider its attitude.

## Building a new leadership in the NUR

**THIS FRIDAY, 19 February**, a day of strike action and a lobby of the National Union of Railwaymen's headquarters has been called in London against flexible rostering. The meeting of representatives of the 25 London depots that called the action elected a steering committee.

**BRIAN GROGAN** spoke to three of its members — **CHRIS FRANCIS** from Cannon St, and **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** and **PERCY FLOWER** from Streatham Hill depots.

'Friday's action is an attempt to coordinate NUR members' overwhelming opposition to flexible rosterings — and all the other productivity strings that are also in the pipe-line', explained Brian.

'It's the first stage of the battle to get a recall of our AGM (national conference). We intend to go ahead whatever the drivers' response to the McCarthy Tribunal.'

'Weighell claims that 25 per cent of the depots have agreed to flexi rostering,' Chris added, 'then how come I haven't met anyone that supports it?'

'Part of the steering committee's jobs is to develop a network so that we can compile accurate information.'

'Friday is part and parcel of a campaign from below against Weighell. He is not representative of the membership's views.'

But Percy was quick to say: 'This is not an action against the union as some people have tried to make out. Friday's action is part of a campaign to get the NUR leadership to organise national action.'

Chris pointed out: 'You've got to realise that this is the first time that Cannon St guards have got together with Kings Cross and Kings Cross with Paddington and so on.'

'If such an action had happened before, we would be in a much better position. But at least now some serious action is under way.'

Percy explained that Friday's action was still on a knife-edge: 'The Western and Eastern regions will be out. But it's touch and go on our (Southern) region. We've been out a few times over the past weeks.'

'The reaction of management was to lock us out on the three days of the drivers' action as well.'

'This hits our pockets in a big way. So it's a big step to take unless people are convinced that they are not going to be isolated again.'

'We're all being witch-hunted by management,' Chris explained. 'They are searching everywhere for the "ring leaders".'

'Our executive seems to have more sympathy for management than us. We know that the Western region have been called to a meeting with management on Thursday.'

'Members of the NEC will also be in attendance, all pressing to get the action called off. I wouldn't put it past them to use black propaganda.'

'Last time they got it announced on television news that the action by

seven southern region depots had been called off. It was a lie, but it confused everybody.'

'We are fighting to build an alternative leadership,' Brian said. 'This is why whatever happens on Friday is not the be-all and end-all. Hopefully it will represent a new beginning.'

**A further meeting of London guards, signalmen and platform staff has been called for Monday 22 February, Friends Meeting House Euston Rd, London at 7.00.**



### Plessey workers say why they won't quit

**THE WORKERS** at the Plessey plant in Bathgate, West Lothian occupied their factory on 25 January in an effort to save their jobs. Two weeks later the company took them to court and got an order against them to end the sit-in.

**Here we reproduce the statement made to the court by the Plessey shop stewards committee in defence of their occupation.**

Since they have defied the order to quit, the management has sent all the employees dismissal notices. This threatens the redundancy payments of the workforce, many of whom have between 10 and 20 years' service. All the phones into the factory have been cut off by the employers.

Despite the occupation having been made official, funds for the workers have not been coming in as much as they need, and the continuation of the occupation is being jeopardised by this.

Finally, the Plessey workers are the first group of workers in Scotland in many years to defy the courts over occupations. The British Leyland workers at Bathgate felt unable to take the same action when they were served court orders.

This dispute, therefore, assumes a significance much greater than the 300 jobs involved. It could be crucial to the development of a mass movement against the Tory government in Scotland, especially against the attempt to use the Tabbie Law to shackle trade unions.

**All activists in the trade union movement should urgently discuss how best this occupation can be defended.**

**Statement by Plessey Shop Stewards in the Court of Session, Edinburgh, on 4 February, in defence of their occupation of the Bathgate plant in order to save jobs.**

*LET US make it clear that the way Plessey notified the workforce of its intended court action (around 5pm yesterday) has made it impossible for us to seek proper legal advice or representation. Although we have come to court to make our case heard, we come with few illusions about the outcome of the case, but let us make it clear that we feel that this is an industrial dispute, and not a legal issue. If there was any natural justice, then it would be on our side.*

*From the start, Plessey has stated that their decision to close the factory was irrevocable and no discussions with the workforce or the community could change that decision.*

*Plessey stated that all the machines and products were obsolete; we have now exposed this as lie. Plessey have admitted that there are viable products in the factory, and certain machines are going abroad — machines that were bought with huge government and SDA hand-outs over the years.*

*This is a very rich multi-national company with huge profits (around £100m for this financial year) but they cannot pay the workforce one week's wages owing, for work done before the occupation. This is a totally illegal act.*

*In contrast to this, the workforce, who are mainly women, many with decades of service to the company, have conducted this occupation in a most responsible manner — paying careful attention to safety, security, care of machinery, and we are continuing development work during this occupation on products in demand.*

*The workers are not just fighting for their jobs, but are concerned for the future of the community, the young and future generations. Unemployment in Bathgate is at present around 23 per cent and it is estimated that the redundancies and closures at Plessey and Leyland would push it to 30 per cent — the highest in Scotland.*

*We cannot emphasise strongly enough the stark contrast between the attitude of management and workforce. What do the management want to achieve by taking this court action? — 16 days work between now and the end of February, to tidy up their business before closing the factory.*

*In three months, the factory, lying empty, will be no more than a vandalised shell. Is this what the power of the law should be used for?*

*On the other hand what do the workers want to achieve by occupying the factory? — years, not days of work; jobs for the young and a thriving community for the future. Who are the true 'vandals' here?*

*No one should underestimate the support we have in the community, the District Council, and from the MP as well as the wider sections of the trade union movement. There is massive support which is already beginning to be mobilised.*

*Finally let us reiterate that this is a trades dispute and not a legal matter. The workforce are motivated by one admirable objective — to save our jobs and to save jobs for Bathgate. It would be foolish to underestimate the power with which the workforce hold this ambition.*

Money is urgently needed to assist the fight. All donations and message of support should be sent to: Mary Murphy, 30 Main St, Fauldhouse, West Lothian. Tel: Fauldhouse 70924. Cheques should be made payable to 'Plessey Joint Shop Stewards Fighting Fund'.

### Hoover women win their fight

By Judith Arkwright

**WOMEN** at the Hoover factory in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales, have won their fight against discriminatory lay-offs. At the same time they have helped the male workers to save their jobs.

**Management have decided not to go ahead with 140 of the original 200 redundancies. This is supposedly because the economic situation has changed. But in reality, this victory is largely a result of the resistance put up by the women.**

The history of the struggle is not a proud one for the local engineering union. But it holds some important lessons.

When the 200 redundancies were originally announced, the union leadership negotiated a deal whereby the bulk would hit the unskilled women workers. But women workers at the plant — led by stewards Jackie Trailor and Pat Goode — appealed to the Equal Opportunities Commission against such discrimina-

tion and won their case.

They were actually in favour of fighting all the redundancies, but they were not going to allow the local union leadership the easy option of putting the brunt on them.

The local media jumped on this so-called 'sex war' with glee. In fighting discrimination, the women re-opened the whole debate on how the redundancy threat should be handled. The men, suddenly faced with the reality of the scope of the redundancies, came out on

strike — for the first time in the history of the plant. Confused and divided by the misleadership they had received, they directed their action not against the management, but against the women who had had the bottle to fight for their rights.

Ironically, this was the point at which the management caved in. Women workers are now allowed to work on the assembly line and the bulk of the jobs are saved for the time being.

What the favourable Hoover settlement shows is that the fight for equality for women is in the interests of all workers. It is the Tories and the bosses who benefit from divisions.

At this moment in parliament the Tories are considering a measure which will prevent all married women with working

husbands from signing on the employment register. In other words they are saying that married women do not have the right to work.

The Labour movement in its entirety should reject this. It must fight for the right of women to work in order to strengthen the fight of the whole working class. United we stand, divided we fall — and the Tories know it.

Women workers at Hoover, at Plessey's in Bathgate and at Loveable Bra in Cumbernauld are showing how to fight. The whole Labour movement would do well to follow their example.

**Build for the womens right to work event on 5 June. For details write to Joyce Gould, 150 Walworth Rd, Elephant and Castle, London SE1.**

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# CHALK FARM GARAGE

Are you proposing to only collect 10p fares from 21 March on your own?

A: No, we decided that we would send it as a recommendation to the London Bus conference to go forward to the LT unions defence committee where all the unions will be meeting next Wednesday. They'll be discussing the one-day stoppage, which is a first step. Then we'll have hourly withdrawals and then you've really got them.

B: A one day strike, that's just token.

A: But it's the start of the campaign.

B: That's the wrong way to start it. The one hour strikes, the non-cooperation — beautiful. In the last resort, yes then we should strike.

What do you think needs to be done to build public support for any action we LT workers may take?

A: We're going to get our members out and about with petitions and leaflets and letters for MPs. We'll be liaising with Fare Fight. I don't think we should put any reliance on the GLC, even though it is a Labour council.

C: My own opinion is that this fares increase won't go through at all. I think the campaign and the massive publicity might sway things.

A: This Fares Fair is not a socialist policy. It's commonsense. I think the campaign's winnable but we have to watch out for a sell-out on wages and one-man conversions.

B: A lot of LT workers don't understand the situation. Partly because they don't go to branch meetings, but they're slowly coming round.

A: It's up to us, it's up to every branch really. We're going to put out a bulletin. We've had some good branch meetings lately. People are actually coming because they're concerned about this.

What we have to get across is that we're

to be faced with a 30 per cent drop in our standard of living. Our wages and conditions are going to get worse and worse.

Do you see Can't Pay, Won't Pay as a last ditch attempt?

A: It will certainly be difficult to sell to the members because you will be breaking the law and you will get a lot of hassle. I don't think it's necessarily a bad tactic.

But the 10p thing has not been well received. It means putting conductors under disciplinary threats.



Photo: Morning Star

And they're not too happy about the Can't Pay, Won't Pay Campaign.

We'll have to see what happens with the one-day strike. Some of the officials in other garages are very reactionary.

As for an all out strike, we're a long way off having the will among the rank and file membership to actually carry that through. A long way off. I'm afraid.

# FARE FIGHT

## FARE FIGHT FOR JOBS

The recent Law Lords' ruling on London Transport means that fares will double on 21 March. What has not been so clearly publicised is the effect on jobs and services. The revised budget for London Transport will mean 700 buses will go — the equivalent to the scrapping of one bus district out of a total of eight. 1,100 conductors' and 1,100 drivers' jobs will go — and these figures are for this year only and do not include the tubes. London Transport workers face a fierce attack on their living standards. HELEN works on the buses and MARTIN on the tubes. Both are Socialist Challenge supporters and they discussed the situation with Tessa van Gelderen. Afterwards Helen, together with Pam, another bus worker, spoke to representatives from Chalk Farm garage where the workers have decided to collect only 10p minimum fare after 21 March. They were concerned not to have their names printed because of the 'red-baiting' that exists inside the union.

## BUILDING MASS SUPPORT

Tessa: What do you think of the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' campaign and what the GLC is up to generally in response to the Law Lords' ruling?

Helen: My first reaction to the 'Can't Pay' campaign apart from the fact it's pretty impractical, is it's just a cop out on the question of redundancies.

These people on the GLC are saying that it's somehow just a question of fares and so all they have to do is to encourage the consumers to protest.

What I think people like Valerie Wise and Ken Livingstone should do is go round the garages and the depots calling on the workers to take real industrial action and to say that the Labour group will support them in whatever they do whether it's all out strike action or a fares strike.

Martin: What we're confronted with is a political attack which demands a political response. Unfortunately this is what we have not had from the leader on the GLC, Ken Livingstone.

The situation at present in the unions is that some kind of protest stoppage is likely. And a propaganda campaign is being launched. Without a clear political lead this campaign is unlikely to succeed in reversing the fares increases.

