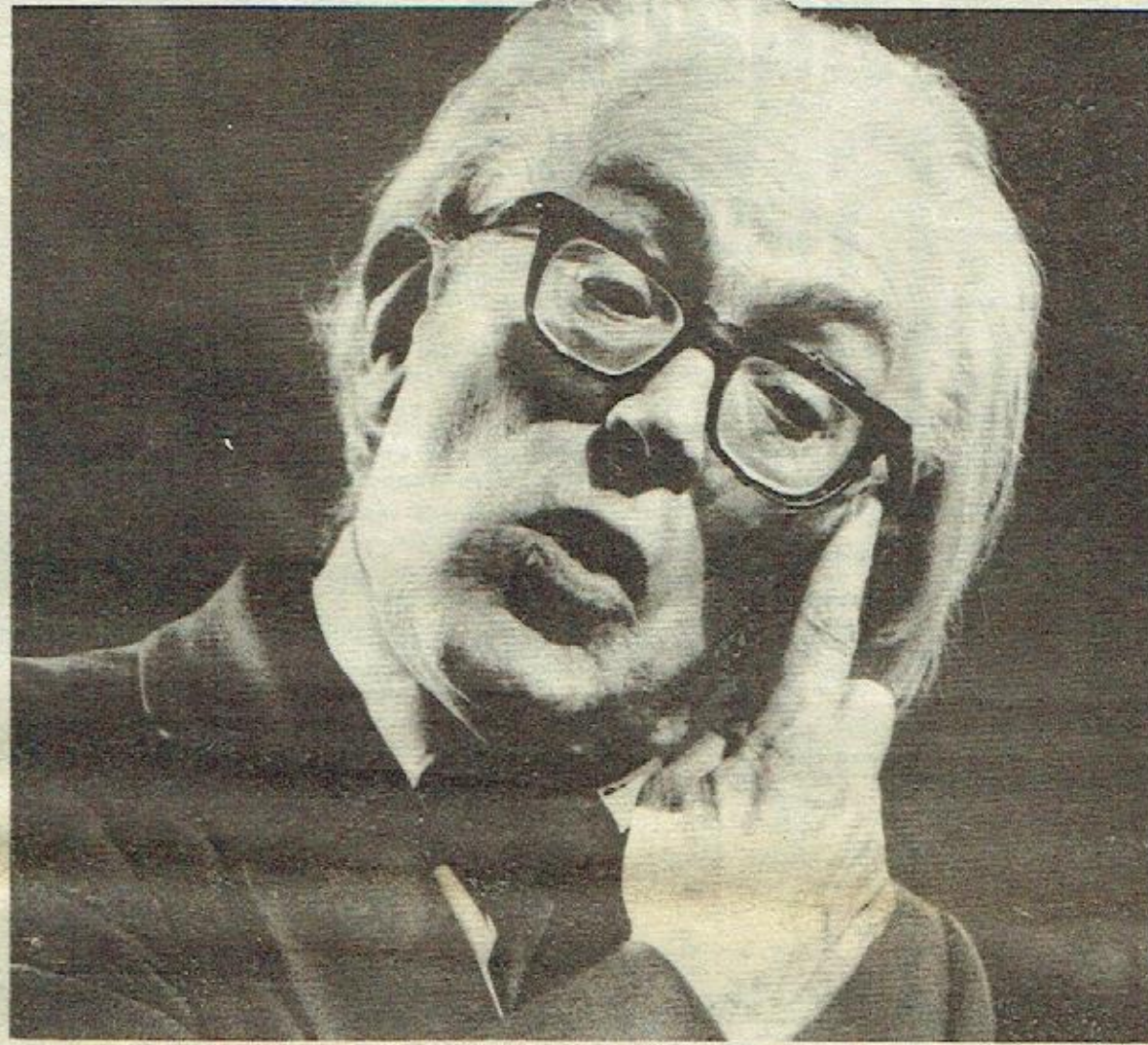


Socialist Challenge

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No truce with Foot

No truce with the Tories



Peter Huntingford

Abortion rights — round one to women...

PROFESSOR Peter Huntingford is not to be prosecuted for giving illegal abortions under the Offences Against the Persons Act. Not only is this a vindication of Huntingford's brave stand against the repressive forces of the law but it's a big victory for millions of women and for the right to choose.

But there is no room for complacency. We should not be fooled by the remarks of the Attorney General who claimed that the Director of Public Prosecutions was satisfied that medical reasons had been given for the abortions, and implying that Huntingford had privately backed down.

It is obvious that the public outcry and the media storm concerning this issue forced the DPP to back off from what would have been the most serious threat to our right to choose since the 1967 act was passed. This may not mean that 'abortion on demand is legal up to 14 weeks', as Huntingford claims. But it is certainly one step on the road to greater freedom of choice if Huntingford's interpretation of the Act wins out.

It shows that the anti-abortion forces within the government and their mandarins in the civil service do not feel strong enough for a head on confrontation with the massive pro-choice lobby which has been built up over the years within the labour and women's movements.

While the buff form which excludes non-medical reasons remains, then this threat remains — but there is no doubt whatsoever that women have won the first round. We can go ahead with strength and confidence until the day we do get abortion on demand — a woman's right to choose.

NO TRUCE!

The phony Bishop Stortford truce is dead. It has yet to be buried by the left.

Unity of the labour movement has never been more needed to mobilise its whole strength to:

- TURN the tide against mass unemployment
- KILL Tabbitt's Bill
- HALT Heseltine's attacks on local government
- END YOPs slave labour
- STOP Cruise
- BREAK the back of the Tories at every point of their attack.

To forge such a unity needs new leaders. Yet Michael Foot's 'truce' always was a manoeuvre to muzzle such determined advocates of these policies and halt the emergence of new leaders. The 'truce' was to give complete freedom to the witch-hunters. The 'truce' was to give full rein to the Denis Healeys and Roy Hattersleys, to the John Boyds and Sid Weighells to divide the movement.

Why no outcry when some supporter of Healey or Hattersley is selected as a Labour candidate? Hasn't the main role of such people been to divide the fightback?

Michael Foot is not interested in unity against the Tories. The only recommendation for objecting to the reselection of

Sheffield Heeley MP, Frank Hooley, is that he is so totally insignificant that his right wing policies have not come in for much attention!

As for Stan Cohen, member for Leeds South East, he was only stopped from departing for the SDP last year by the personal pleadings of Michael Foot. After his failure to gain re-selection he is now leading the pack against the Militant tendency and other left wingers.

An NEC refusal to endorse Militant supporters Pat Wall and Terry Fields as parliamentary candidates cannot be allowed to pass — as have the continuing witch-hunting activities of the right wing who have never observed the truce.

The battle must extend to the forces with real power — the unions. It is the bloc vote which props up the right and gives succour to the witch-hunters. A determined effort to take the Labour Party battles into the unions would send a shiver down the backs of the right-wing and would intensify the fight against the Tories. Such a battle would mean organising from top to bottom in the Labour Party and the unions.

Such a battle would mean the forging of a strong alliance with the Laurence Scott campaign around the AUEW's Rule 14 which can overturn the right wing ex-

ecutive. It would mean linking up with the fight for a special conference of the NUR by the rebellious guards. It would mean linking up with the Broad Left in the Transport Union and in the Post Office Engineering Union.

The whole fabric of British politics would be electrified if Benn and other left wing leaders boldly came out in support of militant struggle. What a difference there would be if Benn answered the now familiar threat to close down this or that plant with a pledge that Labour would reverse everything!

What a boost there would be to the campaign to remove engineering leaders Terry Duffy and John Boyd if he pledged nationalisation of Laurence Scott. Such an approach would give real flesh and blood to the declaration in favour of extra-parliamentary action by 32 prospective Labour candidates.

Watering down Labour's manifesto to bring it into line with the discredited SDP policies of the last Labour government is a recipe for disaster. Boldly mobilising around Labour conference policies and other sweeping demands is the way to win — perhaps the only way.

Murdoch's job massacre

IT'S JOB-MASSACRE time at *The Times*. As we go to press, Rupert Murdoch has insisted on 800 redundancies at *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* as the price of keeping them open. It seems likely that the print unions, and in particular NATSOPA, will agree to several hundred redundancies.

Since the globe-trotting Mr Murdoch took over at Times Newspapers Ltd (TNL) there have been over 800 redundancies. In order to grasp what's going on at *The Times*, it's necessary to understand why *The Times* is not profitable, and what Mr Murdoch's takeover of an old British ruling class institution like *The Times* represents.

Few of the Fleet Street newspapers are profitable. This reflects not only the economic crisis but the general decline in newspaper readership as television has become a much more important news medium.

The Times, formerly the acknowledged mouthpiece of the British ruling class, has lately found difficulty establishing its own distinct space in the newspaper spectrum. Thus, while the *Guardian's* circulation has increased by 50 per cent in ten years, that of *The Times* has stagnated or declined. Strong trade unionism has established a high level of staffing and wages.

The takeover of *The Times* by Rupert Murdoch is itself a reflection of another process at work — the increasing inroads into British newspaper ownership by multinational corporations.

Rupert Murdoch got hold of TNL at the knock down price of £15m. It seems likely that the real estate of the firm alone is worth £50m. From a purely financial point of view Murdoch would gain massively from simply closing down the firm and walking away with the real estate cash.

Producing low cost newspapers is today an inherently unprofitable business. The trade unions in the industry should defend their members' hard-won rights — working conditions, jobs and pay — and not allow them to be made the victims of Fleet Street's profitability crisis.

But socialists should be opposed to capitalist papers like *The Times* and *Sunday Times* closing down, however much they are political weapons for the ruling class.

They represent part of the means of production in the media, and it is no part of democratic socialist policy that the media should be restricted. What is needed is the nationalisation of the means of communication, including all broadcasting and newspapers, and their opening up to political parties, trade unions and other groups so that the media can be expanded not restricted.

It is always the boast of the capitalists that they stand for a 'free press'. But the popular press is becoming even less free, as more and more of it gets into the hands of the multinationals.

A cheap popular press, with many different groups able to publish their opinions, means a subsidised press. Running newspapers as first and foremost businesses will have the same effect in London as in New York — where there is only one daily paper left.

In the meantime both the print unions and the NUJ should reject the idea that their members should have to pay to keep Mr Murdoch profitable.

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.

Lobby TUC for action against Tebbit

A MASS lobby on 5 April is to demand action against Norman Tebbit's anti-union 'Employment' Bill. The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions has called the lobby outside a meeting of 112 trade union executives at Wembley, who will be discussing the TUC's eight-point plan against the Bill. Socialist Challenge calls on all its supporters to build this action.

The Employment and Organisation Committee of the TUC has approved an eight-point plan, setting up a £1.1 million fund to defend unions attacked using the law, and is to call on constituent unions to co-ordinate action 'including, if necessary, industrial action' against the Bill. But it decided by eight votes to five against withdrawing from co-operation with the government, and its industrial action proposals are hedged with 'ifs' and 'buts'.

Motion

Can the TUC campaign be made effective? The sort of action needed was outlined at last Sunday's Annual General Meeting of the Lancashire County Association of Trades Councils, which passed a motion demanding:

- *National and regional demonstrations
- *Organisation of industrial action against the Bill.
- *An end to TUC participation in discussions with the government.
- *A massive publicity campaign to expose Tory hypocrisy.

Commit

'We are asking every trade union body in Lancashire to commit itself to placing its weight and resources behind any union or shop stewards' committee facing the use of either Tebbit's Bill or Prior's Bill,' said secretary John Parkinson.

'When Heath's legislation was introduced and in fact when Labour tried to bring in anti-union legislation in 1969, there were one-day strikes and mass demonstrations. This is the kind of action we need now to stop the Bill going



James Prior — whose 1980 laws paved the way for Tebbit's Bill

through.'

The meeting agreed that resistance to Tebbit should go side by side with defence of all existing struggles.

Next weekend is to see a demonstration in Leyland against Tebbit and in defence of British Leyland workers' jobs. It is backed by the BL strikers, by the Lancashire Association, the local

Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the County Labour Party.

'We are fighting for an understanding of the way in which the law as it stands is being used to prevent Bathgate workers from using whatever tactics they see fit to carry the dispute to a successful conclusion,' said John Parkinson.

The response to this kind of call shows that it is both realistic and possible to begin now preparing for a one-day strike against the Bill, as part of a campaign of mass action designed to smash it. But this can work only if, as in Lancashire, it is used as part of the mobilisation around all existing struggles — and not as a substitute.

DEFEATING HESELTINE

LABOUR Greater London Council doubled its rates this week. Two weeks ago it agreed to put £1 on the rents in a budget that also went along with the Law Lords decision to increase fares and cut services and jobs on London Transport.

Where does that leave the Labour GLC's manifesto? In tatters. Heseltine's Bill and the vicious and swift attacks from the Tories via the courts, have undoubtedly left Labour councils reeling. Stunned by this onslaught they have had no strategy for dealing with it. Instead they have pleaded that 'it's all the Tories' fault and what we need is a Labour government'.

But one of the surest ways of getting rid of the Tories and having a Labour government is for councils like the GLC to take a lead in mobilising support for its policies. The Fares Fair policy was one of the most popular measures a Labour GLC has taken for many a year. And the working class has no illusions as to whose side the courts are on. Yet instead of mobilising a mass movement in London to defy the Law Lords ruling, Labour announces a publicity campaign and votes for cuts.

The Labour left cannot substitute itself for the needs and aspirations of the working class but it can and should give a lead. Instead jobs and services have been cut, direct labour has been run down, rents and rates have risen, council housing sold and so the list goes on.

More importantly these left Labour leaders have been unable to place themselves shoulder to shoulder with those workers who are taking action against the Tories' policies. What have local and county Labour councils done for the train drivers, for Laurence Scott workers and BL strikers?

