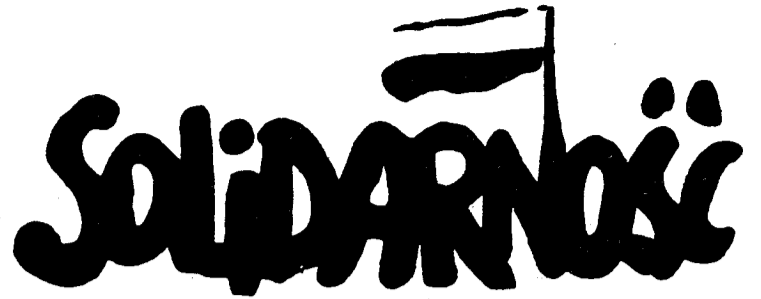


Socialist Challenge



Inside: four pages of Solidarity with Solidarity

Support the train drivers

Action now against the Tories

THE fight of the train drivers should be supported by the whole labour movement. Like other groups of workers they are resisting the offensive of the employers and the Tories by fighting to maintain their 8 hour day. If the mineworkers, steel workers and others co-ordinated their action with the train drivers, the anti-union offensive of the Tories could be thrown back.

Miners once again are threatened with pit closures if they insist on a decent wage. Steelworkers are being told that the 'bad weather' means that a new round of plant and job destruction is now necessary.

But the Rail Board must take the biscuit for hypocrisy. Their barbaric proposal is trumpeted in the press ads as 'a real improvement in working conditions'. Perhaps they have in mind the fact that drivers will be forced to work as many as 15 days without a break.

In the name of 'efficiency' the Rail Board want to:

- * Destroy drivers' social life
- * Undermine safety

....for a wage increase which will not keep pace with inflation.

In standing firm against such improvements, the train drivers are fighting for all railworkers. They are fighting for Ford and BL workers who have had similar 'efficiency' measures stuffed down their throats. They are fighting for all workers because the banner of 'efficiency' is that raised by all the bosses who are utilising mass unemployment to dramatically increase their own profits at our expense.

The miners have voted for strike action. Steelworkers have decided on an overtime ban from early February. Thatcher must not be allowed to slice us up like so many pieces of salami. The strength of the Triple Alliance of which all these workers are a part is enough to turn out Thatcher. The train drivers cannot be left to fight alone.



Tory cuts kill 700 a day die from cold

By Toni Gorton

DEATH, disaster and destruction — that's what this winter has brought us. As many as 700 people a day are dying from cold. The official explanation is that this is a 'natural disaster'. But even weather can be political.

In Tory Britain survival of the fittest is the official credo.

For several weeks, there's been snow, bitter cold and flooding throughout the country. The government has barely twitched a muscle.

While old age pensioners freeze to death because of fear of heating bills or starve because of fear of going out on the dangerous streets, the Tories keep their hands tightly gripped on the public expenditure purse.

Margaret Thatcher declared only last weekend that she'd impose even tougher public spending cuts if she thought she could get away with it.

This week the government finally agreed to contribute to the financing of local authority emergency services. But only with great reluctance and the expectation that the localities will bear the brunt of the cost.

There is no clear guidance to the country which Thatcher says she is so 'passionate' about.

She hasn't said, 'Set up emergency centres, pro-

vide food and heat for those at risk; set up teams to seek out the sick and the old and the vulnerable; mobilise the entire population — and hang the expense.'

No, Tory priorities lie in making British capitalism stronger — no matter what the cost in private suffering.

So it means that emergency services and facilities have been run down — from road gritters to ambulances.

It means three million unemployed, with tens of thousands of children vulnerable to cold because of lack of money to pay fuel bills or buy high protein food.

It means fewer ambulances to take the ill to hospital, even if they could move along the uncleared roads.

It means hospital resources stretched to meet the demands of the situation. One X-ray unit is reporting 100 broken limbs a day instead of the usual 30 a week.

And eventually, Tory policies will mean an even greater drop in the standard of living of all working people when higher food prices hit the shops in the next period.

You won't hear the Tories talking of food subsidies.

Natural disasters can't be avoided perhaps, but unnatural disasters like the Tories can. It's time for a society that puts people and not profits first.