I think Can't Pay, Won't Pay campaign is a blind alley. First because it still leaves open the question of where the GLC is going to get the money to pay wages and keep the service running. Second because we don't have anything like the level of political awareness and organisation even among the organised workers let alone the unorganised passengers.

Tessa: It's true that the Can't Pay, Won't Pay campaign by itself won't achieve anything. But the Fare Fight campaigns that have sprung up around London are attracting huge numbers of people, many in the Labour Party and from London Transport unions.

I think the 'Can't Pay' people would see themselves within these general campaigns, and, as Valerie Wise

said, 'a last ditch stand'. But the problem everyone keeps coming back to is 'What can you do? How can you reverse the Law Lords' decision?'

What's the feeling where you work? What do LT workers think is the answer?

Martin: The feeling on the tubes is that we've lost the initiative and a prolonged guerrilla struggle in defence of jobs, wages and conditions is the order of the day.

Helen: At my garage, when the union said there would almost definitely be compulsory redundancies coming up no-one believes them — they've heard it all before.

Many people are opposed to the one day strike being proposed because they don't think it goes far enough or because they see it as a purely political gesture. A lot of people think we should go for an all out strike.

A couple of us on the buses thought it would be a good idea to get other militants together to discuss how we could get the union to do something more than just pass resolutions on organise a one day strike.

About 40 people came at a week's notice just by word of mouth. We decided to call a lobby of the mass meeting of stewards and local reps which is going to decide how the union will fight the fare increases and redundancies.

We're producing a leaflet calling for an immediate one day stoppage which should be on the same day as one of the ASLEF's strikes. It's important for us to build unity with the ASLEF drivers.

Tessa: There's a whole number of campaigns that have been set up on this issue. Do any have links with the transport unions?

Martin: The Campaign to Improve London Transport, which existed before the Law Lords' ruling has been the main organisation in getting all the trade unions on London Transport in a liaison committee and in initiating the conference on 17 February. It also organised lobbies of the GLC and so on. This is the first time ever that all the unions have met on one committee from LT.

Helen: Fares Fight has been organising local meetings which have attracted hundreds of workers. They've been organising people to go out and leaflet London Transport garages and depots.

You must get the sort of mass support that will defend London Transport workers if they do break the law by saying waging a fares strike.

### FARE FIGHT Campaign BENEFIT

THE performance of CAN'T PAY? WON'T PAY! at the Criterion Theatre in Piccadilly Circus on Monday 1 March at 7.30pm will be a benefit performance in support of the FARE FIGHT campaign for the maintenance of low fares on London Transport.

Tickets for the benefit are available from the Box Office, Criterion Theatre, Piccadilly Circus, London W1. Tel. 01-930 3216, Credit Card sales tel. 01-379 6565. Prices £4.00, £6.00, £10.00.

FARE FIGHT is a broad, non-sectarian grouping of London Transport passengers and workers formed to campaign for a change in the law to allow the GLC to reinstate its low fares policy and to prevent both reductions in service and staff redundancies.

For information about FARE FIGHT contact Hannah Mitchell tel. 01-629 5268.

For information about CAN'T PAY? WON'T PAY! contact Rose Glaisher tel. 01-267 6724.



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

# Leyland workers defy Edwardes and the Tories!

By Patrick Sikorski

**'THIS ISSUE is a national one. There are two thousand jobs at stake and the whole future of bus and truck manufacturing in the UK.**

**'I want to know what the national union officials are going to do about this strike for jobs. I want to know what the Labour Party and the TUC are going to do about this issue!'**

That was the statement from Mick Coyne, chairperson of the Leyland strike committee in Lancashire, when he emerged from a morning of talks with Leyland Vehicles management and national union officials at the Charing Cross Hotel, in London last Monday.

The talks were lobbied by 200 workers from all the five plants in Leyland and Chorley representing all the hourly paid and staff unions who have been on strike since 21 January.

The militant lobbyists greeted their convenor with a deafening chant of 'Edwardes Out! Tories Out!' and cheered massively in front of the press and TV cameras when Coyne reported back on the first few hours of talks:

'Defend your right to work! There will be no sell out at Leyland Vehicles! There will be no sell out of the 1855 jobs which management want to get rid of this year. The issue today at Leyland Vehicles and nationally is the right to work!'

The lobbyists were in a determined mood and were as unimpressed by the three van loads of police who turned up and attempted unsuccessfully to move them on as they were by the widely publicised threats by Edwardes and the BL Board to shut down the whole of Leyland Vehicles unless the strike is ended this week.

A senior shop steward said that they were there to give full support to the strike committee and to impress on the full time negotiators and the company that there was going to be no turning back from the basic demands of the strike.

These are: no redundancies; no more outsourcing of components, no transfer of work or hiving off and instead, the maintenance of the manufacturing base in Leyland Vehicles and finally, serious negotiations on the trade union alternatives.

However it's clear that Leyland Vehicles chairperson David Andrews, and his team, were under strict orders from Edwardes and the rest of the Leyland Board who met a week last Wednesday, to have no truck whatsoever with the union demands.

Edwardes and the Tories are determined that the Corporate Plan must be implemented to the last letter. This means the complete phasing out of tractor production at Bathgate in Scotland and its hiving off to private manufacturers, and the reduction of the Lancashire operation to one assembly plant employing a maximum of 2,000 workers.

As Mick Coyne said after the talks: 'We've no democratic rights as far as that lot upstairs are concerned. I thought the days of the Victorian employer who would hire and fire at will were gone.'

'But it is clear that they will sack 2,000 now and 2,000 in a few months and then another 2,000.'

Asked if he had any hope for the negotiations he replied: 'My hope is with the membership and the rest of the work-

ing class movement. We can achieve our aims if the rest of the movement stands up to be counted. They've already closed

**Defend Jobs  
Support Leyland Vehicle Workers  
Smash the Tebbit Proposals  
Demonstration and Rally  
Saturday 27 February**

**ASSEMBLE**  
12 noon Leyland Civic Centre,  
Leyland, Lancs.

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

down Corby, Shotton, Skelmersdale and half the towns in South Wales and Scotland. This has got to stop.'

Faced with the threat of complete closure unless the strike is called off, the union officials were already caving in and running for cover. The AUEW national official with responsibility for Leyland Vehicles, Gerry Russell, could only respond to the bosses' position by saying that if the continuation of the strike meant closure then that would have to be reported back to the membership!

Leyland workers have had the closure threat pushed down their throats for the last two weeks by the local and now the national press and television. The company have sent three letters to every worker's home.

The threats and letters have been answered in the weekly Strike Committee Bulletin which is distributed to every striker and as many households as possible in Leyland.

Defying the latest round of redundancies has meant the truck and bus workers confronting the Edwardes plan and the Tories. To be successful they will have to mobilise the rest of the Leyland Combine.

The Cars Combine leadership must be forced to implement the decisions of the joint Cars and Vehicles combine meeting held a week last Saturday. Most importantly the Leyland strike committee should take advantage as soon as possible of the decision of that meeting empowering them to call a meeting of stewards throughout the whole of Leyland.

**Bathgate workers stand firm after double threat**

By Ralph Blake

**THE 3,500 workers at British Leyland Vehicles plant in Bathgate are standing firm against redundancy — despite threats from BL Chairman Michael Edwardes and JCB, one of the Bathgate plant's largest customers.**

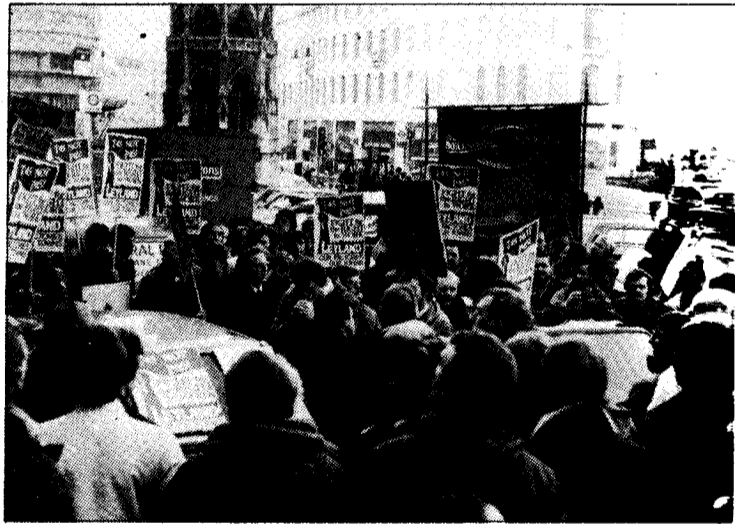
The strike committee decided to continue the strike on Wednesday 10 February in the face of this double threat. Edwardes is threatening to close the Bathgate factory unless the workforce go back to work. And JCB — the Staffordshire based excavator makers, who get their engines from Bathgate — threatened to withdraw their orders if there was not a return to work at the factory by Friday 12 February.

Leyland Vehicles management said that this would mean the loss of an extra 200 jobs at Bathgate. But after the deadline had passed, JCB announced that they were ordering only half the engines they normally get from Bathgate from another supplier.

After the strike committee had decided to continue with the strike, Jimmy Swan, the shop stewards convenor said: 'We are now going into Monday's meeting with BL management in a position of strength.' And another BL worker told Socialist Challenge: 'I'd rather we went down fighting on our feet than be slain on our knees.'



Leyland mass meeting cheers strike on



Lobbying Leyland Vehicles talks

## Support grows for T Lucas

**WORKERS at the rusk mill of the T Lucas factory near Bristol, who occupied the mill to prevent 53 redundancies on 5 February, have not been left to fight alone. A mass meeting of the rest of the 250-strong workforce at the site voted on the following Monday for an all out strike.**

Now the strike committee is campaigning for broader support, starting with a rally on 19 February which will be addressed by Tony Benn MP for Bristol South East, Phil Penning of the Laurence Scott strikers presently fighting closure in Manchester, and Colwyn Jones, the Lucas convenor.

Jim Walker, a member of the strike committee, told Socialist Challenge that the labour movement was already showing a willing response to their

appeals.

'Money has been pouring in from the entire labour movement. Last night we collected over £100 from the City buses branch.

'The CPSA (civil servants union), the Labour Party, the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group have all sent us cash.

'We have been asked to address several labour movement bodies throughout Bristol and Avon, and we've even had money from a retired Lucas worker'.

They have no hesitation in asking for support because, as Howard Cook from the strike committee ex-

plained: 'We have supported the recent fights against redundancies at Laurence Scott and Staffa's.

'We've thought of it as investing in the future. We hope that we will get the same type of support. Then we can get back to normal and start investing again'.

The closure of the rusk mill at the Bristol

site is part of the management's drive for greater productivity. Over the last two years there has been a five to ten per cent increase in productivity.

Now management wants to throw the workers on the scrap heap in order to transfer production to a modern plant at Birstwith near

Harrogate, employing something like a third of the present numbers.

Unions in the Bristol and Avon area are being asked to collect money for the strike fund. Send messages of support, and send delegations to the Lucas picket line. Collection sheets can be obtained from Colwyn Jones c/o Lucas, Moravian Rd, Kingswood, Bristol.



Part of mass Lucas meeting

*Public rally*

**Defend T Lucas-Kingswood strike against redundancies**

*Speakers*  
Colwyn Jones, Lucas convenor  
Tony Benn, MP for South East Bristol  
Phil Penning, Laurence Scott

Linden Hotel, High Street Kingswood  
7.30 on Friday 19 February  
Called by the Lucas Strike Committee

# JUDGES RULE ON TEBBIT'S NEW ANTI-UNION

## The Bill and you — what it says

### POWER TO THE COURTS

The Bill will allow both employers and union-busting organisations to use the courts against workers on a scale not seen since 1901.

\*Unions will be deprived of legal immunity for a wide range of industrial actions.