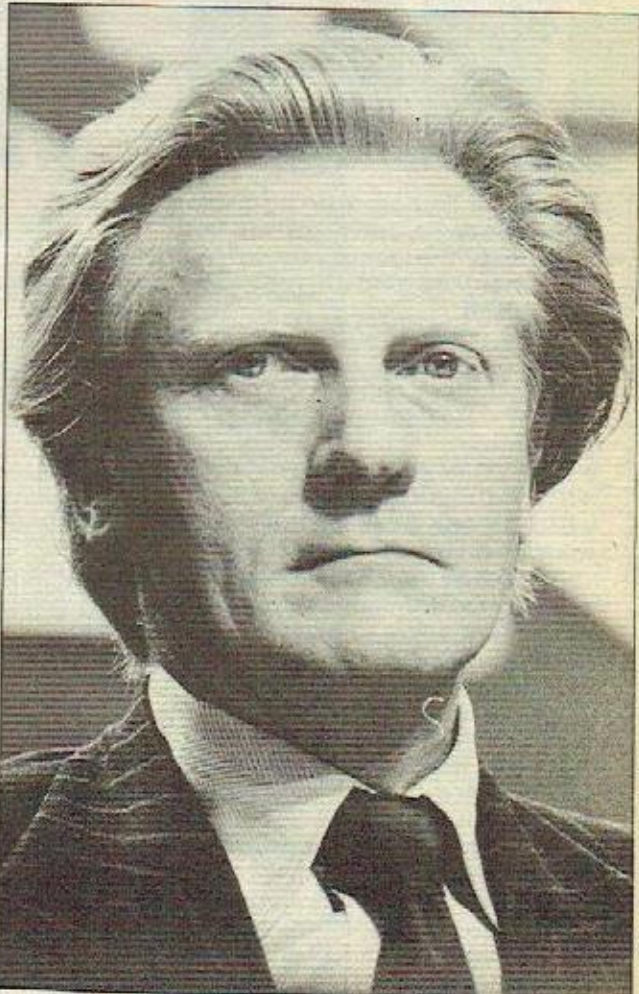
The Labour left has nothing to lose now by literally opening the doors of County Hall and the town halls to use a centre of working class action and resistance against the Tories. In London, despite the feebleness of the left's response to Heseltine and the Law Lords, the Fare Fight and GLC campaigns have operated as a focus for hundreds if not thousands of workers, including many transport workers.

At the same time Labour councils have to show the labour movement where the money really goes — to the banks and finance houses. The level of attacks on the working class especially through Heseltine's and Tebbit's Bills demands a national political response.

But such a national response can only be within the framework of Labour councils pledged to:

- *make no redundancies
- *support all workers' action against Heseltine
- *throw open the books to the labour movement to aid it planning a strategy to defeat the cuts.

Given such a lead workers will feel confident to take on the Tories and fight for a Labour government committed to socialist policies.



Michael 'Tarzan' Heseltine, Environment Minister

Two thousand vote for Bernadette

By Geoff Bell

CHARLIE HAUGHEY, of the outgoing opposition Fianna Fail Party seems set to form the next government in the south of Ireland. But how long he will be Fianna Fail's leader, and how long Fianna Fail will stay in office, are open questions.

The election results gave no clear majority to any party. The final results gave Fianna Fail 81 seats, the coalition partners Fine Gael and Labour 63 and 15 respectively and independents seven seats. There was a 1.97 per cent swing to Fianna Fail, mainly at the expense of the right wing Labour Party, and in constituencies where anti-H Block candidates had polled well in the last election.

Of these constituencies, only Bernadette McAliskey increased the vote received by anti-H Block candidates. Sponsored by Peoples Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International, she got 2,085 votes in the Dublin North Central constituency, over 500 more than the previous anti-H Block candidate. In other constituencies where Provisional Sinn Fein stood in place of anti-H Block candidates the vote fell by 50 per cent.

The main surprise in the election was the success of the left social democratic Sinn Fein — the Workers Party, who won three seats compared to one eight months ago. SFWP, formally the Official wing of the Irish Republican movement, has over the last few years, moved consistently to the right on the national question, to the extent where it now supports partition. In the north of Ireland this resulted in its eclipse as a political force of any significance.

The apparent success of SFWP in the south, together with the low vote of candidates associated with the anti-imperialist movement will be a disappointment to the movement and its supporters. However, the results are not all they seem at first glance.

Clash

For instance, although SFWP tripled its number of seats in the Dail (parliament), nationally it only increased its vote by 0.58 per cent. And, in constituencies where there was a direct clash between SFWP and anti-imperialist candidates the anti-imperialist vote was marginally better. In Cavan/Monaghan the Provisional Sinn Fein candidate received 3,974 first preference votes, compared to 529 for SFWP, while in the two other constituencies SFWP had narrow victories over candidates of the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Nevertheless, many will be disappointed with the votes of Provisional Sinn Fein, the IRSP, Bernadette McAliskey and the other PD candidate Joe Harrington, who received 215 votes in Limerick East. Bernadette herself showed no signs of demoralisation. 'We went to every door in this constituency and we put our policies clearly and honestly to the people,' she said. 'We held the vote and we moved it forward, and I think we did particularly well in that. And having started



Haughey

the fight here we will continue the fight, and we'll be consolidating and building further on that position the next time around.'

Success

Certainly, Bernadette's campaign was a remarkable success. Literally hundreds of people were involved, from a variety of political backgrounds, and there was a steady stream of leaflets and election manifestos which were delivered to every house in the constituency.

One handicap of the campaign was a leaflet distributed by the anti-



Bernadette campaigning

abortion group SPUC which urged voters not to support Bernadette because of her support for a woman's right to choose. This intervention may have lost Bernadette several hundred votes.

A further factor which restricted support was that many voters may have been worried that Bernadette's campaign was a short-term stunt. In that respect her clear promise to continue the fight in the

Dublin North Central Constituency will undoubtedly increase support for her next time around.

More generally, the Irish election results shows that many voters remain apathetic towards

the major parties, and that the right wing social democracy preached by the Labour Party has dwindling support. There remains a vacuum in Irish politics and the appeal of clear anti-imperialist

socialist policies can only increase in the coming months as the twin crisis of the economy and partition remain unresolved. The Irish election has proved little and settled nothing.

Tony Benn shifts on Ireland

By Geoff Bell in Dublin

TONY BENN, who 18 months ago helped open up the Irish debate in the Labour Party by advocating British withdrawal from Ireland 'the sooner the better', substantially modified his position at a press conference given in Dublin during the Irish elections.

Calling for the formation of a Labour Party in the north, he said that British withdrawal 'should be placed in this context'. In effect this is the position of the *Militant* and was adopted against strong constituency opposition by the 1981 Labour Party conference.

Unions

Only eighteen months ago Benn attacked the idea of a Labour Party confined to the north during a fringe meeting at the 1980 conference. But in Dublin he insisted that the way forward was to 'call a conference of trade unions in

the north', build 'labour representation in the north', and from there 'build unity around the problems people experience'.

In listing these problems, Benn featured unemployment and monetarism — but not the repression of the Catholic minority in the north, a repression he has previously condemned.

Also in contrast with previous occasions when he spoke out on Ireland, Benn refused to criticise the Irish policy of the last Labour government despite prompting from journalists. His criticism of British troops in Ireland was also muted, saying this issue was now 'full of complexities'.

He was equally evasive on whether the Unionists in the north had the right to veto political development in the north. He said he was against the 'guarantee to Unionists' but paradoxically said Irish unity could only be endorsed with 'the consent of the north'.

This amounted to a

paragraph by paragraph endorsement of the ambiguities contained in the document passed by the last Labour Party conference. Tony Benn has previously publicly reserved the right to advocate policies different from those agreed by conference, and indeed did so specifically with regards to Ireland during the deputy leadership campaign.

Conditions

He shows no such inclination now. He defended the conference policy in Ireland and claimed it was greeted 'with enthusiasm' by conference delegates, even though a large majority of CLPs at conference voted for a more left wing pro-British withdrawal position.

For Tony Benn that withdrawal must now be conditional on what he called 'class unity' and 'consent' in the north. As Vincent Browne, editor of the Irish news magazine *Magill* commented, 'But Mr Benn, how can you talk about class unity and consent when the north state was set up and exists to exclude such possibilities?'



Railworkers plan to oust Weighell

By D. Ellis, NUR member

UNOFFICIAL strike action by angry members of the National Union of Railwaymen virtually shut down two mainline stations and disrupted services throughout the London region last Friday, 19 February. A follow-up meeting of depot representatives the following Monday mapped out a longer term campaign to kick out the flexible rosters and all the other productivity plans that Sidney Weighell, the union's general secretary, seems intent on ramming down the throats of the membership.

Its first priority will be to launch a vigorous campaign to win national support for a special general meeting of the NUR.

Weighell and the other members of the Union's executive that back him will be prime targets in this campaign. And it's no wonder after his performance in recent weeks. Not only did he sell his own members down the river by signing away their right to an eight-hour day, but his attitude to the courageous action labour movement. During the ASLEF strike, it was often hard to tell if Weighell was speaking as a leader of a union or as a representative of the British Rail Board!

As striking workers assembled outside Unity House, the headquarters of the NUR, a roar went up: 'We want Weighell'. 'Hang on lads ...' came a feeble rejoinder. 'Are you trying to tell us the executive aren't prepared to listen to us?' demanded one railworker incredulously. 'They're too scared!' shouted another.

After frantic negotiations behind carefully locked doors, union leaders were forced to offer to meet six representatives. 'No way, all of us, or none!' was the noisy verdict. Other compromises were equally quickly swept aside until the executive meekly agreed to book a room in a nearby hall.

About a dozen executive members confronted several hundred angry railworkers. If the leadership thought it would convince the meeting that productivity has a human face after all, then it was sorely disappointed.

In the face of persistent bullying and insults by Sidney Weighell — who got as good as he gave — Des Lane chairing the meeting said, 'After hearing these viewpoints from the executive, have you changed your minds?' A deafening roar of 'No' sent Sidney Weighell on his way to another engagement.

Ian Williams, a left-winger on the executive nodded in agreement with



Photo: PETE GRANT (Socialist Challenge)

Friday's strike action proved that railworkers are no longer content with venting their disgust with union leaders, but are prepared to begin to organise against them.

angry speeches from the floor. He indicated his support for a special conference of the membership.

A campaign for such a conference will not be easy to win. Dozens of branches have sent in resolutions to union headquarters. Executive members claimed no knowledge of them.

Well, no matter how many resolutions may have been thrown into Sid Weighell's waste-bin, the growing resistance of railworkers cannot be ignored. Weighell's claim

that 99.9 per cent of NUR members agree with flexible rostering is growing a bit thin. The fight is on to democratise the union so that policies which represent the members' interests will be promoted.

A model resolution calling for a special general meeting will be drawn up by the steering committee of the London LDC's (works committees). Plans are already underway for steering committee members to travel throughout the country to meetings already organised.

What striking guards told Socialist Challenge

What we think of Weighell is shown by hundreds of resolutions from branches criticising his stand.

John, Ealing Broadway
The branches were never consulted about flexible rostering. What is most annoying us is Weighell keeping information from members. It is the NEC's collaboration with management which is cutting off the membership from Unity House. It would be fantastic if Peter Parker resigned. He's really a Tory.

Things would be improved if Tony Benn was leader of the Labour Party. I think his election defeat was rigged.

Mike, Southall This is a unique situation we've got ourselves into. Our members are not only fighting BR, they are also fighting our executive.

Senior guard, Southend Essex radio made the charge that the guards are cowards. I've got campaign medals! We want this charge withdrawn. A lot of us are old soldiers and campaigners. I've given 35 years of service to BR and this is the first time I've taken industrial action. The real cowards are the NUR executive — they're refused to explain the ins and outs of flexible rostering to the membership.

Train drivers' victory KEEP GUARD UP

By Pete Grant, ASLEF

AFTER FIVE WEEKS of industrial action the train drivers of ASLEF emerged victorious against the attempts of the British Rail Board and the Tory government to push through their productivity plans and to smash their union.

The McCarthy Tribunal report fully vindicated the train drivers. British Rail is now to pay the disputed three per cent owed to the drivers from August. The flexible rostering issue is to be taken back into the normal negotiating machinery without any binding commitments from ASLEF.

Ray Buckton said after the report was published, 'I am laughing.' Peter Parker of BR could only go scurrying back to the Department of Transport with his tail between his legs.

The victory of ASLEF is not however just a victory for the train drivers. It is a victory for all workers who are fighting, or likely to fight this Tory government. The Tories were up to their necks in the battle. It has now been confirmed that Tory ministers instructed BR's climb-

down. As with the about-face on pit closures this victory will boost the confidence of other groups of workers to fight Tory attacks.

A note reportedly on Peter Parker's desk said: the Buckton stops here. Ray Buckton should have a sign on his desk saying the Thatcher stops here.

The Tories had imagined that they could smash a small but proud craft union with a membership demoralised by years of working in a small decaying public sector industry without inflicting any great harm on the economy. This would be a taster for the likely reaction to Tebbit's anti-union

laws. It would have had the added advantage of removing a left wing voice from the TUC giving a boost to the right wing to accommodate with those all important Tory laws.

Throughout the dispute, the drivers and their leaders were subject to an unprecedented campaign by the Tory backers in Fleet Street. Distortion of the facts, accusations of widespread fiddling, even incitement to violence came from the very worst of gutter journalism — the Sun, as usual, led the pack. The most despicable acts, however, came from within the labour movement itself. The right wing block of trade union

leaders, Duffy, Boyd, Chapple and Weighell — conducted a prolonged scabbing campaign against the drivers with their call through the press for a return to work and acceptance of flexible rostering.

It's the same union leaders who form the



Ray Buckton: 'I'm laughing'

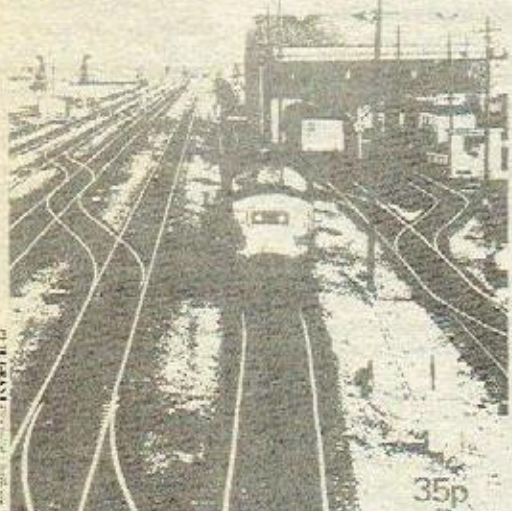
backbone of the right in the Labour Party and it's a lesson all members of the Labour Party should learn. The fight in the unions and outside is the same. It's time to tear up the Bishop's Stortford agreement and shunt these apologies for trade union leaders into the sidings where they belong.

The drivers' victory should not be seen as the end of the fight. Complicity should not be allowed to set in. The Tories are already looking at ways in which to recoup their losses. Threats to cut off the vital funding BR needs to survive have

already been made. Other productivity items are already agreed and this year's pay negotiations have not even started. The ASLEF victory has changed the balance in favour of railworkers. The Tories have suffered a major defeat in a very important first round battle. They must not be allowed to win the war.

The police action at Laurence Scott's has shown workers what Thatcher's Tory Britain will be like if she finally wins. It's about time the trade unions showed Thatcher what a workers' Britain will be like.

HOW TO FIGHT 'PRODUCTIVITY'



Socialist Challenge PAMPHLET FOR RAILWORKERS

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

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

FARES FAIR

Strike on 10 March!