\*Judges will not only arbitrate but will be able to fine and imprison trade unions as well as award massive costs against the unions.

\*Individual scabs can bring in the courts. Previously only employers could do so.

### CURBS THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

The Bill drastically reduces the right to strike. Only industrial action against an immediate employer will be legal.

\*Blacking goods, organising a solidarity strike, refusing to cross someone else's picket line or supporting workers outside the UK — all this will become illegal.

\*'Political' strikes are also outlawed: so striking against government policies, against cuts and unemployment, against trade with Chile or South Africa can bring the courts down on you.

### UNION ORGANISATION UNDER ATTACK

It will be illegal for employers to sack an employee for non-membership of a union unless 85 per cent of the workforce (by secret ballot, of course) have voted for such an agreement.

\*Closed shop arrangements will be outlawed.

\*A firm can dismiss striking employees without being sued for unfair dismissal. But should a union take action against a non-union member to persuade them to join... you've guessed it, it's illegal.

\*'Union-only' clauses in contracts will be banned.

### ENCOURAGING UNION-BUSTING

A £2m fund will be established to 'compensate' those scabs sacked for refusing to join a union in the last five years. There is a grand total of 400 people who will benefit from this clause, while 4 million are thrown out of work by Tebbit's government policies.

The real aim is to encourage organisations like the 'National Association for Freedom' (now Freedom Association) — which was behind Grunwick's George Ward — to whip up an anti-union climate.

Judges can then claim to be acting 'in accordance with popular demand for the restraint of arbitrary union powers'.



### EMPLOYMENT

secretary Norman Tebbit's new Bill against the unions has been unveiled. It is one of the boldest attacks on union rights since the notorious Taff Vale judgment of 1901, which gave birth to the Labour Party.

Here we explain what the Bill means and how it can be fought.

## What's behind the Bill?

By Alan Freeman

**THE UNIONS have had to fight for their rights from the day they were born. The bosses tried to ban them in the 1830s, bankrupt them in 1902, shackle them in 1927, and smash them in 1972. They failed.**

Union members have had to fight their own leaders for their rights. The shop stewards were formed to break the TUC's wartime 'industrial truce' in 1914. In 1949 Labour used wartime legislation to bring dockers to court. And in 1969 the union and labour left wings united to defeat Wilson's anti-union laws through the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

Have the bosses learned their lesson?

They've prepared the ground with unemployment. They will use the SDP as insurance against a repeal of their law.

But most important of all, Tebbit's Bill is a political attack that aims to build up reactionary popular feeling, isolate the militants and split the unions.

It isn't an industrial relations act: it's an Employment Bill. The Tories say they're defending 400 poor oppressed scabs who lost their jobs because they didn't join unions. They say the 'unions have too much power' and are wrecking the economy. Like all clever tyrants they want to convince the frustrated 'little people' of the country that they defend freedom against the horror that will follow their downfall.

Tebbit is recruiting a scabs' army — of undermanagers, professionals and self-employed. And he'd be happy to sign up demoralised workers who can be made to blame 'strong unions' for their condition.

His arguments are bullshit, but some people will swallow anything. Of course, private capital is causing economic decline — but the unions and Labour Party haven't come up with a clear, democratic and planned alternative. Of course the Tories attack democracy and the unions de-

pend it — but the right wing in the Labour Party have muddied up this whole issue by anti-democratic practices and smear campaigns against democratic reform.

The Tories aim to cash in on this confusion by using the courts. They will claim that resisting an unjust law is an attack on parliament.

Lord Denning has already proved the courts' value. He even says they should override parliament if necessary. He is elected by no-one and accountable to his paymasters. If the labour movement accepts the Tories' term of reference it will play right into their hands.

But these terms of reference are also accepted by Labour's right wing. And this is the danger.

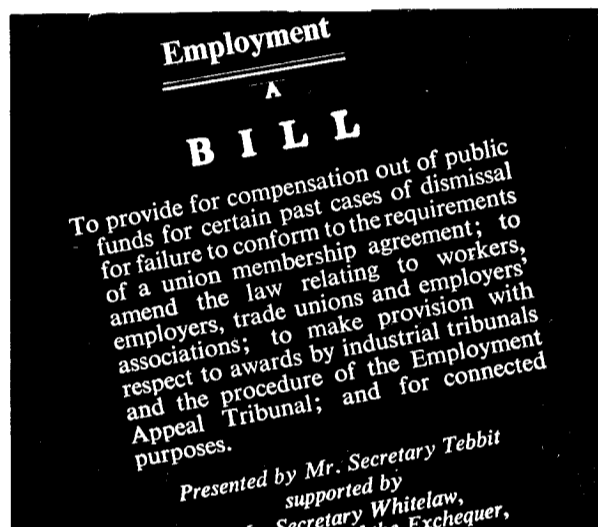
The TUC and Labour Party can smash Tebbit as they did Heath — if they choose. But Len Murray and the AUEW leaders are not calling for a campaign of the same kind as in 1971-72. They want to have talks with the CBI and persuade employers not to use the new law.

This is perfect for the Tories. It will place a selective weapon in the bosses' hands which will be used for steady attrition, in selected test cases. The *Economist* explains what comes next: 'The impact is meant to come when enough cases exist for union legal advisers to tell union executives that "there are clear precedents that such-and-such a strike could put our funds at risk".'

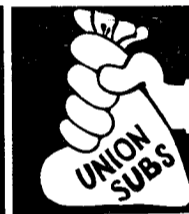
Then the Duffys and Weighells of this world will go to disputes and say 'sorry, brothers and sisters — we'd love to help but our hands are tied'.

This relates directly to the fight in the Labour Party. Foot says he opposes extraparliamentary action. What this means is conflict with the courts or state which speak in parliament's name.

This is glaring hypocrisy. In 1972 the TUC called a general strike to free five dockers, and the NEC — including Foot — unanimously backed it. This kind of resistance — which Bill Keys demands — will defeat Teb-



# HAND OUR U



**NO**  
Tearing up  
agreements

**NO**  
Bankrupting  
union funds

# FIGHT THE

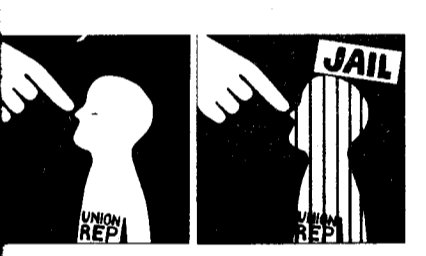


YOUR NEXT GOVERNMENT



Why?  
BILL

Labour Research Department  
OFF  
UNIONS

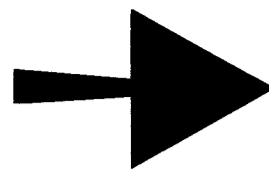


NO  
Trade unionists  
in prison

NO  
Trade unionists  
in prison

TEBBIT BILL

## Why I am inviting people to break the law



By Bill Keys  
General Secretary of the  
Society of Graphical & Allied  
Trades  
Reproduced from Tribune

I do not seek confrontation but I certainly will not flinch from it. It is for these reasons that SOGAT will be inviting the TUC to adopt the following policy:

- 1 The trade union movement to use its collective financial, organisational and industrial strength.
- 2 The TUC to have power to call for co-ordinating action where it is considered that legitimate trade union action has taken place.
- 3 The TUC to set up a special fund to be contributed to on a *pro rata* basis. Let us call it a Fighting Fund and mean it.
- 4 Withdrawal by the TUC from the National Economic Development Council and its associated bodies.
- 5 Withdrawal by the TUC from any government body which has as its objective the application of government economic policies.
- 6 To review activities on other tripartite bodies.
- 7 To instruct trade unions not to sit on tribunals that are dealing with issues arising from the proposed legislation.
- 8 Non-compliance with ballots on closed shops.
- 9 No union must accept funds for ballots.

Does this mean that one is inviting people to break the law? Yes it does, and I will explain why.

The rights of working people and their standard of life were not given by some enlightened employer. Nor were they given by some enlightened government. They were fought for by working people.

We cannot stand idly by and watch this government of reaction destroy our movement. If we are attacked we have the right to defend ourselves and defend ourselves we will.

The making of hostile and unjust laws against the trade union movement is consistent with the state of mind of those people in power which reflects their deep enmity towards the majority of working people.

They are not promoting true law. To be true law, it must nurture life and promote the common good. The government's policies on law do none of these things.

One should remember that Hitler did little that was not legal. The government of South Africa works within its legal framework, imposing the most repressive conditions on the majority of the people, passing regulations that give the appearance of legality to their dark deeds. Mere order and mere law are not ends in themselves. They must be related to life.

It is for these reasons that I shall continue to speak out against this evil government.

# Run Tebbit, run?

By Alan Freeman

IN 1972 Heath's industrial legislation was reduced to tatters. The same could be done now.

If Bill Keys' proposals on this page were taken up and acted on by the meeting of the TUC executives on 7 April; if the rank and file were organised by the Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions from its meeting of 27 March; and if the Labour left organised active Labour Party resistance to the courts and challenged Foot to do likewise, this Bill would not last two minutes.

There are two connected reasons why Tebbit's Bill will not fall so easily as did Heath's.

Firstly, the union leadership is not so ready to resist. Boyd and Duffy's scabbing reflects real advances for the right wing.

Secondly, unemployment and political confusion sown by the leaders have taken their toll of militancy and confidence.

Both shopfloor militants and Labour Party activists face a fight on two fronts. They must stand up to Tebbit in the courts — and to do so they should win over their own members and combat the treachery and cowardice of their own leaders.

This needs politics.

Bill Keys' call to action may not be perfect. But if implemented it would smash Tebbit. At least a section of the union leaders is talking about a fight. But how can it be put in practice? It will not be done, as the LCDTU hopes, by simply 'pressuring' the TUC General Council and executives. If we want action we must first prepare our own ranks. Trades councils, shop stewards' committees, district committees and all bodies of the labour movement should be pledged to:

\*a campaign of resistance to stop the Bill

\*non-participation in the courts if it goes through

\*immediate action to defend anyone attacked using the Bill

Local conferences should prepare days of action and co-ordinate resistance.

Fighting Tebbit is part and parcel

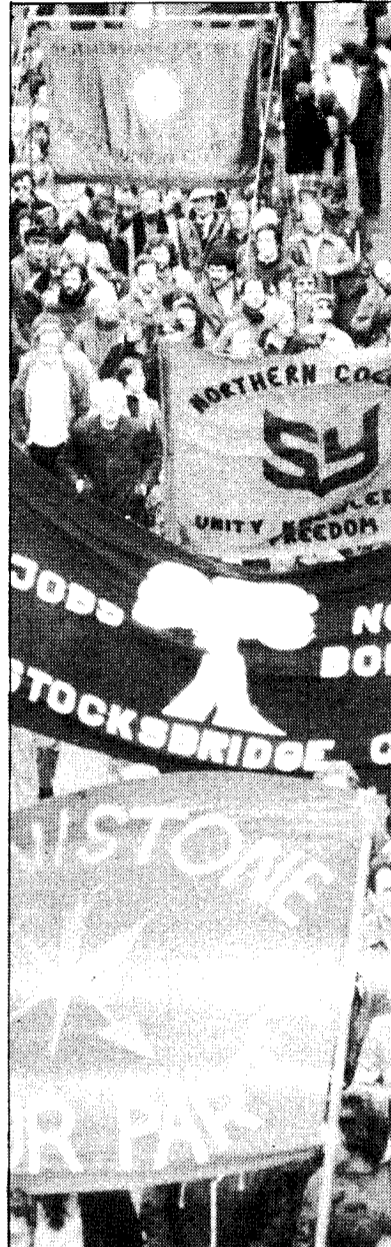


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Tebbit's law would have banned the recent day of action against the cuts in South Yorkshire

of the fight against Heseltine, for jobs, and for democratic rights. In each one of these struggles, it is the strength of the unions we have to call on. Anyone and everyone fighting the Tories should be brought into the campaign.

From this basis it is essential to commit the leaders too. Union ex-

ecutives and conferences should be called on to adopt programmes of resistance, non-cooperation and mutual defence. The TUC and Labour Party should be asked to co-ordinate and lead such activity with a campaign of days of action, demonstrations and if necessary industrial action to stop the Bill reaching the statute books; to support all resistance if it is passed; and to have nothing whatever to do with actions brought under the new law.

But just as important is the fight in the Labour Party. It is useless going into battle with one hand tied behind our backs. Labour's NEC and the PLP right wing reject, and are witch-hunting, the very policies needed to smash Tebbit. Trade unionists and ward activists alike should fight inside the Labour Party to defeat the Healey-Foot team as part of the same fight against Tebbit.

How can this be done? It is a very practical question. Councils have great resources the labour movement can use. Labour Party branches can help co-ordinate action by linking up with affiliated unions at rank and file level.

MPs and councillors have influence and access to the public which they can use, not just by condemning Tebbit but by pledging and organising action in support of every victim of Tebbit and against this unjust law.

It is when the public see that trades unionists under attack from Tebbit and councillors from Heseltine are threatened by the same judges and the same police forces, and are prepared to mount a common defence of each other, that they will understand why the unions must be defended and Labour must be supported.

Every councillor, every MP and every GMC in the country should be asked to support resistance, non-participation, and defence, and take part jointly with the unions in drawing up practical local campaigns of action. Conferences and the NEC should be asked for a firm pledge to take a similar national stance.

The battle between the left and the right in the Labour Party has so far been a battle for policies. The outcome of that struggle is being put to a practical test now. Candidates, MPs and councillors should be judged, not just by their words — but by their deeds.

If this becomes the touchstone of judgment in the Labour Party, the way will be open to a real fighting alliance that can defeat Tebbit and Healey. This is our task.

## The battle of Saltley Gate

By Tessa van Gelderen and Alan Freeman

'THIS will go down in history as the battle of Saltley Gate. The working people have united in a mass stand'.

Ten years ago, with these words, Arthur Scargill celebrated one of the trade union movement's greatest victories. The victory still holds lessons for today.

Unemployment had doubled in 1971 and Heath was preparing, as Tebbit is now, to hurl the courts and police at the unions. But a wave of occupations had proved that it was one thing to have a law, and quite another to use it.

'This is a small firm and it would be possible for a small number of people to get them out', said the only judge to issue a writ in 1971. 'But if it was a big factory you would need 2,000 police with teargas.'

Heath's industrial legislation — to be torn up by the dockers four months later — had provoked huge demonstrations. But he had defeated the postal workers and now prepared

to take on the miners.

The *Financial Times* saw an easy victory. Exactly six weeks later it ate its words. 'In war — and that is what the miners' dispute turned out to be,' it said, 'the active support of the community as a whole is essential. The government failed to obtain it. That is why it lost.'

This support was not won with fine speeches. The miners set out to show their worth to the country by halting all movement of coal. For this they discovered two new weapons — the flying picket and the mass picket.

Saltley Gate coke depot held the biggest remaining stockpile, and police were shepherding 800 lorries through it each day. On Friday 4 February miners began to pour into Birmingham. On Sunday all police leave was cancelled and on Tuesday, after a successful first day's picketing, the bosses and cops went in with everything they had — alsations, iron bars, lorries driven at pickets, and widespread arrests.

By Wednesday they thought they

had won. But the day was being used for something else: nearby engineering factories were being contacted, following the call for support which Scargill had won from the East District Committee of the AUEW and from the Vehicle Builders. A meeting of 400 stewards endorsed the call and the stage was set.

Things began quietly. With 1,000 police, the chief constable thought he could control matters. Then it happened. From Rovers, Acocks Green, from the nearby factories, and from as far as Rover Solihull six miles away, came a human wave — thousands upon thousands — over the railway bridge. The police stood dumbfounded.

'The chief constable of Birmingham took a swift decision,' said Scargill afterwards. 'He said "close the gates".' At 10.45am on Thursday 10 February, the depot shut.

Saltley gates had closed on the coal board, closed on the police, and closed on Heath. But a new door had opened for working people.



The Battle of Saltley Gates — 10 February, 1972

## Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

### Scotland

**ABERDEEN:** SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.  
**EDINBURGH:** SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.  
**GLASGOW:** SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barretts, Byres Rd; Clyde Books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop Collective, Cresswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.  
**HAMILTON:** SC sale every Sat 1-5pm outside Safeway, shopping centre. For more info contact John Ford, 53 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton or Paul Youngson, 18 Forrest Crescent, Hamilton.

### Wales

**BANGOR:** Sat 10-12 town centre.  
**CARDIFF:** every Sat in Bute Town 10.30-12. Also available 1-0-8 Books, Salisbury Road.  
**NEWPORT:** every Sat in town centre 11-12.30  
**PONTYPRIDD:** SC sales every Sat outside Open Market 11-1pm.  
**SWANSEA:** SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.

### England

**BATH:** SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.  
**BIRKENHEAD:** SC on sale at Labour Club, Cleveland st, Thur nights; in precinct outside Littlewoods, Sat 11-12.  
**BIRMINGHAM:** SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.  
**BOLSOVER:** Cross Keys, every Fri 8-9pm, Bluebell 9-10.  
**BRADFORD:** SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.  
**BRISTOL:** SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.  
**BURNLEY:** SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.  
**CHESTERFIELD:** SC sold outside Boots, Marketplace, Sat 11.30am-12.30pm.  
**COVENTRY:** SC available from Wedge Bookshop.  
**HEMEL HEMPSTEAD:** SC sales in Time Square, Sat 10.30-1.30pm.  
**HUDDERSFIELD:** SC sold Sat 11am-1pm, The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.  
**LEEDS:** Sat 11-1 at Lands Lane Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Healds, Arndale Centre, Corner Bookshop, Woodhouse Lane.  
**LIVERPOOL:** SC on sale from News from Nowhere, Whitechapel and Progressive Books, Berry St.  
**MANSFIELD:** Stockwell Gate, Sats, 10.30-12 and 2.30-3; West Gate, Sats 10.30-12; Four Seasons shopping centre, Sats 10.30-12. Phone 653216 for further details.

### Bookshops

**BANGOR:** Rainbows, Holyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.  
**BRADFORD:** Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.  
**BRIGHTON:** The Public House, Little Preston St.  
**BRISTOL:** Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.  
**BIRMINGHAM:** Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.  
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**OXFORD:** EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.  
**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 01-339 8180.**  
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**BADGES:** Make money for your organisation or branch. Huge reductions on anti-racist, Irish solidarity, women's badges and many more. Write for lists of incredibly low bulk rates — from as little as 5p. Free offers for large orders. Send to: SCB Badges, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.  
**BADGES:** Available from Revolution Youth, 20p each plus postage. Big discount on bulk orders. Write to: Revolution Youth, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.  
**BADGES MADE:** Glasgow SC supporters have a badge-making machine, will make badges quickly and cheaply for your campaign/union/Labour Party — and all the money goes back into the struggle for socialism! Write for details/quotes to: SC (Glasgow), PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.  
**POSTERS:** Cheap, good and fast. Order from The Other Printshop, 061-236-4905.

### SC Events

**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 sup-

**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).  
**TEESSIDE:** SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, 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, NW6; 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; Centerprise, 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.

**WHAT is Britain doing in Ireland?** Public Meeting. Speakers: Ken Livingstone, Ernie Roberts MP, Richard Balfe EMP. Fri 19 Feb 7.30 at Stoke Newington Town Hall, Stoke Newington Church St, London N16.

**NAC/LARC Trade Union Ctee.** Public Meeting on DHSS restrictions on abortion rights. Defend the doctors! Stop the prosecutions! Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, 7pm, Fri 22 Feb. Speaker invited include Terry Marsland, Judy Mallaber.

**LABOUR** Committee on Ireland. Discussion on southern Ireland elections. Thurs 25 Feb 7.30pm, Briton's Protection pub, Gt. Bridgewater St, Manchester 1. Open to all LP members.

**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.

**SOCIAL:** Troops Out Movement. Fri 26 Feb 8pm, Hargrave Hall, Hargrave Rd, London N19. £1.50 and £1.

**porters.** Tickets: £3 for rally and school. Write to J Arkwright, PO Box 50, London N1.

**LONDON TRANSPORT** fraction. Fri 26 Feb at 10am and 5pm, Centre.

# Socialist Challenge News

## What's it like to be a woman miner?

By Judith Arkwright

**HAVE YOU EVER** wondered what it's like to be a woman miner? Do you think it's right for women to work down pit? Do you think it's carrying feminism too far? Well, it certainly can't happen here — or could it?

Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth are sponsoring a tour by Mary Zinns of the United Mineworkers of America to debate and discuss all the issues involved up and down Britain between 6 and 20 March. You really shouldn't miss her!

Mary has worked as a miner for three and a half years in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She is on the steering committee of the coal employment project, which is a group of women coal miners helping to get women jobs in the mines as well as taking action around health and safety issues.

Since 1973 some 3,000 women have become miners in the USA, most of whom work underground. Meanwhile in Britain, instead of opening up new arenas for women to find jobs, they're being thrown out of work at twice the rate of men. And instead of women getting into better paid jobs, women's pay in comparison to men's has actually declined since the Equal Pay Act was passed.

### Debated

It's clear that radical new policies are needed to reverse this situation and to challenge Tory moves to push women back into the home.

Positive action policies and other policies to make up for centuries of accumulated discrimination against women are now being debated in the labour movement.

The TUC has taken the position that changing the

present law is necessary to get women into jobs which are now closed to them.

In the United States of America such policies are in operation. How do they work? What would a quota system of women and blacks mean in this country? How do such

policies fit into the general fight for women's liberation?

If you are interested in finding out more then come along to one of these meetings:

**Monday 8 March** — Manchester — Rally for International Womens Day, Lesser Free Trade Hall, Peters Street, 8pm. Organised by NAC and the Action Committee for A Woman's Right to Work.

**Tuesday 9 March** — Birmingham — Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth celebrate International Womens Day — The Fighting Cocks, Moseley

Street, Birmingham 13.  
**Wednesday 10 March** — Glasgow — Phone 041-423 2649 for details.

**Thursday 11 March** — Edinburgh.

**Friday 12 March** — London — Rally for International Womens Day — Camden Centre off Euston Road.

**Sunday 14-Wednesday 17 March** — Sheffield, Bolsover, Nottingham, Leeds.

**Thursday 18 March** — Southampton — Conference Room, Civic Centre, 7.45pm.

**Friday 19 March** — Bournemouth, Fringe meeting at Womens TUC.

\*Mary Zinns will also be speaking under the auspices of other bodies such as on Saturday 6 March — Cardiff, 2.30, Friends Meeting House, International Women's Day rally organised by the Wales Women's Rights Committee.

For further details not listed here phone 01-359 8371. And why not order a copy of our pamphlet? 'A Woman's Right to Work — The Case for Positive Action'.

Contains information, suggestions for positive action policies and a socialist perspective on womens liberation. ORDER YOUR COPY NOW. Price 65p (incl postage).