By Tessa van Gelderen

THE UNIONS in London Transport have called for an all out strike for 10 March against the proposed increases in fares and cuts in services. The recent Law Lords' decision will result in a 100 per cent increase in fares on 21 March with more increases to come; bus services will be cut by 25 per cent and there will be reductions in underground services. Underground stations and bus garages will close and the night services are threatened.

The London Transport Trade Union Defence Committee launched a £20,000 campaign last week in defence of current services, against job cuts and for the restoration of the fares fair scheme. The strike call, which will be the first

time both tube and bus workers have struck together, came from a meeting of 700 workers representing all the unions involved in London Transport.

It was the first time rank and file leaders had ever held such a meeting which was called because of pressure from the Campaign to Improve London Transport. Certainly the union leaders don't want to do much — although they do want to be seen to do



something.

This is particularly the case with Sid Weighell's union, the National Union of Railwaymen, which had been very keen last summer to call a strike

against London leader Ken Livingstone, over the London Transport wage claim. Now that thousands of jobs are on the line the NUR leadership is not prepared to take any

meaningful action.

It is this attitude from the union leaders that has made some transport workers cynical about the proposed one day strike. They have had no explanation or meetings about the proposal.

At the defence committee meeting many representatives were dissatisfied with the way the platform refused to announce the date of the strike until the press conference the following day. After all,



as they pointed out, it was they who would have to organise it.

This one day strike can only be effective as part of an ongoing campaign against Tory policies that has to be taken into the heart of the labour movement. All trade unionists in London should be sup-

porting initiatives taken by London Transport workers.

At the same time there has to be a fight back at a national level. The campaign committee in London is giving support to the South Yorkshire lobby on 1 March and there are also plans for a selective non collection of bus and tube fares.

But despite the misgivings of transport workers as to how effective this one day strike will be, it has to be built into a resounding success. London should grind to a halt.

Then transport workers can use that action as a springboard to show how essential are the services they provide. The train drivers showed the Tories that — it's the only language they understand.



London Transport representatives — the first time all the unions had come together

Fares Fightback Calendar

Monday 1 March Lobby of Parliament from South Yorkshire transport workers
Wednesday 10 March One-day strike of London Transport workforce
Thursday 11 March Lobby of Parliament organised by GLC

Cheap fares: South Yorkshire campaign picks up speed

By Martin Hill and Chris Pitts, Sheffield bus drivers

LONDON is not the only part of the country where public transport is a burning political issue. South Yorkshire's cheap fares policy, in operation for over six years is under attack.

Following the Law Lord's ruling against the Greater London Council's subsidy to London Transport, lawyers have advised that our subsidy, collected on the rates, is also probably illegal. Although the county council has not yet announced what course of action it will adopt, it has started a campaign to defend cheap fares.

Ten of South Yorkshire's brown and cream double-deck buses will be driving down the M1 to Downing Street on 1 March. As well as a delegation of busworkers and representatives of the labour movement and community groups, they will be carrying a petition of a quarter million signatures expressing support for the cheap fares policy.

There has been enthusiastic support for the three-week old campaign — hardly surprisingly. The cheap fares policy has given the county the

cheapest fares in Britain, unchanged since 1975, with an average fare of 7p (working out at 9p for four miles).

As a result, the number of passengers carried has risen every year, the frequency of services has been improved, and new routes have been introduced. The social benefits are enormous, and so are the savings in other areas of council spending. The elderly, disabled, and people on low incomes have a mobility they could only dream of elsewhere.

There is less traffic congestion, fewer road accidents, less need for inner-city car parks, and so on. Bus users and car drivers both benefit — Sheffield is one of the

easiest city centres to park in anywhere in the country.

At last year's local elections, cheap fares were the main plank of Labour's campaign platform, with the slogan 'Aren't the best bus service and cheapest fares in Britain worth 50p a week?' (the cost in rates to the average family). Labour's already large majority was increased as voters overwhelmingly backed cheap fares.

If the subsidy is ruled illegal, and has to be removed altogether, fares could rise this year by 500 per cent, and by 1986 by a staggering 1,270 per cent according to Transport Executive figures. There would also have to be a cutback in the number and frequency of buses; the

threat to jobs is massive. This is perhaps the gloomiest prediction, but in the context of the council's policy of eventually phasing out fares altogether, any rise would be a serious setback.

To many people, free buses seems crazy, but soon inflation will reduce the real value of the fares to such a level that it will be cheaper not to collect them. There is already one free service operating a circular route around the city centre for shoppers.

The campaign petition has been a big success, with people queuing up in the shopping centres to sign it. It is being taken around factories, clubs and community centres. The original target of 100,000 signatures was

met within a week, and the target is now 250,000.

Badges, stickers, posters have been produced, and the local press has given the issue front page coverage nearly every day for a fortnight. The campaign has been the main item of discussion at labour movement meetings, in pubs, and on the buses themselves.

When in uniform, complete strangers approach us to ask for the latest news, or where they should hand in petition forms! A march through Sheffield on Saturday 13 February attracted, at rather short notice, some 3000 demonstrators, led by 150 busworkers.

But time is running out. The County Council has to decide before 4

March whether to bow to the courts or defend the fares policy. Despite the razzle-dazzle of petitions, badges and car-stickers, it seems that they are preparing for the former rather than the latter course of action, relying instead upon the election of a Labour government which will reverse the legal ruling.

We have to insist that the campaign be broadened and strengthened by taking it into the South Yorkshire labour movement. We should be organising meetings with shop stewards committees and in canteens, explaining that workers will take the equivalent of a £4 a week wage cut — at least — if the cheap fares are scrapped. We need to organise and mobilise the labour movement behind

the policy, and behind the county council.

Finally, we have to ensure that the busworkers' union, the Transport and General Workers Union, puts its weight behind the campaign nationally. It is no use each region fighting on its own.

It is a scandal that the South Yorkshire lobby is organised for 1 March while London Transport's one day strike is on 10 March. We need the weight of the TGWU and the Labour Party nationally, building a national campaign, to turn around this attack upon democracy and living standards.

It is only through this approach that we can make sure that it is us, and not the judges or Michael Heseltine, who decide what sort of transport policy we will have.

Bradford 12 Case — laws used as political weapon

By Bernhard Hernes

IN THE case of the Bradford 12 — Asian youths charged with conspiring to make explosives following the riots last summer — the law is being used as a political weapon against black radicals and anti-racists. The very same laws have been and will be used against trade unionists.

This was one of the main points made by Patricia Hewitt, general secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties, at a meeting in Leicester on Sunday 14 February of black workers and labour movement activists in support of the Bradford 12.

Patricia Hewitt condemned the judiciary, saying that no 'hard evidence' is needed in order to convict under the conspiracy laws.

There is much reliance on 'hearsay evidence' — a nod or a wink is enough to convict. This would not be allowed in an ordinary criminal trial.

While this sort of practice is accepted there can be virtually no defence.

Jim Marshall, the Labour MP for Leicester South was there to give his support. He proposed reform of the conspiracy laws and called on the labour movement to take

up this case with some urgency.

He said that he understood fully why black workers had to organise against Labour racism and described the history of Labour Party politics as racist along with the appalling record of the trade unions' support for immigration controls.

Bernie Grant, a full time official for the public employees union NUPE and a founder of the Black Trade Unionists Solidarity Campaign stressed the need for black workers to organise in the trade unions to conduct the struggle against racism.

Many of the issues discussed at the meeting will also be taken up at the Bradford 12 national conference to be held in London at County Hall on 27 February.

The conference is open to all those who support the campaign to free the Bradford 12.

A social will follow at the Africa Centre, Covent Garden with live band and disco, £2.



Bus workers took the lead in the recent day of action in South Yorkshire

Militant... a parody of Marxism

By S Butler
The *Militant* group is in the firing line of a ferocious witch-hunt. Every socialist has the elementary duty to defend it against the right wing.

This said (and acted on!), its politics bear scrutiny. Its new pamphlet — *Militant: What We Stand For* — gives its own account of itself.

Militant takes pride in its Marxism and its programme. But a Marxist programme, to paraphrase Lenin, is always concrete. It should show the labour movement how, starting from today's struggles, its actions can transform society. The opposite approach permeates this pamphlet. It begins from *Militant's* idea of how it wants to change society, determined by its pre-occupation with deflecting an attack from the bureaucracy, and demands that everyone should adapt themselves to it.

Demands

It opens with a crude account of the British crisis coupled to a shopping list of 'demands'. But whenever any of these demands touches real life we are sternly warned that only a socialist transformation can guarantee...etc.

This attitude has walled off sections of the *Militant*-led YS from the real mass actions of youth. Last year's LPYS conference decided to affiliate

to CND — but the *Militant* have made no move to put this mandate into practice.

The reason for this sterile dogmatism is the focus of *Militant's* programme — the demand for 'Labour to Power on a Socialist Programme'.

Power

Its strategy hinges on Labour abolishing capitalism through parliamentary legislation. It completely ignores the role of revolutionary parliamentarians in focussing the assault on the masses on the state. It remains silent about, or passively accepts, the existing *Tory* state as its chosen instrument.

How will Labour 'take power' through parliament? By an 'Enabling Act'. But even were a cabinet committed to such an Act miraculously allowed into office, a battle for power would then rage in

every department of society.

Any government wanting to carry through mild reforms, let alone a socialist programme, must take its authority and legitimacy from the organisation and actions of workers, because this is the only way its policies could be carried out.

A Marxist programme should explain how to address these tasks. What lies behind *Militant's* failure to adopt such a programme? Above all its failure to fight the labour bureaucracy in both the party and the unions.

For *Militant*, everything is subordinated to its 'principle' of staying in the party. This elevation of a tactic into a principle leads to its political adaptation.

LPYS

For all its verbiage about 'socialist transfor-

mation' responsibility is to be handed over to the Labour Party which, we are informed, can be transformed into an adequate instrument for socialism.

This flies in the face of reality. Even the small gains of the last period have produced a furious

bureaucratic onslaught and a deliberate drive to use the SDP to block the installation of a radical Labour government.

In the 1920s the Labour leadership closed down half the party rather than permit support for the Marxist programme of the National Left Wing Movement, inspired by the Communist Party.

In the 1930s the Independent Labour Party was expelled. The YS has been closed time and again. What will *Militant* MPs do against a threat to withdraw the whip? How will they face a threat to close the YS?

The fight with the bureaucracy should prepare a new party — a workers' party with a revolutionary programme — that cannot be destroyed in a bureaucratic onslaught.

Control

Of course the construction of such a party has to go hand in hand with a battle for control of the LP. But if no recognition is taken of the bureaucracy's willingness to destroy the party, and no attempt is made in the here and now to prepare a new party, then the result is bound to be a basic political adaptation to

today's labour leadership.

Nowhere is this more clearly expressed than in their 'internationalism'. 'Socialism', they tell us 'is international or it is nothing'. In a pamphlet that does not mention their policy on Ireland, on El Salvador or on Poland, and whose only reference to the war drive is a solemn affirmation that only socialism brings peace, this is a hollow joke.

The crises that produced the Polish and Salvadorian events have put ten million youth on the streets of Europe in the last year against the missiles.

This is a vast repository for the battle against Britain's labour bureaucracy.

Support

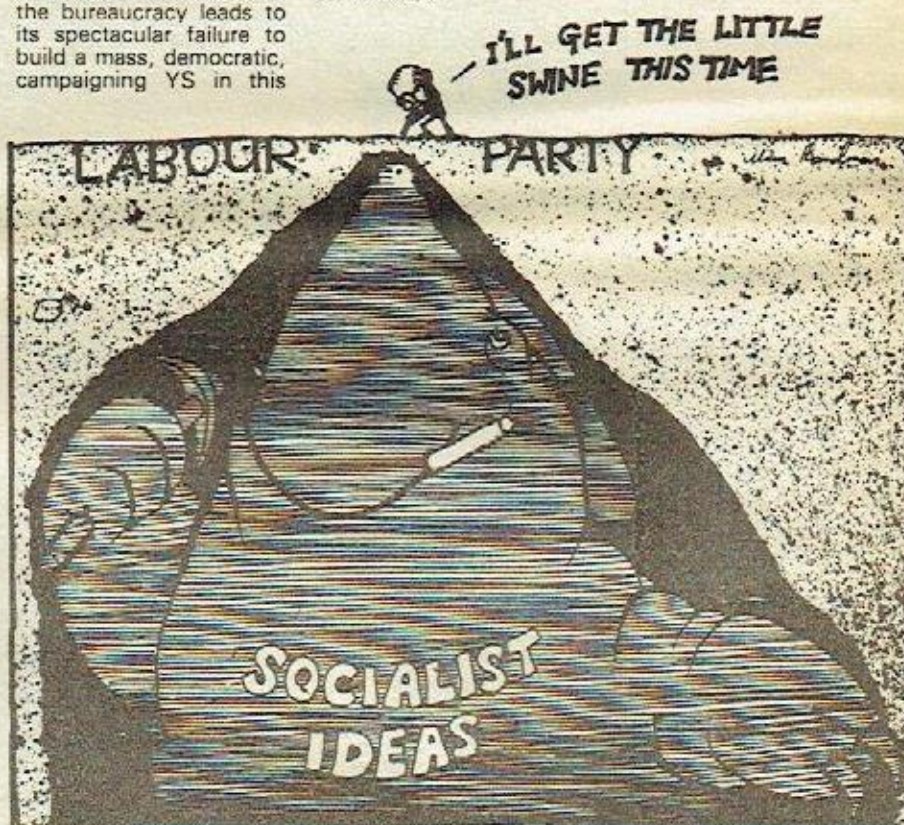
The centrepiece of the labour bureaucracy's defence of capitalism has always been support for Britain's 'national' interests against the international interests of the workers.

It is quite natural that *Militant's* greatest compromise with the bureaucracy falls in this arena. It is inevitable also that its compromise with the bureaucracy leads to its spectacular failure to build a mass, democratic, campaigning YS in this



most favourable period — choosing instead to build a propagandist sect in its own image.

Militant: What we stand for, 20p from *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



'PRACTICAL STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN'

AT THE founding conference in mid-January of Labour Liaison '82, the new co-ordinating committee of the left in the Labour Party and the trade unions, a further national meeting was promised for one month on.

This would discuss practical suggestions on how to act on the aims and objectives of the campaign. Now at the end of February, there are no concrete plans for a re-call conference, according to Norman Atkinson MP, one of LL'82's organisers.

The suspicions that some of the left had agreed to a truce at the Bishop Stortford meeting of Labour and trade union leaders seem well founded.

However their dreams of a 'quiet life' are not shared by

all. *London Labour Briefing*, a left monthly journal associated with Ken Livingstone, has stated that if LL'82 doesn't take up the fight for socialist policies, it will.