## RALLY FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

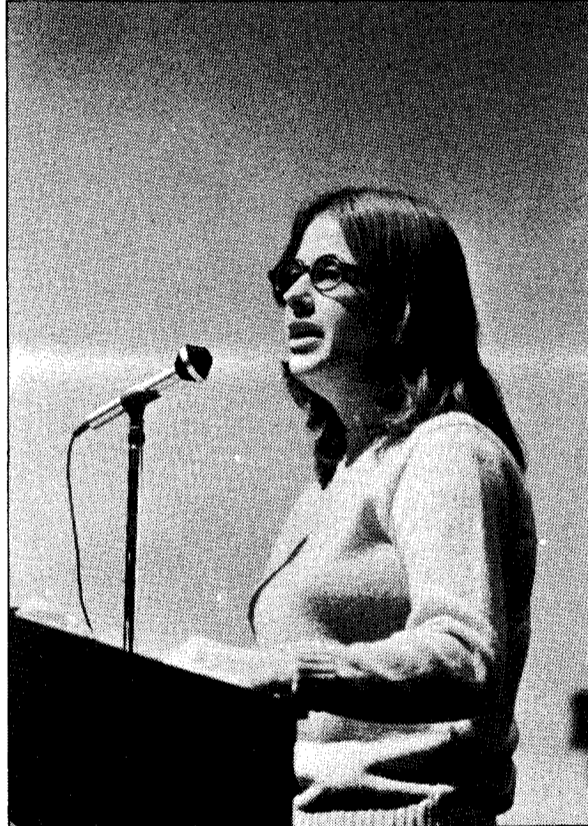
### A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY was first celebrated on March 8th 1913 to commemorate the strike of women textile workers in New York. Since then women the world over have been mobilised on this day to show their strength and to fight together. On Friday 12 March women from different countries of the world will be meeting together to talk about their struggles and the fight for socialism.

Speakers include: **Mary Vinns, United Mineworkers of America and member of the Socialist Workers Party, US.** Speaker from the Nicaraguan womens movement. Speakers from the Fourth International, including Irish section. Speaker from the campaign for abortion rights. Speakers from the action committee for a womans right to work.

Entrance: £1 and 50p unwaged. At the Camden Centre, off Euston Road. Friday March 12th at 7.30pm. Doors Open 5.30pm Bookstalls and displays, light refreshments available

Published by Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1



Mary Zinns — US coalminer

### Books for South Africa

**THIS** scheme, which has now been in operation for some four years, has been playing an ever-increasing role among South African exile groups in many parts of the world. We have been able to send Marxist literature to revolutionaries in Botswana, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and to scattered groups of exiles in Europe.

This was made possible by the generous response to past appeals for money. With the increased cost of books and postage, it is becoming more important than ever that we have a steady flow of income. The best way to ensure this is through bankers orders. All you have to do is to fill out the form here and send it to your bank.

If you can, send a photocopy to us at: Books for South Africa, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP, or at

**Books for South Africa Bankers' order form**

Your Bank.....

Name of Account to be debited.....

Account Number.....

Our Bank.....  
 Harlesden, London NW10 4AB

Account No..... 130300661

Sorting Code..... 77-91-27

Amount to be paid..... Monthly

First Payment due..... And on the same date in the month thereafter.

Signed.....

least, advise us that you have sent in the form. It will be money well invested.

If you can't manage a regular donation, send us

as much as you can. Revolution is on the order of the day in Southern Africa. In Namibia the struggle grows more intense. The need is urgent.

## The Other Bookshop

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<b>Revolutionary Marxism Today</b>	£10.50	£4.75

Mail Order Service — add 20 per cent for p&p. Orders to: The Other Bookshop, Box 50, London N1.

# Women's Rights

## A woman's right to choose Women fight Tory attack

By Judith Arkwright

**WOMEN** all over the country started putting the message across to the Tory government that we will not permit any back door changes to the 1967 Abortion Act.

In London on 9 February, 2000 women marched, hitting the national headlines as they called for the charges to be dropped against doctors who are threatened with prosecution for illegal abortion. Similar actions took place in Bradford, Brighton, Cardiff, Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and Scotland.

Because all previous attempts to restrict women's abortion rights through parliament have failed, the Tory government, through the Department of Health and Social Security is changing the grounds for legal abortion by what is called a 'statutory instrument'.

### Wording

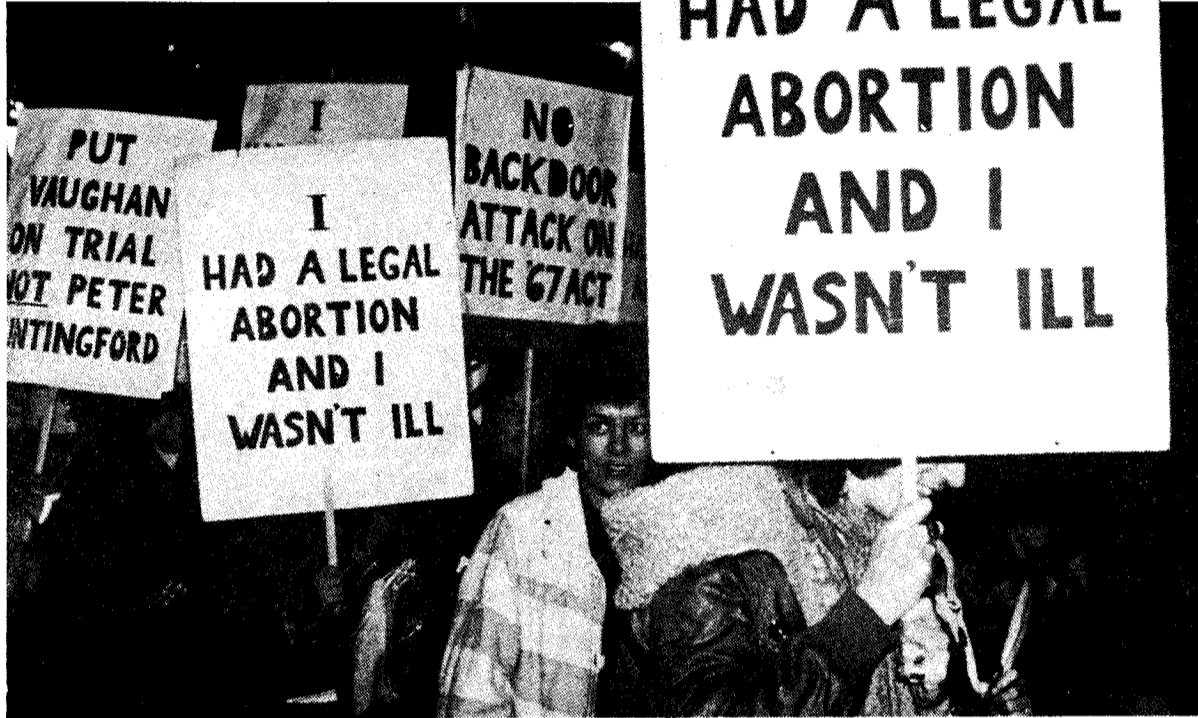
Simply by changing the wording in the abortion notification form which has to be filled in with every abortion, the DHSS is trying to remove the social grounds — ie rape, poverty, environment — for abortion.

To back this up, the DHSS has referred Professor Huntingford and another doctor to the Director of Public Prosecutions for refusing to fill in this new form and thereby performing abortions illegally.

Professor Huntingford and other doctors have shown they are prepared to defy the DHSS and de-

the ITV programme 'Out of Court', if the DHSS now withdraws from the battle it will be taken as agreeing to the principle of 'abortion on demand'.

What is needed now is to bring the weight of the labour movement behind



Over a million women have had abortion on non-medical grounds which DHSS seeks to outlaw

defend a woman's right to abortion on non-medical grounds.

Further, the DHSS has now gone too far to retreat for as Peter Huntingford pointed out on

the doctors and behind a woman's right to choose.

As part of the campaign, 150 women have signed a declaration that they have had abortions on social grounds, because

if the doctors are 'guilty of obtaining illegal abortions' then so are the more than one million women who have had their pregnancies terminated on non-medical grounds.

The campaign initiated by the National Abortion Campaign and Labour Abortion Rights Campaign is gathering steam. Here are a few of the upcoming events.

**20 February:** NAC/LARC TU liaison committee public meeting, Conway Hall at 7pm. Speakers from the TUC, National Union of Public Employees and Labour Party.

**20 February:** NAC national planning meeting — Manchester

**13 March:** NAC/LARC health workers conference

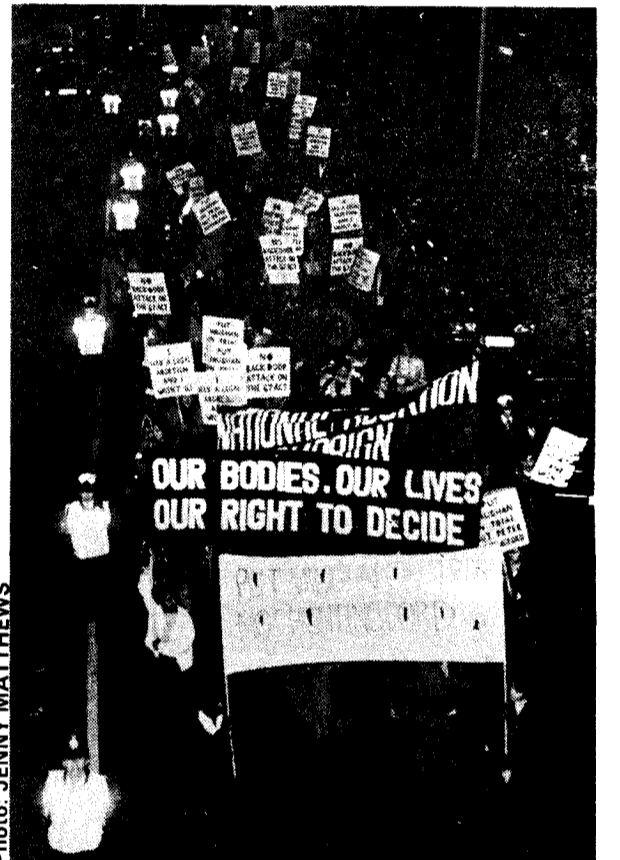
Party National Executive Committee, National Labour Women's Committee, National Joint Committee of Working Women's Organisations, National Association of Local Government Officers, Civil and Public Services Association, National Union of Students Women's Committee, National Council for Civil Liberties, Jo Richardson MP, Gwyneth Dunwoody MP, Stan Orme MP, Terry Davis MP, Stan Thorne MP.

The campaign is sponsored by: the National Abortion Campaign, Abortion Law Reform Association, Labour

For further information contact NAC, 374 Grays Inn Road, London N1, phone 01 278 0153.

Photo: JENNY MATTHEWS

Photo: JENNY MATTHEWS



2,000 women marched in London on 9 February

## SWP and the Labour Party

**I RECENTLY** left the Socialist Workers Party having been an active member for four years. I have decided to join the Labour Party as a Socialist Challenge supporter.

The SWP is the biggest far left organisation in this country with about 4,000 members of whom a fair number work in industry.

A year ago developments in the Labour Party wouldn't have merited much coverage in the SWP's paper, *Socialist Worker*. But recently, *Socialist Worker* has had to pay more attention.

In terms of united action, SW has been clearly

saying, 'We have got to stand shoulder to shoulder ... with Benn and Livingstone.' But what form does that united action take?

The SWP admits that a battle has to be waged inside the Labour Party in order to link up socialist ideas with the battles going on inside the unions, on the picket lines, around Laurence Scott and so on.

The trouble is that the SWP is going to leave it to

others to do this campaigning ... they will stay outside the Labour Party.

But the main reason for SWP abstentionism is that it doesn't understand the central role that the Labour Party Left plays in working class consciousness.

At the moment, to a significant minority of working class militants, the left and particularly Benn represent a political solution to the crisis.

While the SWP can abstain, the mass of militant workers can't. It is

their party, whether they are individual members or not.

Increasingly, the arguments around democracy, re-selection, accountability are not restricted to the Labour Party but extend to the unions as well.

Duffy, Boyd, Chapple and Co have got a vested interest in supporting the right wing in the Labour Party because they know that they could be next in the firing line.

Socialists have got to be seen to be fighting in

the Labour Party against the right wing and for a party committed to socialist policies and campaigning to give practical support to workers in struggle.