As part of our series on Labour Liaison '82 we reprint Labour Briefing's thoughts on what should be done.

● *Briefing* has made its own position very clear. On the question of the National Executive Committee, for example, if no lead is forthcoming, we shall be organising and campaigning ourselves to remove Neil Kinnock and Joan Lester — not simply because of their abstinence in the deputy leadership election, but because of their proven unreliability on many of the most important issues of the day.

We simply do not believe that hundreds of constituencies elect them to the executive so that they can oppose NEC control of the manifesto

LONDON LABOUR 30p
BRIEFING
No 18 MARCH 1982

**PASSENGERS AND TRANSPORT WORKERS
UNITE IN MASS ACTION**

**CAN'T PAY—
WON'T PAY!**

broadsheet against the witch-hunts, and we hope to see a full-page advert appearing in *Labour Weekly*, signed and paid for by MPs, prospective candidates and others, endorsing the views of Peter Tatchell, defending the rights of *Militant* within the Party and embarrassing the Party leadership.

They must be shown that they may chop off Peter Tatchell's head, but for every left-wing head that rolls, another ten, another hundred, another thousand, will spring up to challenge them.

We are not going to win the issue by waiting for a concession from the right, we are only going to win by campaigning and fighting.

These are the kind of practical steps we believe Labour Liaison '82 should be taking. Yes, of course Labour must win the next election — as Tony Benn said, the left hasn't 'but a gut' winning the policies and the constitutional issues in order to lose!

But the fight for socialism within the party is consistent with our desire to win the next election, and there can be no let-up in pursuit of either of these complementary aims.

and support witch-hunts and purges. Secondly, we will support all practical campaigning steps to stop the

witch-hunts. Comrades from Bermondsey, together with *Briefing* supporters and others, are producing a

Plessey Bathgate sit-in goes on

By Neil Cruickshank

WORKERS at Plessey Capacitors in Bathgate are determined to fight for their jobs and continue their sit-in now in its fifth week. They were sorry to see the Leyland workers in Bathgate give up their fight, but this has made them even more insistent on 'continuing for the sake of the community'.

Bathgate, as they point out, once a centre of the industrial revolution, is now an industrial desert; unemployment runs at 30 per cent in the town.

The management are trying to intimidate the workers by using the law as a weapon. On Friday 25 February, 141 workers will be summoned to court to answer why they had not complied with an original order to end their sit-in.

The slogan of the sit-in — 'We want justice — and jobs' — describes the workers' attitude.

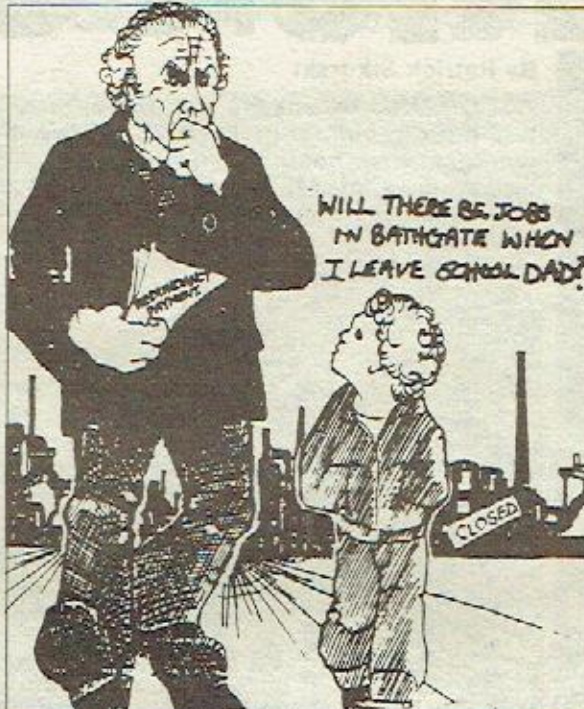
The fight for jobs is a just one; the 19th century law which the management has dredged up and which has only been used once before this century is a bosses' law and represents the bosses' interests — not the workers.

The only way to win is to make another Lee Jeans in Scotland. Already the workers have received delegations from Plessey factories in Liverpool and Beeston and the local community is right behind them.

A rally has been called for 27 February and the West Lothian Labour Party and Trades Council are producing the material including badges, and collection sheets.

Why don't you ...

- Take collection sheets to your workplace, community organisations
- Send a delegation from your factory
- Organise meetings and factory visits, particularly in the build up to the women's right to work event on 5 June called by the Labour Party
- Raise money through



WILL THERE BE JOBS IN BATHGATE WHEN I LEAVE SCHOOL DAD?

local women's right to work activities.

- Send resolutions through Labour Party wards and trade unions calling on the TUC and LP

nationally to show support.

If you want any material write to Mary Murphy, 30 Main Street, Fauldhouse West Lothian.

like Tony Benn to drive the struggle into the base of the labour movement and to link it to the national fight-back against Thatcher and her suitors in the Labour and trade union bureaucracy.

As Phil Penning said at the Lucas rally, 'It's people like you who are going to keep the fire burning for the rest of the trade union movement, and I hope it blazes out of all proportion.'

'The workers at Laurence Scott salute what you are doing.'

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

T Lucas — 'We salute you'

By Jon Lovibond

PHIL PENNING speaking at the 'Defend Lucas jobs' rally in Bristol on 19 February said on behalf of the strike committee of Laurence Scott in Manchester: 'We had one meeting we wouldn't turn down no matter what came up, and that was this meeting, because we know what support you've given us in the past and we know the problems you're going to come up against.'

T Lucas in Kingswood, Bristol, is a subsidiary of the multi-national fast and frozen foods conglomerate Dalgetty-Spillers, which last week announced half year profits of £19.6m.

The all-out strike now in its third week, is to save 53 jobs in the rusk mill which is due for closure in March.

The rally attended by some 300 strikers, their

families, dockers, busworkers, other trade unionists and Labour Party representatives began to point the way forward.

Tony Benn MP for Bristol South East as first speaker, spoke of the parallels between Polish Solidarity and the industrial struggles breaking out all over Britain.

He gave his full support to the Lucas workers and offered

whatever help he could give.

The question of leadership was the consistent theme. Colwyn Jones, Lucas convenor demanded: 'a strong coordinated labour and trade union leadership to fight Thatcher's unemployment policies.'

'Traitors like Healey, Duffy, Boyd and Kitson must be thrown out.'

Busworker, Jim Cheek, echoed this point: 'Workers are facing a three-cornered fight. It's the rank and file against the bosses, the government and the trade union bureaucrats.'

The urgent need now is to spread the dispute, to use speakers



1980 Civil Service strikes weren't enough

Civil service pay offer 'Ten applicants for every job'

By Bill Alder, Mansfield CPSA

MOST people's idea of a civil servant is a bowler-hatted city gent, but the overwhelming majority of civil servants are low paid clerical workers.

Tens of thousands are below the official poverty line.

On Tuesday 16 February, 65,000 of us were told that our 1982 pay rise had been cancelled. Other civil service grades were offered one to five per cent.

In areas like Nottingham the response of many civil servants was an immediate walk out.

Last year the civil service unions were in dispute with the government for five months, the longest national wages struggles since the 1926 General Strike.

But rather than call an all-out strike, the leaders of the biggest union, the CPSA, limited the action to selective strikes and overtime bans. The result was that union members got fed up with losing pay for actions which had little effect on the government.

Eventually we settled for just one per cent more than had originally been offered. Union

membership and morale fell.

The nil pay offer this year makes sense to the Tories. Young workers or first year workers are less likely to be union members because they fear victimisation and are almost ignored by union officials.

Tory spokesperson, Barney Hayhoe, stated on TV: 'If they don't like it they should remember that there are ten applicants for every job.'

But as the walkouts showed, the union membership is still willing to fight. The unofficial stoppages must be used to force the national officials to call strike action.

The CPSA's full claim is 13 per cent. The full time negotiators must not be allowed to settle for less, that is, to negotiate a wage cut for the membership.

The CPSA should plan joint action with the teachers' unions who have been offered a miserable three per cent.

The CPSA has the power to close airports and nuclear submarine bases, to foul up the government system of administration.

That power should be used now to stop the Tories in their tracks.

Another 'Lee Jeans'

By Judith Arkwright

'SUPPORT us because we support you'. This is the sign on the gate outside the Lovable Bra factory warehouse where 200 women are picketing to save their jobs.

The owners of the company are not so lovable and have been engaged in a typical asset stripping operation. A 'cash flow crisis' they claim has forced them to close the factory in Cumbernauld new town in the West of Scotland.

This so-called temporary crisis incidentally was brought on by an unpaid order of bras to Libya, whose government on hearing of the consequences for the workers immediately agreed to pay for the order.

For eighteen years the Pagan-Lovable company has been in Cumbernauld, supported by grants from the Cumbernauld development corporation, paying slave wages.

One woman we spoke to had been getting £87 for a seven-day week — with a basic rate of £30.

The women workers occupied the factory since the closure was announc-

ed in December and were finally evicted and made redundant last Wednesday, 17 February. But they haven't given up.

'Just let them try and stop 200 angry women,' said Sadie Lang the convenor of the Tailor and Garment Workers Union.

The women are now picketing the warehouse where £1.25m worth of stock is waiting to be delivered to the shops.

While we were there they turned away two lorries from British Home Stores and Littlewoods.

Another banner leaning against the factory gate says 'Cumbernauld is not a new town, it's a broo town' and with 20 per cent unemployment the women know they can't give up without a fight.

Many of them are the only 'breadwinners' left in the family. They know who their real enemy is and that's the Tory government — 'They talk



Sadie Lang, Convenor

about cutbacks — they wanna cut Maggie's legs off,' says Margaret, one of the women on the picket.

Their decision to carry on the picketing despite the closure has attracted attention and it looks as if an offer to save the factory might be forthcoming — the bosses and the government don't want another Lee Jeans and it's clear that the courage and determination of women workers shown in the struggle is certainly coming through at Lovable Bra.



Lucas strikers and families keen to fight



LAURENCE

Kick out the

By Patrick Sikorski

ACCORDING to last Friday's *Daily Mirror* the ten month old struggle by Laurence Scott workers was beaten last week by Arthur Snipe, boss of Mining Supplies, Doncaster who took over the Laurence Scott group just 18 months ago.

Under the sycophantic headline 'Britain's toughest boss' we read 'I see victory as putting one over them all' and 'It was my way of telling the bug-gers I can't be beaten.'

But 'if you really want to know' why 500 police were able to escort 10 lorries and a couple of dozen scabs through the Scotts picket line in Openshaw Manchester last week, don't look in the *Mirror* but listen to the Scott's workers themselves.

'We were defeated by the national union leadership and the police, not by Snipe,' said Denis Barry convenor of the strike committee.

'We are staying put in the strike offices along the street from the factory to push through the Rule 14 campaign to get a ballot to remove Boyd, Duffy and the executive. We already have confirmation of 119 branches supporting the campaign. We appeal to every AUEW branch in the land to get the other 132 into Peckham Road.'

Last July, when the strike was still official, it took just one week of picketing of his Doncaster factory to bring 'Britain's toughest boss' scurrying to the negotiating table. It was only after Boyd, Duffy and the rest of the national Confederation officials withdrew all union support that Snipe knew that he simply had to wait his time.

It was the consistent series of sell outs and stabs in the back from the national leadership of the AUEW that convinced Snipe and police chief Anderton that they could use brute force against an isolated workforce.

Even so the massive use of the police day after day - all police leave in the Greater Manchester area was cancelled - is a testimony to the fighting spirit of the remaining 200 Scotts workers.

What happened at Leyland?

By Patrick Sikorski

THE FOUR WEEK old strike to stop 4,000 redundancies at the Bathgate and Leyland, Lancashire plants of British Leyland Vehicles came to an end last week as mass meetings on Thursday and Friday voted for a return to work.

The vote at Leyland's five plants in Lancashire on Thursday was split down the middle and the vote at Bathgate the following day reflected that decision by voting three to one to return. The votes were against stewards' recommendations to defy Michael Edwardes' threats to close the whole Truck and Bus operation and continue the strike until demands for withdrawal of redundancies, an end to outsourcing and hiving off, and negotiations around the trade union alternatives were met.

Both strike committee leaders, Mick Coyne in Leyland and Jimmy Swan in Bathgate expressed bitter disappointment in the results but were confident that this was by no means the end of the fight against the implementation of the BL corporate plans. As Swan said: 'I think we have proved to the company that they are not going to walk all over the Bathgate factory.'

Ever since the breakdown of talks last Monday in London the media had mounted an unrelenting assault on the strike and this undoubtedly had its effect in ramming home Edwardes' threats. But the decisive role in breaking the strike was played once again by Boyd and Duffy.

Just two days before the mass meetings the weekly meeting of the AUEW national executive instructed Len Brindle, Preston District Secretary of the AUEW and ex-Leyland convenor, to read out the following letter from Michael Edwardes to Duffy at the mass meetings:

'Dear Mr. Duffy, It would be a matter of great concern if your Executive Committee does not recommend a return to work at Leyland and Bathgate at meetings on Thursday

and Friday. My colleagues have explained to you that we would be stretched to justify the £180 million capital needed for the present Truck Plan particularly after the strike. The employee representatives' alternative plan requiring £600 million is totally unrealistic.

The hard facts are that if we do not achieve normal productivity in the next few days the timetable will not be achievable. In the circumstances I will be recommending to the BL board on Friday that we take steps to cease manufacturing trucks at Leyland and Bathgate unless the management of the trucks business can demonstrate that the plan is achievable.'

Brindle read this out but immediately followed this up by reading the text of a resolution from the Preston District Committee of the AUEW which expressed 'disgust' at the attitude of the EC and 'endorsed without qualification our support for Leyland workers'.

But the real practical support that was building up in the Preston area was not reported to strike leaders or most importantly to the mass meeting by local Confed officials. The day before the mass meetings, a Preston Confed No 30 shop stewards' conference, attended by over 100 stewards representing every important workplace in the area, had unanimously voted to support the demonstration called this Saturday in Leyland and called for co-ordinated token industrial action in the area in support of the struggle.

The recent votes on wages and the Longbridge tea break strike in the cars division together with the fightback in Trucks indicates a willingness to confront Edwardes and the Tories. That means taking on Boyd and Duffy as well. The sell outs of these right wingers have built a right wing or passive section of workers in every engineering works in the country which threatens every strike and every stewards committee recommendation. Fighting to support the Laurence Scott Rule 14 campaign is the first step in getting rid of them.



Convenor Denis Barry (centre) argues with the police and gets arrested; Phil Penning, TASS steward, protests at Denis' arrest - and gets arrested



Joint Shop Stewards Committee Statement on Laurence Scotts

At Laurence Scotts we have seen a most commendable stand by trades unionists for the basic principle of the right to work. The true face of Thatcher and Tebbit's Tory Britain have been used to stop this an overkill operation by the police to bust the picket line. This was preceeded by strike breaking through the use of helicopters and the anti-union Employment Act was used to prevent the strikers gaining solidarity by effectively picketing the parent company.

The trade union and labour movement must both congratulate the Scotts strikers for the tremendous battle they put up but never allow this scale of attack to happen again.

The strike breaking we've seen at Laurence Scotts could be a foretaste of the future for all trade unionists. It can be stopped, but only by building a united movement that defends trade union rights and the fight for jobs. The Laurence Scott strike has been an example to us all.

Statement supported by Tony Benn MP and Ken Brett, assistant general secretary AUEW, Broad Left candidate for general secretary.



Tony Benn condemns the strike breaking activities. do the same.

THE SCOTT strike breakers

Open letter to the labour movement

Dear Colleagues,
The Laurence Scott workers are now in the 10th month of dispute in their fight for jobs, which we know has set an example to all trade unionists except the right wing leadership of all unions, who have capitulated to the Tory government and disgraced the name of trade unionism across the land.

Our letter today is to inform you that at our strike bound factory Snipe, the owner, organised a convoy of 11 lorries accompanied by a team of 30 scabs to break our picket lines. The police mounted an operation the likes of which have never been witnessed before — the strength of the police presence had to be seen to be believed. Talk about six pickets per gate: we were not even allowed one picket per gate.

The 500 strong police force including 48 of the Tactical Aid Group (Anderston SPG) violently removed our pickets from the gate leaving the gates free for the convoy of scab lorries to make their entrance into the factory. The work within the factory which we had vigilantly guarded for 10 months was bulldozed through our picket line.

We had five of our pickets arrested trying to stop these scabs.

We must now appeal to trade unionists all over the country to come to our aid and back this work, especially the National Union of Mineworkers, because 70 per cent of the scab work is destined for the coalfields.

If the trade union movement cannot support the blacking of the work it will be an absolute disgrace. Remember our employer Snipe has 100 per cent backing from the Employers Federation, while we have to continually beg for our support.

If we cannot help each other in this struggle they will eventually smash all resistance. Remember that the Arthur Snipes of this world will go to any lengths to destroy workers fighting for their rights.

On behalf of the Laurence Scotts Joint Shop Stewards Committee Works Convenor, Denis Barry.

The following scabs crashed through our picket in lorries bearing the names:
Armitage — Yorkshire
Outgates — Goole
J. Doyle & Son — Liverpool
Rouanes — Yorkshire
Clan Securities — Manchester

Snipe's contemptible smears in the local press against 'political bandits' and 'professional agitators, posing as unionists, but acting politically' will cut no ice with any engineer, unionist or Labour Party member in Manchester, or indeed throughout the country.

Local Openshaw residents immediately threw the slander back in the face of the authorities when within a few hours over 600 of them signed a protest petition against the area being turned into an 'armed encampment'.

But why were Boyd, Snipe and Anderton allowed to get away with it in one of the heartlands of the engineering union?

John Tocher, AUEW Divisional Organiser and leading member of the union Broad Left had pledged months ago that any attempt to break the Laurence Scott picket would be met with another 'Roberts Arundel'.

The Roberts Arundel fight was back in 1968 and involved an American multi-national doing an asset stripping operation very similar to Snipe's. Thousands of Manchester engineers successfully supported the picket.

Laurence Scott workers mobilised regularly for that picket just as they did eight years later for the other big battle around Automats which was a union recognition battle.

In fact while other factories picketed a set day every week 30-50 Scott's workers went down every day to Automat. But since then the full effects of the sell-outs by Manchester Broad Left hero Hugh — now Lord — Scanlon have hit every engineer.



Get your MP and local trade unionists to

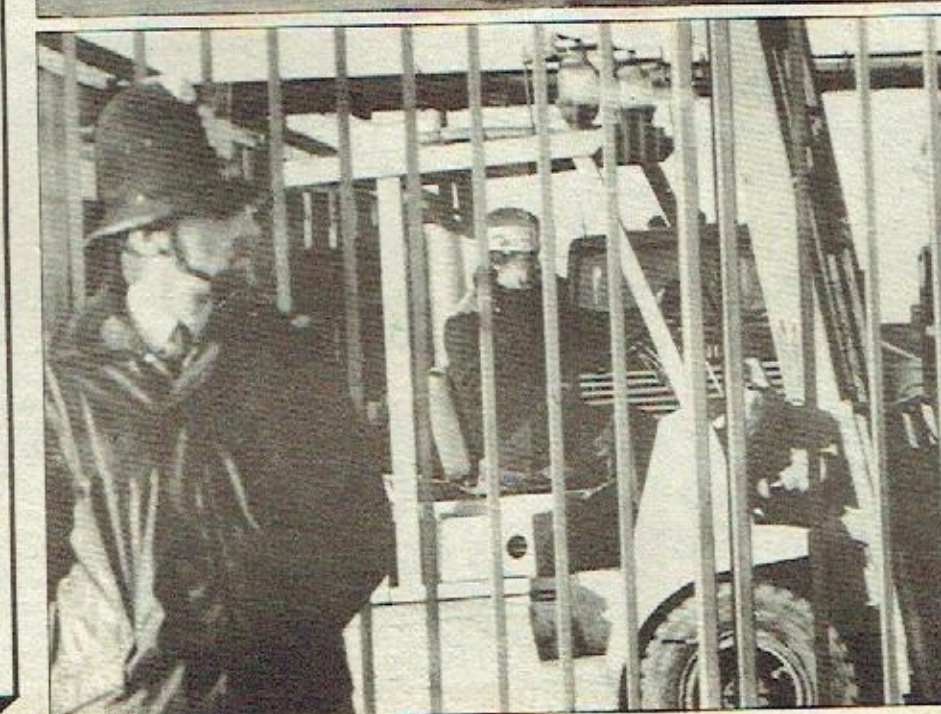
Scanlon's support for three years of Labour's Social Contract smashed the ability of the Broad Left to win any elections, never mind mobilise the rank and file.

Last week Broad Left convenors were in fact holding back their members from going down to Scotts as the news came over the radio from 6 o'clock onwards.

But thousands of rank and file engineers have supported Scotts. 1050 branches — nearly half of the total — passed resolutions condemning the executive's handling of the dispute last year, and it is almost certain that the Scott's workers will get the required 251 branches to support the Rule 14 campaign. This is the biggest, deepest and broadest movement against Boyd and Duffy since they came to power.

When Duffy and Boyd are replaced by a leadership that really fights for the rights of engineering workers, Scotts will be seen to have played a massive part. The fight for jobs at Scotts may be drawing to a close but the fight around the Rule 14 campaign can be the beginning of the end for Boyd and Duffy.

Tuesday 16 February:
The Tactical Aid Group (Manchester's SPG) charges the picket to allow the scabs through. Cutting tools and pneumatic drills are used to break through the gates. Ten lorries are loaded up with vital motors for the mining industry.



Support Rule 14 campaign

Laurence Scott Strike Committee
Protest resolution for AUEW branches

'THIS branch believes executive council has seriously mishandled the Laurence Scott dispute. As this is an issue of concern to all AUEW members the branch demands a ballot for removal of executive council in line with Rule 14, paragraph five.'

Rule 14, paragraph five states: 'The executive council, or any member thereof may be removed from office by a ballot of the membership of the union provided such a ballot is demanded by ten per cent or more of the branches and not less than two thirds of the membership are in favour of such removal. The ballot should be conducted by the General Secretary.'

If your branch supports the protest resolution, make sure it is sent to the AUEW general office, 110 Peckham Rd, London SE15 and a copy is sent to the strike committee, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire with donations.

THE following AUEW branches have so far informed the Scott's strikers that they have passed the Rule 14 resolution calling for a ballot to remove the union leadership:

- Newton Abbot, Feltham 8, Glossop 16, Manchester 17, Paisley 2, Bury 3, Oxford 4, Openshaw 8, Blackwell, Eccleshill 2, Darlington 14, Hamstead, Oldhill 14, Kirby 31, Gillingham 2, Blackpool Layton, Manchester 10, Cardiff 3, Chester-le-Street, Redditch 4, Rubery, Newton Bromsgrove, Wallasey, Parkgate, Eastleigh 3, Birmingham 25, Billbrook, Willersden 3, Birtley, New Haw, Cardiff 5, Letchworth, Edgmont, Woolston, Basildon 2, Leigh 24, Bedford 15, Sheffield 19, Hackbridge, Sheffield 41, Elmsmere Port 7, Bristol 28, Kirby 2, Blaby, Sheldon, Bristol 2, Liverpool 17, Nelson 2, Ford 28, Lydney, Okeoverton, Speke 4, Bradford Cumber, Wisbeck, Rothwell, Leicester Central, Chapelton, Leicester 17, Bridgewater, Harlow 5, Chesterfield 5, Brockworth 3, Cambridge 2, Kirkby 3, Elmsmere Port 3, Coventry Flatchampstead, Stourport on Severn 13, Meadow, Rochester, Springvale, Peterborough, Coventry Parkside, Ross on Wye, Nuneaton 4, Selby 15, Accrington 6, Lutworth, Merthyr Tydfil, Bury 7, Yarnold 3, Newton Aycliffe, Colne, Workington 3, Wellingborough, Spennythorpe, Birmingham 4, Blackpool 2, Crayford 7, Swindon Cheyne Manor, Durdee Midmill, Shipley 37, Harlow 3, Wantage, Forest of Dean, Fleet Street, St Pauls, Horley Huddersfield, Burgh Fair Harlow, Droylsden, Cheltenham 4, Warstock Birmingham, Aspley, Coventry 73, Coventry Buckingham, Gloucester 8, Coventry 25, Slough, Nottingham 3, Sheffield 2, Saffron Walden 2, Erdington, Bedford 13, Leeds 14, Ashton on Ribbles, Basildon, Southall, Cheltenham 4

251 branches are needed to force this ballot.

- What you can do if you are in the AUEW:
1. Make sure it's raised in your branch and all other branches in your district.
 2. Check your secretary sends the resolution to both the union HQ and Laurence Scott. It is vital that the workers at Laurence Scott receive copies as soon as possible. The branches above are just those who have sent copies to Laurence Scott.
 3. Invite a speaker/Video film on Scott's — now available — to your branch.

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. Andrew Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Prince 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, Crosswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.

HAMILTON: SC sale every Sat 1-4pm outside Safeway, shopping centre. For more info contact John Ford, 51 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton or Paul Youngson, 18 Forrest Crescent, Hamilton.

Wales

BANGOR: Sat 10-12 town centre.

CARDIFF: every Sat in Butte 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, Blithell 9-10.

BRADFORD: SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.

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 Pedestrian Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Headingley Aridale 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.

DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.

ILFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Lev Street.

MILTON KEYNES: Onkleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.

OXFORD: EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.

LEICESTER: Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Leicester, and V Karla, 53A London Rd, Leicester.

LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1.

LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays

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 Percival's 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 (Irisland Centre).

TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newfane, 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 Bearties, town centre from 11am-2pm.

YORK: on sale every Thursday, dole office Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Cony 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 Nelson's 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.

What's Left

RATES for What's Left: 5p per word or £4 per col inch. Deadline: noon Sat prior to publication. Payment in advance. Phone 01 359 8180.

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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.

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

LABOUR: Committee on Ireland. Discussion on southern Ireland elections. Thurs 25 Feb 7.30pm. Briton's Protection pub, 61, Bridgewater St, Manchester 1. Open to all LP members.

FREE: the Bradford 32 national mobilising conference Sat 27 Feb, County Hall, London SE1, 10-5. Details from Azim, phone 011 328 4523. Social follows at Africa Centre, Covent Garden, with live band and disco. £2.

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.

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-

Socialist Challenge News

Gisela Scholtz

Socialist Challenge regrets to inform its readers of the death, in Paris, of Gisela Scholtz on 14 February. Her comrades and friends deeply regret her death and a loss of a courageous and devoted activist.

Comrade Gisela was born in 1935 in Germany: her youth was

difficult due to the hardship of the war. She was involved in the struggle of the student movement in its heyday and was a leader with Rudi Deutschke in the Berlin SDS.

Thereafter she joined the Fourth International, fulfilling her tasks both in the Belgian section of which she was a national leader for several

years, and on the international level.

In April 1969 she was a delegate for the Belgian section at the ninth world congress of the Fourth International.

Gisela Scholtz was active and appreciated in her professional field as a researcher and journalist. She worked on German television for a period making several

films for them, including one remarkable one on the children of Belfast.

Her comrades and friends mourn with her family and her companion Ernest Mandel. They will not forget her. They will remember her contribution to the struggle for the renewal of the workers movement and the building of a revolutionary international.

International Women's Day

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE and Revolution have organised a joint tour of Mary Zinns, United States coalminer to celebrate International Woman's Day. Come along to one in your area:

Monday 8 March — Manchester — Rally for International Women's 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 Women's 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 Women's 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 women's 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 WOMEN'S 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 women's movement. Speakers from the Fourth International, including Irish section. Speaker from the campaign for abortion rights. Speakers from the action committee for a woman's right to work.



Entrance: £1 and 50p unaged. 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, 100 Whitechapel, London E1

The need for a revolutionary party

By Ailean O'Callaghan

LAST WEEK we saw how the trade union bureaucracy was forced to drop its former allegiance to the Liberal Party and participate in the formation of the Labour Party.

On the continent, social democratic parties built the trade unions not the other way round. Working class parties swearing allegiance to marxism existed prior to the widespread development of the factory system.

By the beginning of 1914, the German Social Democratic Party had more than a million members and published 90 daily newspapers which had 1.4m subscribers. It had a large women's section, youth section, cooperative, sports and cultural organisations and led several million workers

in social democratic trade unions.

Rosa Luxemburg, the great Polish revolutionary who was a member of the SPD's left wing, was nevertheless able to describe one of its leaders in the following way: 'There he stands in the street like a pot-bellied urinal... In any Serbian village there is more humanity than in the whole of German Social Democracy.'

On August 4th 1914, these 'pot-bellied urinaries', calling themselves marxists, joined with their non-marxist British counterparts in sending the work-

ing classes into World War I in the uniform of their respective 'fatherlands'.

From that day on, revolutionary marxists have had, as their chief task, the liberation of the working class from the influence of these reactionary bureaucrats and the creation of new mass revolutionary parties.

V I Lenin, who in 1917 led the socialist revolution, explained the new tasks facing revolutionaries the world over. He explained the betrayals of the so-called marxist parties by drawing parallels with the emergence of the labour aristocracy in Britain. The 'social chauvinism' of these parties was the result of a split in the working class with the growth



ARGUMENTS for SOCIALISM

of a privileged layer with its own interests against that of the mass of workers.