It's a pity that the SWP who have a fine tradition of anti-fascist activity and support for workers in struggle will not get directly involved in what is becoming an increasingly crucial fight inside the Labour Party.

**IAN MacDONALD (AUEW)**  
Hayes, London

Poland. But how does this differ from what we would call a military coup elsewhere? The old mechanisms for suppressing popular mobilisation lose their effectiveness faced with the self-organisation of the working class — so the ruling class (or caste, in the case of Eastern Europe) simply changes the rules of the game.

In Poland, the old form of political rule — the Communist Party — was totally bypassed in the decision to impose martial law in Poland. It was cast aside as an inadequate instrument — just as parliamentary rule is cast

aside by the capitalists in time of crisis. The army simply moved into all areas of state activity.

It's all very well to say that 'talk of a military coup in Poland ... lets the ruling Communist Party off the hook'. But that doesn't alter the facts of the matter. Not to describe it in such terms risks letting the bureaucracy as a whole off the hook for the enormity of what it has done to the working class movement in Poland, thereby dulling the response of workers in Britain. And that, I'm sure, is the last thing that Jonathan would want.

**MARTIN METEYARD**  
Glasgow

## A coup or not a coup?

**I WAS** surprised to see Jonathan Silberman (*Socialist Challenge* 21 January) claiming that 'there has not been a military coup in Poland'. He does so with the best of motives, but I think he's wrong. And some of the supporting arguments he produces are distinctly odd.

Jonathan tells us that what characterises the Soviet bloc is 'that the state is based on an interlocking system of the leaders of the party, the army, government ministers, the trade unions, and so on'. But what's so special about this? With some slight modifications, doesn't it generally sum up the way in which the capitalist state also

operates? It's all very well to point to General Jaruzelski's position in the Polish government — but isn't General Haig the present US Secretary of State? For that matter, weren't Pinochet and other Chilean generals in the cabinet at various times under Allende? Even the trade unions, although basically in-

dependent organisations of the working class, are linked into the 'interlocking system' of the capitalist state via the bureaucracy. Look at the role of the American AFL-CIO in Latin America, for example — with a little help from the CIA. And our very own TUC runs an international department which exchanges personnel with the Foreign Office!

Jonathan rightly says that the bureaucracy 'was forced to change its form of political rule' by introducing martial law in

## Letters letters LETTERS

## Rape virtually eliminated in Cuba

**THE** widespread support among workers for stiffer sentences or even castration and hanging is something which can't be avoided in our discussion about rape.

Many who turn to these solutions see rape as an exceptional act.

Socialist Challenge should emphasize that violence against women — sexual harassment, at work, battering and so on is common.

Most women know their attacker and many attacks are committed in their own homes. Only a small minority get reported. The measures put forward by the hang'em and flog'em brigade hardly prevent this.

You are right to point out that rape is a social problem and as you say, 'that is why until the social and economic system in this country is fundamentally altered, attacks on women and discrimination will continue'.

So why not point to Cuba where the revolution has seen the virtual elimination of rape? The material advances (housing, jobs, childcare, free abortion and contraception) have helped improve the lives of Cuban women and are also paving the way for the ideological battles to overcome the prejudices and backward attitudes that remain.

There are over two million in the Cuban Women's Federation which leads the continuing struggles against 'machismo' and for full equality. That fight is aided by the support of the law.

The Family Code was introduced after long discussion and voting by the whole population in 1975.

It proclaimed women equal in marriage, provided equal control of joint property; decreed equal rights and responsibility for raising children; equal rights to have a job or profession and participate in social activity. Moreover discrimination against women is punishable.

Stating that only a fundamental change can lay the basis for a solution does not mean putting the issue off.

We are saying that workers have to choose. Either they fight for socialism and genuine solutions or they back the status quo with stiffer sentences.

A trade union and Labour Party campaign to recognise sexual harassment, and for a change in the rape laws is necessary both to defend the rights of women and to expose the myth that violence against women is an individual problem.

**DENNY FITZPATRICK**  
London

## POLISH WORKERS SAY :

# 'The winter is yours, but the spring will be ours'

By Davy Jones

ALMOST two hundred people were arrested in the industrial city of Poznan last weekend following riots to protest against martial law. Most of those arrested were students and school students. Some 162 were punished by special courts.

The demonstration marked exactly two months since the Polish regime instituted martial law to smash Solidarnosc. It appears that in other cities like Swidnic, Wroclaw and Lodz there were protests on the same day.

The authorities used a massive military presence in the Baltic port of Gdansk to prevent any recurrence of the riot which occurred there on 30 January when hundreds of youth were arrested. And in Warsaw the authorities sent a convoy of more than 100 military vehicles through the streets on the evening of Friday 12 December to frighten the workers into submission.

In the courts throughout Poland the authorities are ruthlessly disposing of Solidarnosc activists via long jail sentences. Hundreds have now received terms of three to ten years for trade union activities, organising opposition to martial law and other 'subversive' activities.

Wojciech Lasocki, a mechanic from the Ursus tractor plant near Warsaw, the plant where Piotr Kozlowski of the Solidarnosc trade union working group in Britain was deputy convenor, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for inciting a strike and distributing outlawed documents.

In Katowice four miners from the Wujek mine, where the authorities admit to killing at least seven miners last December, were jailed for up to four years for organising a strike. Soon to face trial will be Miroslaw Krupinski, deputy chairperson of Solidarnosc's National Commission, who attempted to re-form the union leadership in the Lenin shipyards in the days following the imposition of martial law.

Foreign embassies in Warsaw report a steady trickle of applications for emigration from people released from internment camps. This sinister development follows the cynical speeches of General Jaruzelski offering to allow those unhappy with the Polish system to leave the country.

But despite the repression, resistance to martial law is growing. Solidarnosc is regrouping and reorganising for a major offensive against the authorities for a few months' time. The most common graffiti in Poland in the workplaces reads: 'The winter is yours, the spring will be ours, Solidarnosc.'

*The Labour Party has called a rally on Poland for Tuesday 16 March in Central Hall, London at 7.30pm. Speakers are not yet decided.*



Piotr Kozlowski (left) and Marek Garztecki from the Solidarnosc trade union working group address the Socialist Challenge/Revolution educational school last weekend in London. They enthralled the conference, which was attended by more than one hundred people, by explaining the history of Solidarnosc at the Ursus tractor plant where Piotr was deputy convenor.

## Scottish Labour's support for Solidarnosc grows

By Des Tierney

PIOTR Kozlowski and Marek Garztecki from the Solidarnosc trade union working group in Britain returned to Scotland last week for another tour of labour movement meetings. In three days they spoke to three mass meetings of workers, five trade union meetings, one Trades Council, and three shop stewards committees.

The transport workers' union played an important role in the tour. The Solidarnosc members spoke to the Central Region of the TGWU and the union organised some of the other important meetings — with the Grangemouth dockers, the BP tanker drivers at the Grangemouth oil terminal, and the workers at Plesseys, currently in occupation against redundancies.

The Grangemouth dockers listened very sympathetically, at a mass meeting before their 8am shift began. Piotr and

Marek explained the situation in Poland and emphasised that with the militarisation of the workforce many of the products from Poland were being produced using forced labour. They appealed, as fellow trade unionists, for the Grangemouth dockers to consider blacking cargoes from Poland. The following day a collection was taken which raised over £90.

### Threats

The Plessey workers, at their factory in Bathgate also gave them an enthusiastic reception. They were particularly impressed when Piotr addressed himself to their demand for the right to work. Piotr also praised them for refusing to be cowed by Court orders or 'sacking' threats.

Tanker drivers at the BP Grangemouth depot, a well organised section of the Scottish working class, had an on the spot collection which raised almost

£25 after listening attentively to Piotr and asking some very good questions about corruption in the CP and among government officials.

Shop stewards' committees at British Leyland's Albion Plant and the BSC Clydebridge works pledged their financial support to Solidarnosc. They asked for details of internees in Poland so that they could send aid directly.

NUPE hospital workers of the Glasgow East Branch decided to find out about the plight of hospital workers in Solidarnosc and to twin their trade union branch with a Solidarnosc hospital workers' branch. Other white collar unions, chiefly NALGO and the NUJ, also took the opportunity of the visit to carry on their campaigns in defence of Solidarnosc.

### Defend

This support at the rank and file level of the trade union movement is

being translated into moves to commit the leadership of the trade union movement to actions to defend Solidarity. At its next meeting the Glasgow and District Trades Council, a very important body in the Scottish trade union movement, will debate a proposal that they 'twin' with

the Gdansk region of Solidarnosc.

Through TGWU branches in the Central Region the national executive of the TGWU and the Docks Section of the TGWU will be asked to consider in what ways they can give support to Solidarnosc. This will include consideration of

blacking actions.

Motions calling for support for Solidarnosc will also be heard at this year's STUC and Labour Party Scottish conference.

Attempts are being made to have these conferences addressed by representatives of the Solidarity Trade Union working group.

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

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

**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.

# Solidarnosc and the left

By Davy Jones

**SUPPORT for the struggle of the Polish workers is growing. Solidarnosc militants have been touring factories and workplaces around the country rallying support, and more and more solidarity committees have been established.**

**At this point the bulletin of the Polish Solidarity Campaign has chosen to launch a vicious witch-hunt against socialists in this country including those who are supporting Solidarnosc's struggle.**

Its January 1981 bulletin carries an article entitled 'On the left' which deals with the reactions from what it terms 'the totalitarian (Leninist) left in Britain'.

It charges that the 'essential ingredients' of the left's campaign are those of 'appeasement' in general: the attempt to deflect attention from Soviet responsibility, to

treat repression as an internal Polish matter, and to limit responses (if any) to token ones, directed at Jaruzelski alone. And with the typical witch hunters' sleight of hand it tars Stalinists and anti-Stalinists with the same brush.

Socialist Challenge totally refutes this distorted picture which can only weaken the

solidarity movement in this country and harm the cause of the Polish workers.

Socialist Challenge and the Fourth International have fully and without qualification supported the struggles of the Polish workers against the bureaucrats. Since August 1980 we have devoted page after page explaining what Solidarnosc is fighting for and why it should be supported. We have never 'blamed' Solidarnosc for 'facilitating the coup' as the PSC bulletin article suggests.

Since the imposition of martial law last December our solidarity efforts have been redoubled. Our supporters locally have been in the forefront of organising highly successful tours

of workplaces and labour movement bodies, establishing direct links between Solidarnosc and workers in this country. And we have supported and helped to initiate many solidarity marches, pickets and rallies.

## Covered

We have not 'covered up' for the pernicious role of the Soviet bureaucrats in their attempts to crush the Polish workers.

Throughout the previous 18 months we explained that the existence of a mass democratic independent working class movement, Solidarnosc, was a direct threat to the continued existence and privileges of the Soviet and Polish bureaucrats.

But all the slanders and innuendo of the PSC bulletin article are a cover for political difference with Socialist Challenge. That is, we believe that solidarity with Solidarnosc is a matter for workers in this country and the organised labour movement. We don't believe that Thatcher, Reagan, the SDP/Liberals or any other bourgeois figures can or will give any help to the Polish workers.

There is widespread evidence that the international bankers put considerable pressure on the Polish and Soviet bureaucrats to crack down on the workers 'to solve the economic crisis'. And the leaders of the imperialist powers — Reagan, Thatcher, Schmidt and co — shed only cynical crocodile tears over the repression against Solidarnosc. They feared the rise of a mass democratic and independent union as much as the bureaucrats of Eastern Europe.

Nor do we agree with the PSC bulletin's articles stated priorities for campaigning! 'The most important tasks are: to break

all links by the TUC, unions and the Labour Party with Soviet bloc 'unions' and parties which all support the repression in Poland; industrial action against trade and contracts with Poland and the Soviet Union.'