It was this layer of labour aristocrats and bureaucrats who had delivered the mass of workers to slaughter. The interests of the great mass of workers, however, still lay with the socialist revolution. Therefore new parties had to be built to break the hold of the bureaucracy.

An opposing view was put forward by Karl Kautsky. His most important argument — since it is still heard even on the left today — was to claim that the mass of workers were just as backward and just as chauvinistic as their leaders. He declared that the idea of a split in the working class was a nonsense. Simple argument was all that was needed to resolve the differences which would therefore be overcome in the passage of time.

Lenin was adamant: 'It is a lie when anybody says (Kautsky included) that the masses of the proletarians have shifted to chauvinism'. It was the bureaucracy that was responsible for ruling class ideas in the labour movement. They had to be driven out.

History decided the question. In 1917, Lenin's Bolshevik party led the Russian revolution in the teeth of the opposition of the Mensheviks. In 1919, the bureaucrats of the German Social Democratic Party drowned the German revolution in blood, using troops and fascist bands to murder thousands of German workers including Rosa Luxemburg and others.

The labour bureaucracy is the chief obstacle on the road to socialist revolution. The only way to overcome it is to build mass revolutionary parties rooted in the industrial working class.



The victory of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution and the murder of Rosa Luxemburg by the Social Democratic leaders proved the need for a new party.

Socialist Society strikes back

I HAVE been distressed to read your report on the Foundation Conference of the Socialist Society by Phil Hears in your issue SC 230. No doubt the inaccuracies of this piece reflect the fact that Phil, who did not attend the conference, has had to rely on misleading press reports.

To write that Eric Heffer was booed and hissed when he suggested that the Labour Party was the place to fight or 'when he urged the Socialist Society to

join the Labour Party' as your caption put it, gives quite the wrong impression.

In fact Eric Heffer was generally well received. When he urged individuals, not the Society, to join the Labour Party there were about two and a half boos and hisses from an audience of over a thousand people.

According to the registration about half of those present were members of the Labour Party. This session was chaired by Tariq Ali and there was some good humoured merriment when he declared that he would be only too

happy to follow Eric Heffer's advice.

Phil's report also declares with some emphasis: 'the one question of practical political orientation discussed by the conference was the Labour Party. The Conference decided not to allow the steering committee to prepare proposals on affiliation to the Labour Party ...'

The report then goes on to attribute this decision to the composition of the conference: 'independent socialist intellectuals ... Most of them actively hostile to involvement in the Labour Party.'

As it happens there were many Labour Party members who counselled against affiliation and James Cur-

ran, editor of *New Socialist*, made a particularly effective contribution on this point.

There was widespread agreement that we should try to strengthen socialist influence in the labour movement and Labour Party but the majority thought that affiliation would not be the most effective or appropriate

way to do this at the present time.

We were mainly pre-occupied with establishing the society at this conference and ensuring that socialists inside and outside the Labour Party could work within it. The formal motion for affiliation did not come up until late on the Sunday afternoon so that, con-

trary to the implications of Phil's report, there was no time to discuss it properly.

Achieving a vital connection with the labour movement will certainly be a priority for the Socialist Society and we know there are no easy formulas for this.

But 13 of the 30 people (excluding Tariq) who were elected to the steering committee were members of the Labour Party. We were also heartened by the fact that the first person who applied to join the society was Lou Adams of the ASLEF executive.

ROBIN BLACKBURN

Socialist Society

Alan Freeman replies

AS the Socialist Challenge delegate to Socialist Society's conference I can agree with most of Robin's factual corrections, and hope this will ease his distress. But I also think Robin has missed the points Phil makes.

Firstly, on affiliation. The problem faced by anyone in the Labour Party who wants to fight its present leadership (i.e. about 90 per cent of its members) is not just whether to be in the Labour Party but *how* to fight.

If Socialist Society merely puts its services or members uncritically at the disposal of the Labour Party the risk is that the right wing, with their control of the apparatus, will use those services much more effectively than the Party rank and file.

This is not a small matter for paid intellectuals, who have access to the printed word and hence great power.

There are many devices which commerce and bureaucracy have found to use this power for their own ends, as the sad history of Fabianism shows. Not the smallest of these devices is the subtle abuse of the intellectuals' own desires to reshape the world according to their own perfect ideals.

Will Socialist Society take sides in debates in the party? Will it find ways of putting its services at the disposal of those fighting oppression, rather than those promoting or condoning it?

The practical issue facing millions of trade unionists is their fight for democratic control of the party. At the centre of this

is now the fight for the right to *organise*, centring on the witch-hunt.

How will Socialist Society make a clear statement that its members want, not merely to be in the Labour Party but to take sides and conduct an organised battle? This is what is at stake: and if Labour Party members shy away from this issue, it indicates only their lack of a strategy for dealing with it.

But this is just one more instance of a more general problem.

Socialist Society has adopted a quite restrictive programme (one which excludes, for example, the

Communist Party) and a detailed individual membership structure. It rejected a Conference of Socialist Economists motion that tried to strengthen the role of affiliated bodies. It is putting its resources behind definite political campaigns, which implies a definite system of priorities.

This forces it to make choices. And these choices are simply *difficult*. Would anyone on the steering committee care to tell us whether the society will be offering publication facilities to Michael Foot? To the

Cambodian government in exile? To Colonel Ghadafy? And if not, why not? Such questions can't be settled by waving a programme — least of all the Socialist Society's.

There is no way around this by vowing to be friendly, and certainly not by brushing debates under the table. A proper system for debate is essential — including the tolerance of opposition, facilities for circulation of discussion, rights of tendency, and so on.

What is alarming about the decision on affiliation is that the defeated motion was not even a motion to

affiliate. It was a motion to *discuss* affiliating. It was the steering committee's own resolution, which it withdrew and which I then moved. In short, faced with a division on the only practical question confronting it, the steering committee decided not just against affiliation but against *discussing* it.

This highlights the danger to which Phil was rightly pointing: that of building a new ghetto for the left intelligentsia — a very comfortable one, no doubt — by trying to close ranks to uncomfortable difficulties which might provoke dissension, but which millions of people have to face *daily* because their lives depend on it.

There is much which is smug in the British left intelligentsia, and if Socialist Society wants to create a new popular common sense, its first step must

surely be to create the conditions for a struggle against the common sense of those from which its membership is drawn, instead of accepting it as the only light and truth.

Socialist Society can't have it both ways. Either it has to open ranks to *everyone* in the Labour movement, genuinely putting itself without strings at the service of the entire labour movement. Or it can set about building a new party, in which case — if it wishes to contribute to building a genuinely non-sectarian and revolutionary party, rather than the left's answer to the SDP — it must confront the practical issues facing the labour movement, and create an adequate democratic structure to do so.

The alternative is to take the well-trodden path of building a new sect.

Letters letters Letters
Letter: letters LETTERS

SDP is a petty-bourgeois party

HOPEFULLY the debate in the House of Commons over Tebbit's union-bashing proposals will have clarified a few minds about the real nature of the SDP. The SDP MPs split three different ways on the most important question for the British ruling class — how to deal with the unions.

Seventeen of them voted with the Tories and against the advice of their own specialist policy committee. The SDP's spokesperson on industrial relations voted against the majority of his parliamentary colleagues, four others did the same, a further five abstained.

Can anyone seriously claim that the British ruling class — the most experienced in the world — is going to entrust its future, in the middle of its gravest crisis to a party that crumbles at its first test before it's got anywhere near office?

And what of the Labour bureaucracy? Can anyone believe that by voting for measures that will attack the interests of the bureaucracy in an absolutely unprecedented way the SDP think they can forge an alliance with it? Eric Varley described Jenkins as 'Tebbit's poodle'. Healey called the SDP 'Tebbit's troopers', and 'Mark Two Tories'. Bill Sirs, arguably the most opportunist of the right wing bureaucrats in the TUC described them as 'pink Tories'. These were hardly the kind of overtures designed to woo the

SDP into an anti-Tory coalition with the Labour right, were they?

In my previous letter I argued that with the absence of support of any of the significant institutions of the ruling class (even the millionaire press has now turned against the SDP) or of the working class (not a single bureaucrat let alone a trade union has joined them) the SDP would have to be regarded as a party of the petty-bourgeoisie whose only future could be as a junior partner to the Tories.

Evidence is now emerging that this is the direction Roy Jenkins wishes to take the SDP in.

Owen has publicly stated that participation in a 'reshuffling of the right' would spell doom for the SDP. He wants to take the SDP in the classical direction that petty-bourgeois parties go in, towards radical populism, a course which is one which is doomed to failure in Britain.

Owen is not alone however. Shirley Williams explained her hesitation in voting with Tebbit by say-



The Gang of Four — leaders of a petty bourgeois party?

ing 'SDP policy is clear ... you cannot reform the unions without a reform in Company Law as well. We want an even-handed approach.' Isn't utopian 'even-handedness' towards Capital and Labour the stock-in-trade of petty-bourgeois parties?

The wishful thinking of Owen and Williams of an SDP which can play an independent role in British politics is being daily undermined by the class struggle. The majority of SDP MPs by voting with Tebbit were signalling that, having left Labour

behind, their only way forward was with the bosses' party, the Tories.

Certainly the SDP are important. Certainly they reflect the depth of the political crisis in Britain. They may lead to a change in the electoral process (depending on how fast the class polarisation proceeds) and how far the SDP is therefore able to maintain its grand illusion.)

But today it is the national rail strike, the Bathgate occupation and the stiffening of the resistance of the industrial trade unions and not the

antics of the SDP which will have the more important effect on the balance of forces between the classes.

Based on that analysis I said in my original reply that the left's opportunity is now — provided it gives a line for mass struggle.

That opportunity based on a projection of an SDP-Labour coalition cannot be put off until sometime in the next decade. The railworkers couldn't wait!

TOMMY CUSACK
Harrow

International Viewpoint

International Viewpoint is the new fortnightly English-language news and information journal of the Fourth International produced in Paris. It commences regular fortnightly publication this week. All Socialist Challenge readers are urged to subscribe.

Special introductory subscription price (25 issues per year): if you subscribe before 1 May: Britain £6, US \$13 (airmail \$18), Australia, New Zealand, Asia \$20.

Send cheques, postal orders made out to PEC, to *International Viewpoint*, 2 rue Richard-Lenoir, 93018, Montreuil, France.



Solidarnosc leader argues 'Prepare for a general strike'

THE following letter, addressed to all Solidarity activists, was signed by Zbigniew Janas, the chairman of the Solidarity chapter at the large Ursus tractor factory outside Warsaw and a member of the union's National Committee.

From the available information about the activities of the police and the Security Service and from the stepped-up propaganda against Solidarity members, we can conclude that the military regime is aiming to smash Solidarity and paralyse society. What activities should Solidarity members undertake?

1. It is necessary for representatives of our union to link up and collaborate with each other, both within each factory unit and among different workforces. To achieve this and to coordinate activities, it is vital to improve the flow of information.

This will also serve to relay the experiences of the union. It is necessary to achieve collaboration between those in the factories and those outside, and with this aim to organise meetings in private homes outside of working hours.

2. It is indispensable to organise broad material and moral support for the families of those arrested and persecuted. This must be carried out in a regular and ongoing way. Therefore it is necessary to organise collections of money from friends in the work brigade and union groups.

It must be remembered that such activities arouse solidarity among people and make the deprivation of anyone impossible. These actions must be undertaken immediately, considering the weight of their moral influence over people.

3. It is necessary to establish contacts with underground publishing houses with the aim of distributing leaflets and all other unofficial publications. This activity is enor-

facts on the basis of Goebel's maxim that a lie repeated a hundred times becomes the truth.

This activity must be

these activities without considering the security threat.

4. Strictly union activities must also be undertaken.

collective arrangements, and the carrying out of other legal activities that help workers, such as those concerning safety

take the organisational preparations.

They must not, however, carry out active resistance, since that could lead to bloodshed. In this country, the government, which claims to rest on the workers, has already spilled much workers' blood. Remember that they are murderers. It does not matter to them how many people are shot down if it serves their interests.

To conclude, I remind all activists that they were chosen through democratic elections for two-year terms. They

were given this approval, and nothing but nothing can prevent them from fulfilling their role of serving those who elected them.

Remember: we cannot defend ourselves through ignorance or fear. Each of us must calculate what they can do when it is possible, but also what to do when it is necessary to risk their jobs or even their freedom. In these difficult days we must all prevent the destruction of Solidarity, which is the only hope of Poles.

For us, the sun will shine once again.



mously important in light of the complete propaganda broadcast by the mass media, which lies, slanders, and distorts the

carried out in great secrecy, considering the heavy security and dangerous consequences. But do not lightly give up

The elimination of all rights and the increase in the number of reprisals by management representatives and party activists makes it necessary to oppose such actions with all our strength, and to gather the names of those who have attempted to carry out these types of actions.

With this aim, files relating to illegal and anti-people activities of the party and administrative apparatus must be established. These files should be decentralised so that the loss of one does not lead to the loss of all of them. To the extent that it is possible, it is vital to print illegal documents and distribute them among the workforce.

In this difficult period, these activities must not be left to the future: the raising of labour concepts on production matters, the establishment of new

and health conditions. This is important so that the authorities themselves do not imagine that our powerful organisation can be destroyed by one or a few blows.

5. Written protests must be made, both individually and collectively, condemning the actions of the military junta and demanding freedom for arrested union activists and the restoration of society's independent rights. These letters should be legibly signed, since only then will they have propaganda and moral value.

6. In anticipation of a social explosion, it is necessary to prepare for the proclamation of a general strike. These preparations must be carried out in great secrecy. With this aim, clandestine committees must be set up, which should under-

Appeal for South Yorks Polish Solidarity Committee

THE APPEAL below is to launch the Polish Solidarity Committee in the South Yorkshire area and to organise meetings with Solidarnosc speakers to win support for their struggles.

We believe that the backbone of the campaign to defend trade union and labour organisation in Poland can only come from the trade union and labour movement in Britain, and internationally.

It is sheer hypocrisy for President Reagan or Margaret Thatcher to support trade union and democratic rights in Poland, while they are attacking the workers of their own countries with anti-union legislation such as the Tebbit Employment Bill, or the smashing of the air traffic controllers' union.

We believe that it is sheer hypocrisy to condemn the military dictatorship in Poland, while propping up the genocidal regime in El Salvador, the military regime in Turkey, or the racist apartheid state in South Africa.

It is sheer hypocrisy to talk of defending the Polish workers in Solidarnosc while making a massive escalation in nuclear armaments such as Cruise and Trident missiles, many of which will be aimed at those same Polish workers.

It is only we, the trade unionists in Britain and internationally, who have the right to call the Polish workers of Solidarnosc: brothers and sisters, comrades, as their cause is our cause — the defence of working people and their interests.

We therefore support the struggle of the Polish workers for:

- * an end to martial law
- * the release of Lech Walesa and all other political prisoners
- * no intervention in Poland by outside states
- * food and medical aid for the Polish workers
- * the cancellation of all debts and interest to Western banks
- * material aid to Solidarnosc by the TUC
- * trades union delegations to visit Poland
- * Solidarnosc speakers to address Labour and trade union meetings

Rotherham BSC Crafts Committee (who have also donated £50 to the campaign), Bernard Connolly, convenor Rotherham and South Yorks BSC Crafts Committee, JP Sherburn, AUEW convenor BSC Tinsley Park, Cliff Wright, AUEW convenor BSC River Don, D Gooding, AUEW Convenor BSC Stainless, R Bastock, NUSM WCM & BE convenor BSC Rotherham, SM Wood, Boilermaker convenor BSC Rotherham, N Blanchard, Boilermakers convenor BSC Stainless, R Elsom, Craft Convenor BSC Tinsley Park, P Storer, AUEW convenor BSC Rotherham.

The Rotherham works craft committee are sponsoring meetings in Sheffield and Rotherham with Solidarnosc speakers. Contact Rab Bird, 279 Ellesmere Rd, Sheffield S4 7DP. Ring 0742-617174.

JANUARY 1982

INTERNATIONAL

POLAND & THE LEFT

OLIVER MACDONALD

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Miners should back Polish workers

By Jack Lavin

THE brutal repression of the Polish miners following the imposition of martial law has angered many miners in this country. Poland has become a major issue in the union.

A recent *Yorkshire Miner* correctly condemned the hypocrisy of Thatcher and Reagan over Poland. It pointed out that if British workers fought for some of Solidarnosc's 21 demands they would be crucified in the press.

It goes on to say: 'Poland's Communist Party and government bear an enormous responsibility for what has happened in their country.'

But then it changes its tune, attacking Solidarnosc as follows: 'It wasn't long before Solidarnosc began harbouring elements which had about as much to do with socialism as Maggie Thatcher.'

It continues: 'There are neutral reports of Solidarnosc being infested with some of the very worst neo-fascist, ultra-nationalist and anti-semitic elements.' Not one shred of evidence is given to back this up.

Protest

The *Yorkshire Miner* article claims to 'point the finger at the guilty parties and make excuses for no one'. The truth is that it is a cover-up for the bureau-

crats in Poland who brought the economy to its knees to defend their power and privileges. They have about as much to do with socialism as Thatcher and Reagan.

Militants in the NUM should write letters to the *Yorkshire Miner* protesting about this disgraceful article and putting the truth about Solidarnosc. The *Yorkshire Miner's* view can only discredit the left in the eyes of the union membership, playing into the hands of the right wing.

By contrast the *Scottish Miner* presents a largely factual account of the Polish events from summer 1980, though it ends up sitting on the fence: 'All the time there were forces on both sides deepening conflict instead of smoothing it away.'

Mick McGahey, President of the Scottish NUM, has called for the release of the 18 miners' leaders interned following the stay-down strikes at the Piast, Wujek and Ziemovit pits in Silesia before Xmas. He has demanded the end of martial law, and offered to 'mediate' between the Polish miners and their government.

Such offers are likely to fall on deaf ears. The bureaucracy doesn't want negotiations. It wants to smash Solidarnosc, preferably forever. It knows it can't co-exist for long with a mass independent working class movement.

Other areas of the miners have taken action to aid the Polish workers. The union in South Wales has demanded that a delegation be allowed to visit Poland. Nottinghamshire has given £2,000 for medical aid as well as backing a recent demon-

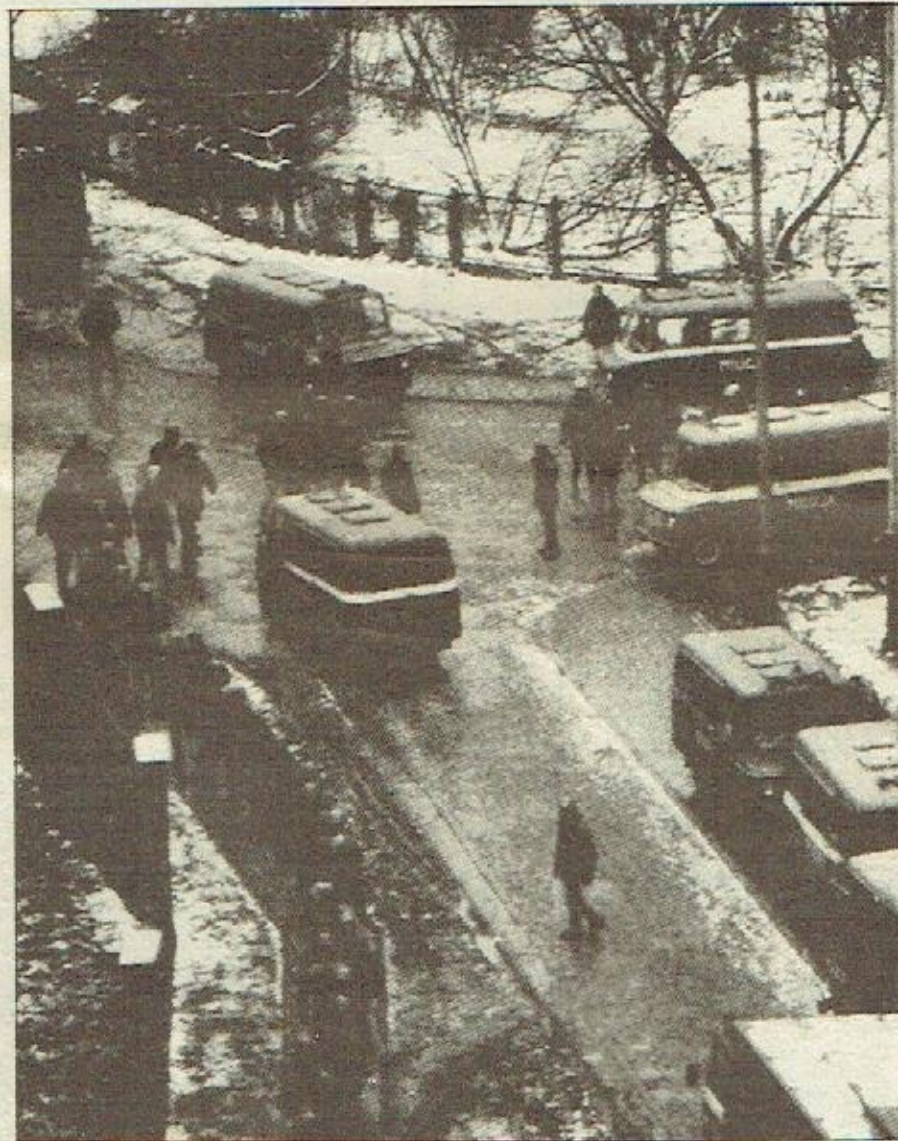
stration in the area.

The national executive is also considering what action to take. Proposals include asking mining unions to seek a ban on imports of Polish coal, raising money for the families of miners killed, imprisoned or blacklisted, calling for release of union leaders and sending a union delegation to Poland. Banning Polish coal is no way forward if it means asking Thatcher to stop the imports.

The NUM should give the lead in organising a

powerful labour movement campaign for aid to Solidarnosc and for support to the Polish workers. Militants can begin the fight for such a campaign by getting out the truth about what Solidarnosc stands for. That's the best way to expose the hypocrisy of the right wing.

A start can be made by submitting appeals to Area Councils, calling on them to invite representatives of the Solidarnosc trade union working group to speak at Council meetings, to tour the pits and welfare.



The hated Polish militia on the Warsaw streets

Solidarity round-up

Oxford: more than two hundred people marched last Saturday to a rally in support of Solidarnosc organised by the Oxford Labour Committee on Poland. The committee was set up by the Oxford and District Trades Council. Grzegorz Banecki of the independent students union, NZS, appealed to the Oxford students to support the NZS. Local Labour councillor Peter Moss also spoke. The local anti-missiles campaign - Campaign ATOM - backed the demonstration following a discussion on the significance of Poland for the anti-missiles movement.

Leeds: More than one hundred people attended a meeting to support Solidarnosc on 16 February, supported by the Leeds Labour Left, Leeds North East constituency party and Young Socialists branch. Speakers included Ivek Bialecki of the Solidarnosc trade union working group, Victor Moszcynski of the PSC and Geoff Bloomfield, a fulltime officer of the TGWU in Bradford. The meeting agreed to establish a local solidarity committee. Ring Leeds 490927 for details.

Solidarnosc trade union working group: comprised of Solidarnosc members in Britain. It calls for: freeing of all internees, lifting of the state of war, the return of confiscated union property, the resumption of union activities by Solidarnosc. It aims to increase Solidarnosc's links with the British trade unions and to disseminate information on the situation in Poland. You can help by: subscribing to their bulletin, at £5 per quarter including postage; twin with factories and regions, adopt internees, raise money for those imprisoned and for Solidarnosc's underground union actions; don't buy goods imported from Poland; take our stickers and badges, collection sheets. Contact us at: 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5 9E. Ring 01-373 3492.

Battersea: Labour Party public meeting 'Solidarity with Solidarnosc' on Wed 3 March at 7.30pm in Lower Town Hall, Lavender Hill, SW11. Speakers include: Eric Heffer MP, Ron Keating (NUPE), Member of Solidarnosc, Oliver MacDonald (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*).

Brent: Brent South Labour Party meeting 'Solidarity with Solidarnosc' on Wed 17 March at 7.30pm Stonebridge School, Shakespeare Ave NW10. Speakers include: Eric Heffer MP, Oliver MacDonald (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*), Solidarnosc member.

Central London: Major London Labour Party rally on Tue 16 March at Central Hall, Westminster at 7.30pm. Speakers include: Eric Heffer, Denis Healey, Joan Lester and a TUC speaker.

Nottingham: Solidarity with Solidarnosc meeting on Thur 11 March at 7.30pm at TGWU offices, 269 Mansfield Rd. Speakers include Piotr Kozlowski of Solidarnosc trade union working group, Oliver MacDonald (*Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*). Called by Labour Movement Solidarity with Solidarnosc.

Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign: new leaflet available containing useful solidarity information - the Labour Party international committee resolution on Poland, the resolution from the Lancashire Association of Trades Councils, a list of solidarity committees and other statements. Send for copies to Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, 10 Park Drive, London NW11.

Solidarity Committees with Solidarnosc

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

Cardiff Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Mark Jenkins, 87 Beatty Ave, Cardiff. Ring 0222-764195.

Coventry Solidarity Committee, John Fisher c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd, Coventry.

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

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

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

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

Leeds Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Dave Feickert, 28 Roundhay Mount, Leeds 8, Yorkshire. Ring 0532 490927.

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

Polish Solidarity Committee, 69 Edinburgh Rd, London E13. Ring 01-422 2218 for London speakers, or 01-249 2665 for out of London.

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.

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JOBS NOT BOMBS

Atma Singh looks at a new anti-nuclear pamphlet on planning for jobs and need.

A timely pamphlet has been produced in Newcastle, coinciding with the successful Northern Region Labour movement conference on 6 February.

At the conference Terry Marsland of the Tobacco Workers explained, in a keynote speech, how her union was backing stewards who had organised factory floor education on nuclear disarmament in the teeth of management attempts to gag 'political' discussions.

The pamphlet will give valuable guidance to militants wanting to follow her union's lead. It is intended to show practically

how arms production facilities could be converted to meet social needs.

Although it deals with Tyneside, it explicitly argues against 'regionalism' so typical of Labour Party bureaucrats: 'In no sense,' it says, should its examples relating to Tyneside 'be interpreted as pleading a special case for Tyneside'. It shows the possibilities in planned production by taking into account the type of arms and nuclear energy pro-

duction in the area, connecting this to the social needs which have already been discussed in specific projects (such as the combined heat and power district heating scheme drawn up by the Parsons' shop stewards' committee). It tries to link together such alternative 'isolated initiatives' in a coherent whole.

It places conversion in the context of an alternative economic strategy but casts useful criticisms against the TUC and Labour Party economic strategy. How is conversion to be made a working reality? 'Conversion... is dependent upon a socialist government requiring accountability for the way huge sums of public

money are spent. Compulsory planning agreements, nationalisation, legislation on conversion, community participation and workers' control are the only ways in which the likes of Vickers can be socially controlled,' the pamphlet points out.

However, the discussion of likely 'mass institutional opposition' by the capitalist economy and state is totally inadequate and there is no conception of a strategy of mass action or a seizure of control or power by the workers. Apparently this mass institutional opposition is supposed to vanish into thin air with the election of an accountable socialist government.

This evasion relates to other areas which are not discussed in the pamphlet.

Conversion is not placed in its international context, or related to the present crisis of the British economy or labour leadership. A strategy for conversion cannot be effective unless it is accompanied by a political, as well as an economic strategy.

Despite such criticisms (which need to be given flesh in political mass action) the pamphlet is a major step forward for the labour movement and CND in its political thinking.



'Jobs for a Change: Alternative Production on Tyneside' obtainable from Days of Hope workshop, 115 Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NB1 4AG. Price 60p per copy. Reductions for bulk.

France - the lull before the storm

By Phil Hearse

A DELUGE of popular rejoicing took place on May 10 last year when Francois Mitterand was elected President of France, ending an unbroken run of right-wing government since the second world war. Since the general strike and factory occupations of May-June 1968, the French left has grown, re-organised and prepared itself through numerous struggles and electoral tests to break the grip of the right wing and open the transition towards socialism.

After nine months of Socialist Party government, the struggle between the working class and the bosses is developing only slowly - in marked contrast to what many on the left had expected.

The left has come to power in France in a rather different context than was foreseen during the 1970s. While the Socialist Party victory reflects the deep radicalisation and re-composition of the working class since 1968, especially the shift to the left among young workers and women workers, the Socialist victory in the Presiden-

tial and Assembly elections did not occur at a time of massive working class upsurge.

On the contrary, as a result of the austerity measures of the bourgeoisie and nearly two million unemployed the number of strikes in 1980 was the lowest since 1953. Over the last four years the largest trade union federation, the Communist-led CGT, has lost nearly half its members, dropping from 2.3 million to 1.2 million. Mitterand has therefore not come to power on the back of a massive wave of working class struggles, as did the Popular Front government in 1936, in which the government would have to preside over a very sharp clash between the classes.

Doubt

Mitterand has been elected for a seven year term, and the parliament for five years. The Socialist president therefore argues that he has the time to proceed gradually, and many workers are inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt - for the time being. But the depth of the economic crisis, and the experience of the government so far, show that fundamental choices cannot be long delayed.