For us, the most effective solidarity work would be to build a political campaign inside the labour movement to raise material aid for Solidarnosc, to build direct links between Solidarnosc and British workers, and to organise campaigns of rallies, marches and pickets in support of the Polish workers.

## End

These should demand an end to martial law, the freeing of Wales and all the other prisoners, and an end to restrictions on Solidarnosc's right to organise. These are exactly the demands put forward by the new National Commission of Resistance in Poland itself.

Campaigns which concentrate their fire primarily on an economic boycott

have two problems. First, they fall into the orbit of all the hypocritical Cold War campaigns of Reagan and Thatcher, who aim to whip up anti-communist propaganda the better to attack their own working classes.

Second, an economic boycott of the Soviet bloc will have little or no effect on the Soviet bureaucrats. They will use such actions as an excuse to step up their austerity drive against the workers of Eastern Europe. A political campaign of solidarity with Solidarnosc both helps to isolate the Soviet and Polish bureaucrats and aids the workers in this country in their struggles against Thatcher's own austerity and anti-union drive.

Socialist Challenge is optimistic about the opportunities for building a serious movement of solidarity with Solidarnosc where it really counts — among working people. We don't think that such a movement will be helped by the witch-hunting type of article printed in the last PSC bulletin.



Kozlowski and Garztecki from the Solidarnosc working group at the head of the Birmingham demonstration earlier this month



Piotr Kozlowski from the Solidarnosc trade union working group at a Manchester torchlight rally last month — Socialist Challenge supporters played a key role in organising the solidarity actions in both Manchester and Birmingham

## The labour bureaucracy today

By Ailean O'Callaghan

**OVER the past two weeks we have described how the formation of a privileged layer in the trade unions with interests more in keeping with the bosses than the workers is indispensable to the maintenance of capitalism in Britain.**

The ability of this layer to impose its will lies in its political weight not in its numerical strength which is minute in comparison with the millions-strong membership of the unions.

The political traditions of the labour bureaucracy were formed as a result of a split in the working class during the early period of capitalist development. A skilled section of the working class was won to the defence of the capitalist order by literally being bought off.

However the conditions which allowed this aristocracy of labour to

develop were soon undermined by the changes in the position of British capitalists brought about through inter-imperialist competition.

This stage of British capitalist development was marked by the concentration of ownership, the rationalisation of production techniques, the merger of industrial and banking capital and the carving up of the world market.

This economic upheaval stimulated British workers to organise themselves on a massive scale.

In engineering for example, the introduction of mass production methods struck at the status of the craft workers while at the same time encouraging the organisation of the unskilled in an unprecedented way.

In less than two decades this process turned the trade union outlook of the engineers upside down.

From the 1890s onward a pressure developed for the Amalgamated Society of Engineers to organise on a class instead of a craft basis.

The 1898 lock-out proved to be

the last stand of the ASE as a craft union, an organisation of the Labour aristocracy. The inevitable rules revision allowing unskilled workers into the ASE came in 1912.

This was only part of a more general process. Industrial unions were formed for the first time on massive scale. Because of Marxist participation, the wave of industrial unrest between 1890 and 1914 was accompanied by a growth of socialist consciousness among a militant minority of workers.

At the same time the 'deskilling' of the modernised industries led to a rapid shrinking in the size of the labour aristocracy, though not in the privileges of those that remained.

A new section of these privileged workers was the growing labour aristocracy. The ruling class gave special attention to this layer, as a way of blocking the new workers offensive drawing them into the administration of the state. Their growing privileges intertwined with the political tradi-

tion of attachment to the capitalist order.

As early as 1886, the general secretary of one of the most important unions stepped into a job in the Labour Bureau formed by the liberal politician Mundella — the President of the Board of Trade, forerunner to the ministry Tebbit now heads.

The process of integration took a big step forward in World War I as union leaders were drawn further into official administration. This was consolidated on the back of the defeat of 1926 general strike.

The series of mass national strike waves between 1910 and 1914 gave a big impetus to the break from political support of the working class for the Liberal Party and the formation of the Labour Party.

The bureaucracy went along with this idea of a Labour party but only so as to impose Liberal-Labour policies on it!

While organisationally, therefore, the Labour Party represents a big step



forward for the working class, politically it represents the interests of the Labour bureaucracy.

The Labour Party leadership plays the same role as the trade union bureaucracy.

As Leon Trotsky put it: 'The same leaders guide trades unions, betray the general strike, lead the electoral campaign and later sit in at the ministries.'

'The Labour Party and the trade unions — these are not two principles, they are only a technical division of labour'.

## Unions threaten South African regime

# Murder of Neil Aggett

By N. Ndabeni

WHILE the 'Western' politicians led by Reagan and Thatcher are masquerading as the champions of free, democratic trade unions in Poland, they are strangely silent — or perhaps not so strangely — about the fate of trade unionists in the Republic of South Africa, the lynchpin of imperialism in the region.

What is happening to active trade union leaders in the apartheid republic has been brought forcefully into public view by the death in detention of Dr Neil Aggett. Neil is only one of literally scores of trade unionists and political activists who have died at the hands of the South African police.

The last case which aroused world-wide hor-

ror was the murder of Steve Biko, the Black Consciousness leader. Dr Aggett's case is exceptional only in that he was the first white person to meet this fate.

He was in detention because his activities in organising black workers on the Rand as Secretary of the Food and Canning Workers Union.

Under South Africa's draconian laws, the police can detain any person almost indefinitely without trial, without access to legal advice or even to family. South Africa needs no martial law. As far as the great majority of its population is concerned — the black working class — they live perpetually under emergency law in a police state.

South Africa's white ruling class have shown increasing nervousness at the growth of trade unionism

Through militant action, more than 30 such agreements have been forced on employers.

A meeting of twelve of the most important trade unions held in Langa, Cape Town in August last year passed the following resolution:— 'We accept that trade unions are public bodies and accordingly we do not object to providing information with respect to our constitution finances and representivity. However, we refuse to subject ourselves to control by anybody other than our own members. We therefore reject and resist the present system of registration insofar as it is designed to control and interfere in the internal affairs of the union.... It is an internationally recognised right of workers to withhold their labour. Moreover, under present conditions and legislation, strikes happen so fre-

quently because of low wages, inadequate bargaining procedures that workers have no alternative to strike action outside the law. It is in any event the duty and function of the unions to stand by its members.... The prohibition of financial support for workers will not be obeyed.... The unions agree to support each other in the event of any union resisting participation on the Industrial Council.'

It is because of the militancy and solidarity shown by the unions as typified by the Langa resolution that the apartheid authorities have resorted to increased repressive measures against black trade unionists and whites like Dr Aggett who support them. The Langa meeting took a decision to continue resisting banning and detention 'in any way possible' and warned that

continuation of this practice 'could only worsen the already deteriorating industrial relations situation.'

The unions also agreed to give every help in the so-called homelands, where the permanent state of emergency prevailing in the Republic has been taken over by the new 'ruling class'.

They were particularly concerned with the situation prevailing in the latest of these 'independent' statelets — the Ciskei — and agreed to send a delegation to Chief Minister Sebe to express their 'extreme displeasure at his anti-union stance'.

As a protest over the death of Neil Aggett there were nationwide strikes last Thursday. At three of South Africa's biggest ports Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London work came to a halt for 30 minutes as black stevedores downed tools.

In other parts of the Western and Eastern Cape, there was a massive response to the call for action. Students at the University of Witwatersrand staged a lunchtime protest meeting, which was addressed by the principal, Professor D J du Plessis, who said: 'A civilised nation should not allow this sort of outrage to happen'.

There is no record of any protest from Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, the Pope, or any other of the self-proclaimed evangelists of free trade unionism.

among black workers, and the militancy of the strikes over the last two years.

There were at least 170 strikes by black workers in 1981, all of them illegal. Of the 90 or so strikes organised by the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), 53 were won.

The government has tried to control the trade union movement by requiring unions to register under the so-called Industrial Conciliation Act which the unions see as a device to hamper their growth.

They want instead factory-level agreements on shop stewards and wage-bargaining rights.



Armoured cars on patrol in Soweto. South African repression of unionists is escalating.

## Grenada 1982 : YEAR OF ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

From Pat Kane in St. Vincent

THE government of Grenada, the tiny Caribbean island in which there was a revolution in 1979, has designated 1982 as the 'Year of Economic Reconstruction'. The Grenadian economy is suffering from years of mismanagement and exploitation under the former dictator Eric Gairy, now a resident of San Diego, California.

Gairy returned to power in 1967, after having been removed from office in 1962 following a corruption scandal. Earlier that year he was declared bankrupt as a result of 17 prosecutions for debt default. Twelve years later, at the time of the 1979 revolution his personal fortune had grown to an estimated 8 million dollars.

The new revolutionary government estimates that it saved 2.5 million dollars during the first year of the revolution by eliminating waste and corruption.

The government has announced a whole series of economic measures to increase the island's productivity. Already the government has made considerable progress to break the island's economic dependence on the international capitalist market. But the collapse in cocoa, nutmeg and banana prices has severely affected the country's struggle for self-

sufficiency.

Last year the government developed an asphalt plant to construct the runway of the new international airport and carry out road repairs. The island's roads have been neglected for thirty years making them very difficult to repair.

Last year it also opened the first ever agro-industries plant canning fruit and fruit drinks. A housing programme and free primary health care were all established in 1981.

This is on top of the benefits in education, new agriculture co-operatives

and a reduction of 25 per cent in the island's unemployment since the revolution.

But, the international economic crisis has had its effects here. Cocoa prices have collapsed to less than half the price of two years ago. Nutmeg prices have fallen, but through increased technical aid to farmers there was a bumper crop last year.

Grenadian farmers get only 0.023 British pence per pound for bananas from the British company Geest. Geest also insist on special packaging which costs nearly as much.

While export prices fall, imports of oil and other goods spiral through inflation. Tourism has been badly affected by the propaganda campaign against the Grenadian revolution. In a random study by the Grenadian mission in New York, 169 articles in one month were found attacking Grenada.

Despite these and other difficulties, the economy has shown considerable growth since the revolution. According to the International Monetary Fund, which is no



Grenadian premier Maurice Bishop

friend of the revolution, in 1981 there was a five and a half per cent increase in agricultural production, a 20 per cent increase in quarrying, 14.5 per cent increase in construction and an overall two per cent increase in gross National Product. This is all in a tiny island of only 113 square miles and a population of just 110,000.

This growth has been achieved because of the political outlook of the government. Mass participation and control are

the cornerstones of the government's strategy. 1981 saw the development of the island's mass organisations, in particular the National Youth Organisation and the National Women's Organisation, and the extension of the system of 'peoples democracy' which allows the participation of the vast mass of Grenadians in the running of their own country. These democratic institutions will be instrumental in solving the island's economic problems.

## El Salvador Elections farce as US gets desperate

By Paul Lawson

AS THE military situation deteriorates, the United States is getting increasingly worried about the possibility of a victory of the left wing guerrillas in El Salvador. Following the destruction on 27 January of a large part of the Salvadorean air force in a guerilla attack on the Ilopango air base near San Salvador, the FMLN guerrillas have launched military attacks all over the country.

There is every sign that the military effort of the Salvadorean army and National Guard is collapsing. The United States, in a response to this situation is doubling military aid, and a debate about whether to send troops is going on. Alexander Haig, US Secretary of State, has already made it clear that the US will do 'whatever is necessary' to prevent a left wing victory.

The attacks have been aimed at destroying transport and communication links — major roads have been cut by guerrilla groups conducting patrols, destroying government trucks and generally disrupting the economic life of the country.

The United States is also becoming increasingly worried about what will happen to the much-vaunted elections scheduled for 28 March. These elections have no credibility whatsoever, held in civil war conditions with the main opposition groups banned.