In the realm of civil liberties the government has already taken



Francois Mitterand: his 'period of grace' is coming to an end.

a number of very progressive measures. The death penalty has been abolished and the State Security court has been abolished. Moves have been made to wrest control of television away from Giscard's appointees, the deportation of immigrants has stopped and political prisoners have been freed. Of course these measures are immensely progressive, but they are the 'easy' measures to take - they don't involve trampling on any of the bosses' fundamental property rights.

Much more indicative of the general direction in which the government is going are their actions on shorter working hours and nationalisations. Mitterand came to power

pledged to reduce the working week to 35 hours and to give more holidays. Already the government has granted a fifth week's statutory paid holiday, but it has compromised on the 35-hour week.

An agreement has been made with the French employers' organisation the CNPF to immediately introduce a 39-hour working week and the 35-hour week over five years. This gives the employers lots of time for prevarication during the negotiations.

Moreover the employers are turning the introduction of the 39-hour week to their own advantage saying that to compensate for the reduction workers must agree to more

'flexible' rostering of work hours, reduction in meal breaks etc.

Already a whole series of struggles have broken out against these attempts by the bosses to use the shorter working week to deal a blow to the workers - including among government workers, customs officers and airport workers as well as factory workers. But these struggles are far from being a nationally co-ordinated movement; for the moment they remain fragmented and sectoralised.

The nationalisation programme of the government has come up against the resistance of the courts. Mitterand proposed the nationalisation of five industrial groups, two finance holding companies and 36 small banks which remained outside the framework of the nationalised banking system. Despite the fact that generous compensation was offered, the Constitutional Council, France's 'Supreme Court' on major constitutional matters ruled that it was not enough.

Bosses

Mitterand accepted their decision and thus the bosses will get billions of francs more. In addition the implementation of the nationalisations will be held up. The decision of the Constitutional Council is typical of the kind of obstruction which the ruling class will put in the way of the Socialist government.

An indication of the fundamental problems which the French government will face, however, is the attack on social security which it has already carried out. Faced with the

crisis of state expenditure the government increased workers' national insurance contributions by far more than those of employers, and introduced a tax on unemployment benefit. This is not a good sign for the future.

The new political situation is leading to a re-organisation of the workers' movement. The Communist Party, which has traditionally been the best organised party in the factories, commanding 20 per cent of the votes in elections, is suffering on two fronts. Its electoral position has fallen back badly, and the CP's position in the unions has also suffered.

Grip

In the Communist-led CGT the grip of the CP at rank and file level is slackening, while in many elections for shop stewards and representatives the pro-Socialist CFDT is tending to gain at the expense of the CGT. This reflects the deep suspicion with which the CP is regarded because of its sectarianism and its move away from 'Euro-

communism' towards traditional pro-Russian Stalinism. The events in Poland, which have had a big impact in France, have deeply shaken both the CP and the CGT leadership, as rank

and file CGTers have come out in favour of Solidarnosc against the CP line.

The immediate picture of the re-organisation of the workers' movement therefore appears to be of a move away from the CP towards the Socialist Party. But the reality is more complex. As the economic crisis deepens, the Socialist Party government - for that is what it essentially is despite the presence of four CP ministers - will have to administer the crisis. Any progressive moves it makes will meet the increasingly furious resistance of the bourgeoisie. The re-organisation of the trade unions and workers' parties is also taking the form of the development of oppositional currents at the base of the movement.

Today in France, there is an unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of the workers parties both at a national and local level. The workers in their majority are still giving Mitterand what he calls his 'period of grace'. But it will not last for ever.

As the crisis deepens the workers will increasingly come into conflict with the bosses. The first nine months of socialist government have been the lull before the storm.

No British support for Reagan's plans in Central America

By Megan Martin

IN THE WAKE of fresh revelations by the *Washington Post* of a US plan to bring down the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign in Britain has issued a call to its supporters to put pressure on the British government to dissociate itself from Reagan's policies in Central America.

A deputation, organised by the campaign, is going to the Foreign Office this week to seek clarification on the government's policy towards Nicaragua. The deputation includes representatives from Labour, Liberal and Plaid Cymru. Others who could not be part of the delegation - including

David Owen of the SDP and Lawrence Daly of the NUM - have sent letters.

The Parliamentary Select Committee of Foreign Affairs is planning to visit Central America in March and has been hearing evidence from interested parties.

The Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign is asking all its supporters to write to their local MPs (in particular Tory MPs) or to go and see them at their surgeries to take up the points which the deputation will be making. These include:

1. Does the government support the threats made by the US of economic and military action against Nicaragua? If not, why has it not made public its disapproval?
2. Will the government give guarantees that

British military personnel and installations in the Caribbean and British arms sold to Honduras will not be used to provide support for military aggression against Nicaragua? (There have been reports of British naval vessels taking part in joint manoeuvres off the Honduran coast and of tanks being sold to Honduras).

3. Does the government intend to provide economic aid to the government of Nicaragua? (The only contribution made so far has been the cost of flights by two Hercules transport planes to deliver medical relief supplies two or three days after the fall of Somoza, plus the portion of EEC aid borne by Britain's contribution to the EEC budget - and over which the government had no choice).
4. When will the British

Embassy in Managua be re-opened?

5. When does the government intend to follow France's example in selling military equipment to the Nicaraguan government? (Or should we assume that the government is interested only in selling arms to the likes of

Pinochet in Chile?)

Socialist Challenge should combine activity around these points with vigorous efforts to mobilise for the 28 March demonstration called by the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign against US intervention in El Salvador and Central America.



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REDS WELL WORTH SEEING

Reds opens this week in London. The film, which has been nominated for a dozen awards, deals with the lives of two American revolutionaries — Louise Bryant and John Reed — and their involvement with the Russian Revolution. John Reed's book Ten Days That Shook the World has become a classic account of the revolution.

By Andrew Britton

THE VERY existence of *Reds* is astonishing. Here is a Hollywood movie, funded (to the tune of forty million dollars) by a subsidiary of Gulf Oil, which attributes heroic status to the life and struggles of a revolutionary socialist, affirms the Bolshevik insurrection and insists on the vital interrelation between the achievement of the real equality of the sexes and socialism!

It should not detract from one's admiration of, and gratitude to, Warren Beatty, the film's producer, director, and co-author with Trevor Griffiths, that such a project is contradictory. The film's very contradictions are creative, and I wish briefly to indicate the major ones.

The central identification-figure in *Reds* is not John Reed (Beatty) but Louise Bryant (Diane Keaton). The reason is clear enough: the film needs to introduce the spectator to political activism through a character external to it. However, this device blocks the discussion of ideas. In her first interview with Reed, 'cute' comedy is employed to convince us that Reed, though a socialist, is also loveable: his charm is established at the expense of what he actually says.

Later, the political debates within the American CP are mediated by close-ups of Bryant looking pained and disillusioned, signalling what our own reaction is to be, and this undoubtedly

bolsters reflex convictions about the sterile, incestuous bickering of the left. Elsewhere, however, particularly in the marvelous scenes with Eugene O'Neill (Jack Nicholson), the use of Bryant to criticise complacent, jaded bourgeois cynicism about political/sexual radicalism derives its force from Bryant's status as identification-figure.

While *Reds* backs the October Revolution it is extremely unclear about the revolution's degeneration. Reed is allowed, in conversation with Emma Goldman (Maureen Stapleton), to voice some of Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism: in terms of the isolation of the soviets within world capitalism, and much is made of imperialism's attempt to crush the regime. The film stresses Reed's fervour as if to portray it as obsessive, and born of his personal need to reject the suspicion that his life's work has been wasted.

Similarly Goldman's flat assertion that 'the system doesn't work'

smacks of the bourgeois jibe that socialism cannot work and must go Stalinist.

Because Goldman is herself a radical (though not, of course, a Leninist) the revolution seems to be condemned out of its own mouth. The negative meaning is reinforced by the film's failure even to hint at the existence of a left opposition to Stalinisation within the Bolshevik Party; the suppression of resistance to the bureaucracy naturally confirms a feeling that the revolution had to go wrong.

Reds is also ambiguous about socialist revolution in the West, and it is easy to see how this relates to the omission of the struggle between Stalinism ('socialism in one country') and the internationalist left opposition.

Reed's speech to the striking workers is explicitly internationalist, and is given enormous weight.

At the same time, Louise Bryant is continually used to imply that western revolutionaries should propagandise for soviets rather than build permanent revolution (the irony is lost on the film. This is a classical Stalinist line). We can agree with the film's

criticism, through Bryant, of the idea of the party as dispensing orders to the workers.

The problem is that she can also be read as rejecting the need for revolutionary parties in the West at all.

It is just possible to read *Reds* as a big, romantic adventure movie which is left, at the end, with 'the one great love' (and female self-sacrifice) as the only antidote for political despair. Bourgeois journalists have dredged up comparisons with *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Dr Zhivago* to preserve their liberalism.

During the revolution sequence, with the Internationale blazing on the soundtrack, the film intercuts shots of the festival of the oppressed in the streets with shots of Reed and Bryant making love for the first time since their relationship has broken down over Bryant's demands for sexual and professional independence.

But the intended implication is clear enough: *Reds* leaves us with a couple whose equality is achieved, after long and painful struggle, through a mutual commitment to socialism.

The value of audacities such as this was brought home to me very movingly by the reaction of the two



Warren Beatty and Diane Keaton in *Reds*

audiences with which I saw the film this Christmas in Toronto. On both occasions, the sequence I have just described was received with spontaneous applause, and as I left at the end many were humming the Internationale.

Reds' limitations are obvious, but any movie that can do that (and I know of no others that have) is infinitely more than the sum of its inadequacies.

Ten Days That Shook the World and Insurgent Mexico both available from The Other Bookshop and Birmingham's Other Bookshop.

John Reed-writer and revolutionary

Excerpts from a review by Harry Ring, taken from the American socialist paper *Militant*.

Whatever its shortcomings, artistically or politically, *Reds* towers over the average commercial film and is definitely worth seeing.

We see the indispensable ingredient of authentic revolution — the masses of people intervening decisively in the historical process.

But the film also highlights Reed's eventful life.

Reed played a key role in putting the national spotlight on the Paterson, New Jersey, silk strike of 1913. He told the story of Pancho Villa's Mexican guerrillas, and reported on the Ludlow, Colorado,



mine strike where workers were massacred.

Reds features exciting scenes of Reed as a fighter against World War I, and then as he plunges into the Russian revolution and its aftermath.

And with all this, his tempestuous relationship with Louise Bryant. That relationship is a major theme of *Reds*.

In Petrograd, Reed witnessed the tumultuous days leading to the formation of the revolutionary government. He reported

the revolution brilliantly and was won to it totally.

Reds captures some of the drama of Reed's return to the United States in 1918 to tell the story of the Russian revolution first hand. On his return, he wrote numerous articles and spoke at many meetings.

Then, after winning back notes and documents confiscated by the U.S. government on his return here, he wrote the classic *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

Lenin wrote a foreword to *Ten Days* in which he said, 'Unreservedly do I recommend it to the workers of the world. Here is a book which I should like to see published in millions of copies and translated into all languages.'

John Reed did more than write an important book. *Reds* recounts — with limited success — the important chapter in Reed's life when he plunged into the working of building a party in the USA that would seek to follow the path charted by the Russian revolution.

On his death in 1920 Reed was buried in Red Square — the only American so honoured.

But there are also parts of *Reds* that can be and have been construed as anti-communist.

Beatty and co-writer Trevor Griffiths appear to have stumbled, wittingly or unwittingly, into a campaign that has persisted

for some sixty years by renegades from communism determined to claim Reed as their own: people who declare that Reed became disillusioned with the revolution and died a trapped dissident.

But the 'evidence' that Reed died disillusioned is based almost exclusively on what lawyers would describe as hearsay — sometimes two- and three-times removed. There is not a word in Reed's last writings to confirm this. Quite the opposite.

I think a study of the available record confirms what Hugo Gellert, an early communist, recalls Reed saying to him on his first return from revolutionary Russia. As the final film credits are being shown on the screen, Gellert is heard saying:

"Grand things are ahead, worth living and dying for." He always said that.

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Socialist Challenge

No slave labour:

Unionise YOPS



Tories want these sweet shop conditions for youth throughout British industry

By Mark Hackett

THIS Thursday's lobby of parliament organised by the YOPS Trainees Union Rights Campaign, backed by the Labour Party Young Socialists, is the start to a much needed fightback against the Tories' attack on young people's living standards.

With unemployment among young people now running at record levels, real wages falling and the right to social security benefits under attack, further attacks are on the

way. The government wage-cutting over the last two years threatens to reduce real income to 40 per cent of 1980 levels.

The Young Workers Scheme encourages employers to pay less than £40 a week, to receive a £15 a week government subsidy for 52 weeks. It blames excess wages paid to young people for the 50 per cent jobless levels.

The opposite is true: many young workers are working for low wages, even as low as £10 a week for full time and part time work.

Although the Youth Training Scheme may provide some higher quality training for a few, it will mean an enormous cut in income to £15 a week to 16 year olds on YOPs.

This is combined with the removal of the right of 16 year old unemployed young people to social security.

What is needed is a massive campaign to unionise YOPs trainees. We must demand of the TUC that it abandon its support for YOPs, launches a serious fight against Youth Training and Young Workers Schemes and helps unionise more already on YOPs into the unions.

We must demand the creation of socially useful work and the nationalisation of firms making redundancies by a massive programme of public works, building schools, homes, railways and essential medical equipment.

We must demand a minimum wage for students and the unemployed protected against inflation, the right to training and further education and employment at trade union rates with job security.

This means gathering the strength of the labour movement to defend the interests of young jobless. Tebbit's Bill and this cynical subsidy to the bosses to hire young non-unionised workers are the twin tactics to break the labour movement. The Tories must be defeated.

Our motto

By P Ryan

THE ITALIAN revolutionary, Antonio Gramsci, summed it up: 'Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will' he said. That used to be our motto here in the Socialist Challenge Fund Drive department. It's a good motto, we like it, but it doesn't convince bank managers. They take their mottos from the likes of Milton Friedman who, in the course of writing key monetarist texts, came up with this: 'There's no such thing as a free meal.'

Regrettably, having looked at this from all angles, we are forced to agree with this little adage. It is true, there is no such thing as a free meal. And that's where you come in.

Producing Socialist Challenge involves sending reporters and campaign organisers all over the country to get the very best coverage.

Just in the last fortnight we sent a reporter to Dublin to cover Bernadette's election campaign, we sent people to the picket line at Laurence Scotts, to Leyland Vehicles, and with the Solidarnosc trade union working group all over Scotland, and we plan to continue. We need your support.

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