The State Department has now come forward with the bizarre suggestion that the left wing be allowed to stand in the elections from 'outside the country' saying that it would guarantee 'equal time' on TV and radio for 'the left'. It has not explained who 'the left' are, and whether this would include the FDR and FMLN, nor what exactly it is in the relationship between the US government and the El Salvador government which gives the United States control over such things.

A target of the United States statement on the elections was the Socialist International. According to the US, the Socialist International is undermining the efforts to get 'peace' in El Salvador by opposing the elections as a fraud.

But in fact, the US's offer to ensure 'fair' elections is a fraud and a joke. Everyone knows that the Salvadorean army, which is supervising the elections, would never allow an FDR/FMLN victory even if they were allowed to stand, even if elections were free of intimidation and organised in the countryside as well as the cities, even if the left wing parties were able to freely campaign without their militants being made sitting targets for the right wing death squads. But none of these conditions will be fulfilled.

It is increasingly clear that the Reagan administration has got itself into a very nasty cleft stick in El Salvador. To intervene militarily will bring about a political storm both in the United States and worldwide. Not to intervene could well mean standing back while the revolutionary guerrillas are victorious. As the fake elections approach, the struggle in El Salvador is reaching a decisive stage.

# Belgium: general strike against austerity

By Phil Hearse

MILLIONS of Belgian workers joined a one-day general strike last Monday against the government's proposed austerity measures. The strike was accompanied by mass demonstrations all over the country.

It was followed up last Thursday by a demonstration of thousands of steelworkers in Brussels, which was attacked by sabre-wielding mounted cops. The violent scenes in Brussels are a symbol of the massive social tensions which are rocking Belgium.

The strikes and demonstrations are a response to the proposals of the Wilfred Martens government, with the crisis of Belgium's traditional industries such as textiles and steel. In order to make the working class pay for the economic crisis, and to begin to 'restructure' industry at the workers expense, the Martens government proposes:

- A modification in the national 'sliding scale' of wages to reduce incomes by three per cent across the board.
- A programme of closures, redundancies and mergers in the steel industry.
- The reduction of workers' wages in the steel and textile industries in exchange for government financial help.

- A twenty per cent reduction in employers social security payments



Mounted police flee demonstrators

which will reduce all social benefits.

- The introduction of 'special powers' which will enable the government to rule the economy and the unions by executive decree.

This package amounts to a massive attack on wage earners — some estimate that it could, if pushed through, result in an overall 15 per cent reduction in living standards.

Last Monday's strike was organised by the Socialist FGTB trade union, to which most unionists in the French-speaking south of the country belong.

Unfortunately the strike was opposed by the CSC, the Christian union federation strong in the Flemish-speaking north of the country.

Nonetheless, despite official opposition, thousands of CSC unionists joined in the strike, which was solid in Brussels and the south, and partially successful in the north. Among the hundreds of red banners of the FGTB in last Monday's Brussels demonstration, there were dozens of green banners of the CSC.

The position of the CSC is complicated by its close links with the Social Christian Party (PSC), one of the government parties in coalition with the Christian Democrats.

While many of the rank and file of the CSC oppose the austerity measures, the union leadership continues to support the Social Christians and their participation in the government.

some muscle behind our claim.

FTAT is also in dispute nationally over the furniture wage claim. The national executive is supporting any factory around the country taking industrial action.

The union is going for 15 per cent against the bosses' offer of only 7 per cent. The furniture workers have taken national industrial action twice in the last three years.

wage rates in the industry have lagged behind similar types of work in the furniture and building trades industry for many years.

During recent wage negotiations employers have told us high wages equals lost jobs. But redundancies have escalated while pay has remained low, so this excuse is wearing thin.

This time we're out to show the owners we're serious about a decent wage by putting



This has led to a rank-and-file campaign in the CSC to break with the Social Christians and form their own political party, a 'Christian Workers Party', which would break with the pro-capitalist austerity measures of the PSC.

Despite the success of the FGTB-organised one day strike, the opposition of the socialist-led union remains hesitant and episodic. The Martens

government shows no signs of backing down.

The Revolutionary Workers League, the Belgian Trotskyist organisation, has been campaigning for two years for a general strike to defeat the government and impose a workers government.

Its most immediate campaign is for a united

front of the workers movement, to prevent the religious and political division of the labour movement proving an obstacle to repelling the offensive of the bosses and government.

## East London teachers out on official strike against cuts

900 TEACHERS in the East London borough of Barking and Dagenham are set to go out on official strike for three days from 16 Feb and indefinite strike from 26 Feb. This is the first such action sanctioned by their union, the National Union of Teachers in two years.

Ken Glanfield, a Socialist Challenge supporter and teacher in Dagenham School spoke about the issues to Ken Jones, secretary of the local NUT and a candidate for the National Executive of the union in the outer London boroughs.

What's the strike about?

It's about the jobs of 160 teachers and the level of education provided in one of the most working class London boroughs.

Last year, 80 jobs were cut out of 1400 and now they're coming back for more.

Heseltine's cuts in local spending — seven per cent in the case of Barking and Dagenham — are given as the reason.

This is a heavy blow for any council, but the local council which is 90 per cent Labour has done nothing to mobilise op-

position to these cuts.

They've had no contact with trade unions except to tell them about the cuts and had no contact with the local people.

Leaders of the council have stated that 'there is no social justice in these cuts' and talk about a 'national campaign against the government' while in practice they do nothing.

What's been the response of the local unions?

The lead in the fight against the cuts — which affect other sectors besides education — has been taken by the NUT, which represents 70 per cent of the teaching force in the area.

Other unions have not been as militant so far, even though 200 school meals workers in NUPE and GMWU for instance, face the sack.

Over the past six months, NUT meetings of 300 have been commonplace and workplace meetings have been held in almost every school.

It is through such activity that we've been able to get the backing of the national union.

What are the implications nationally?

For a long time a battle has been going on for the NUT to strike against job loss as well as compulsory redundancy. If this strike wins, that argument will have been won.

More than that, victory in this area will encourage members all over the country to resist the cuts. We are now the national focus for activity which will determine the future course of the union.

We have called on the national executive to call a solidarity strike throughout London on 10 March.

What are you doing about getting support in the Labour Party and what is being done locally to build support for 10 March?

The NUT is handicapped in this fight by not being affiliated to the Labour Party.

Even so, the local association is calling on local wards and constituencies throughout the country to put pressure on Barking and Dagenham Council not to implement these cuts and to mount a campaign of resistance to government policy.

## Sawmill workers to strike

By Phil Davies, NATIONAL Executive, FTAT (Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades) union

NATIONAL wage negotiations with the sawmill owners have reached deadlock. After rejecting the offer of five per cent the unions involved, TGWU, GMWU and FTAT met Friday 29 January and unanimously decided to

instruct their members in the industry to strike one day a week from 14 February.

They also ordered a complete ban on overtime and a reduction in piecework.

This is the first time in many years strike action has been taken by sawmill workers. The industry has never been renowned for industrial action. Though sawmill operators are highly skilled in their craft,

## Bradford 12 campaign calls national conference, demonstration

By Chris Guthrie

AS THE countdown begins to the trial of the Bradford 12 on 26 April, their defence campaign is stepping up the pace. A national conference has been called in London for 27 February, a national demonstration is organised for 3 April in Leeds and a mass picket will take place outside the court on the opening day of the trial.

A special 'statement of support' has been sent to all black, anti-racist and labour movement bodies for their endorsement.

MP Tony Benn and Ken Gill, chairperson of the TUC equal rights committee have already lent their support.

The Bradford 12 are a group of young Asians who are charged with conspiracy to make explosives following the July uprisings

last year. No petrol bombs were used in Bradford and the 12 are pleading not guilty.

According to their London Support Group, this is a show-trial of black political activists and it is vital that the black community and labour movement come to their support.

To bring together the widening support for the campaign the conference has been organised to take place at County Hall, London SE1 on 27 February.

The agenda will include: the lessons of the July uprisings and the trials that have followed them; the political significance of the trial; and the way forward in the campaign.

Credentials can be obtained from: Bradford 12 London Support Group, c/o 54 High St, Southall Middlesex or phone 01-328 4523.

The conference will be followed by a social at the Africa Centre, Covent Garden with live band and disco. £2.



Ken Jones explains the issues

# Socialist Challenge



## EL SALVADOR SOLIDARITY DEMONSTRATION

To coincide with the government's fraudulent elections  
 Sunday 28 March  
 Assemble Speakers Corner 1 pm  
 March to rally in Trafalgar Square

By Phil Hearse

# Stop US plans to invade Nicaragua

**IN RESPONSE** to the dramatic advances being made by revolutionary and socialist forces in El Salvador and Guatemala, the United States is preparing an elaborate series of military measures to defeat the struggle of the workers and peasants of that region.

Special plans drawn up by the CIA have been leaked to the *Washington Post*. They reveal:

\* A plan to set aside \$19m for covert military action against Cuba and Nicaragua.

\* Money to be set aside for building 'a broad political opposition to Sandinista rule in Nicaragua'.

\* US support for anti-Sandinista exile forces in Honduras to be stepped up. There are 6,000 men in 20 training camps being readied along the Nicaragua-Honduras border for a possible invasion of Nicaragua, in co-operation with the Argentinian, Guatemalan and Honduran governments.

\* 1,000 soldiers are being trained in Argentina to assist with an invasion of Nicaragua.

According to the *Washington Post*, President Reagan has already given his support to this plan. Argentina withdrew its ambassador from the Nicaraguan capital Managua last week, after the FSLN accused the Argentinians of being involved in activity to overthrow the government.

Among the activities proposed in the Reagan-approved plan are harassment raids by small groups of CIA-backed exiles, which would include attacks on Cuban boats and installations, as well as harassment of Nicaragua.

The involvement of Argentina comes as no surprise. As Socialist Challenge exclusively reported two weeks ago, a meeting of top brass from all over Latin America was held at Fort McNair Washington last October.

and graced with the presence of US defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

The new US plans all point to an invasion of Nicaragua being the decisive counter-blow which the United States wants to aim at the Central American revolution.

Over the past month the military position of the Salvadorean junta has worsened considerably. Fighting in neighbouring Guatemala has dramatically escalated and the four main guerrilla groups there have established a joint command.

These struggles are gradually turning into a regional revolutionary war. For the United States, to send troops to El Salvador is a very risky choice. Already TV film of a senior US officer carrying guns in a combat zone has caused a political storm in the US. Both domestically and internationally the US would be under sharp attack for a direct military move.

It seems certain that the US is co-ordinating and international counter-revolutionary force to invade Nicaragua, to strike a blow at revolution in the whole region.

The threat against Nicaragua is a very immediate one. Socialists everywhere should be preparing to take action to defend the Nicaraguan people and all those fighting the US-backed dictatorships in Central America — starting with support for the El Salvador national demonstration on 28 March.



Nicaragua militia demonstrate in Managua 'reaction shall not pass' says the banner

## We're not resting on our laurels — are you?

**ENTHUSIASTIC**, that was the response to our new sellers' subs this weekend at the Socialist Challenge School on Poland. People took out subs, getting us off to a flying start. So now it's up to the rest of you to keep up the good work.

Meanwhile, we're not resting on our laurels. As you can see from the other articles in this issue, we are organising a tour and a big rally for Mary Zinn of the United Mine-

workers of America.

All of this, of course, will cost money and we need it in advance of the tour. The airline won't wait until after the rally for their fare — they want

it up front.

So, we need you to put up the money for us. Get your donations off as fast as possible — if you want them to be used specifically for the tour, make the cheques payable to

Socialist Challenge as usual, but mark the envelope 'MZ Tour'.

A special thanks this week to our Wandsworth supporters who have given £400 this year so far, and

Ed Mahood who is one of our most consistent contributors.

Our thanks also to our other supporters, including:

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Ed Mahood	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1164.00</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£5927.60</b>

But we're almost £2000 short of our target for the period. We should have raised £7850 so far — so dig deep!