Photo: PEI GRANT (Socialist Challenge)

Ford, the unions and the Tories

LAST MONTH the overwhelming majority of Ford's 54,000 shopfloor workers voted for strike action from Tuesday 5 January. They were incensed at a 7.4 per cent wage offer and the promise of a 39 hour week from January 1983 tied to a tough set of 'efficiency' demands.

Last week, the same workers divided on what was essentially the same offer. So what has really changed in the last four weeks? One thing: the attitude of the national trade union leadership towards a strike in Fords, which would have inevitably led to a clash with the Tories on pay and picketing.

First, right winger Jack Whyman, the chief engineering union negotiator, found favour in proposals the company had made at ACAS — the government conciliation service — just before Xmas. Yet senior stewards had already rejected these.

Then, left winger Rod Todd, head negotiator for the transport union, told the press that it was not Ford's package of efficiency measures which had been rejected, but the price was still not right.

His members were on holiday when he said this. Apparently a single phone call from Paul Roots of Ford management was enough for Todd to summon the full negotiating committee by telegram and recommend that the strike be called off.

The full negotiating committee split 27 to 17 on the deal: full time officials on one side and most of the elected convenors on the other.

As at Leyland, the trade union leadership has shown itself to be totally unwilling to lead a fight against the bosses and their Tory protectors. And in a situation where national union leadership and backing is seen as vital to winning struggles, a united workforce at Ford has been divided by these bureaucrats to the benefits of the company.

The stewards' leadership, which in many plants has been weak in the face of attacks on jobs and conditions since 1979, was unable to defeat this sabotage.

That will be the battle throughout 1982. Struggles over the elimination of demarcation, total mobility of labour, new technology and work practices and the elimination of local agreements are inevitable as Ford implements the efficiency clauses.

Bringing these struggles together will require a shop stewards' leadership which plays a conscious political role; explaining the links between Ford, the employers' offensive against jobs and the union busting of the Tories; explaining the need for socialist policies to fight their attacks. In this way shopfloor unity can be rebuilt and the sabotage of the union leadership challenged.

This same need cries out from recent events in Leyland, Laurence Scott and Staffa and the continuing struggle over democracy and socialist policies in the Labour Party. It is essential if the bosses and the Tories are to be taken on and defeated.

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.

Ford workers split and bitter



By Mick Drake, Dagenham

'WE GAVE them a 100 per cent mandate for strike action and they flung it back in our faces.' That was how Halewood body plant shop steward Jimmy Atkinson summed up the sell-out of the £20 — 35 hours claim rammed down Ford workers' throats by their national union leadership last week.

There was an equally bitter reaction in other Ford plants. Swansea followed Halewood by voting seven to one for immediate strike action and passing a vote of no confidence in Ron Todd.

Bridgend, Belfast and Dagenham 'knock-down' and body plants also rejected the deal cooked up by Todd and the company which contained all the efficiency clauses and no more money than the one rejected three weeks previously.

Assault

The efficiency clauses amount to a frontal assault on all the gains in working practices and conditions — from job demarcation to the afternoon tea-break — won by Ford workers over the years. They give the company a free hand in how new technology is introduced, bringing nearer the day when company trained technicians will operate and repair automated lines while both skilled and production workers lose their jobs.

They make the individual operator responsible for quality with a potential threat to hundreds of inspectors' jobs. They prepare the day for when no worker has his or her 'own' job and total mobility is the norm.

But the leaders' sabotage succeeded in suffi-

ciently splitting Ford workers for the strike to be called off.

Nowhere was this more vividly demonstrated than on the 21,000 strong Dagenham estate where every mass meeting split narrowly one way or another. A head count of one mass meeting in the foundry resulted in a majority of two for acceptance. Demands for a similar count in the river plant were rejected as the deputy convenor — who supported the deal — jumped up and down shouting, 'We've won, we've won'.

When stewards in the assembly plant announced that the day shift mass meeting had voted to accept, despite their unanimous recommendation to reject, there were angry scenes.

Refused

Many workers refused to believe the outcome of the vote and in their frustration rounded on the stewards while the villains of the piece were safely hidden in their union headquarters.

The situation on the assembly plant night shift was even worse. The atmosphere was so electric that senior stewards were unable even to start the mass meeting. A straight vote was taken and was split down the middle. One steward was hit on the

back of the neck with an iron bar and hospitalised, others pelted with cans and nuts and bolts.

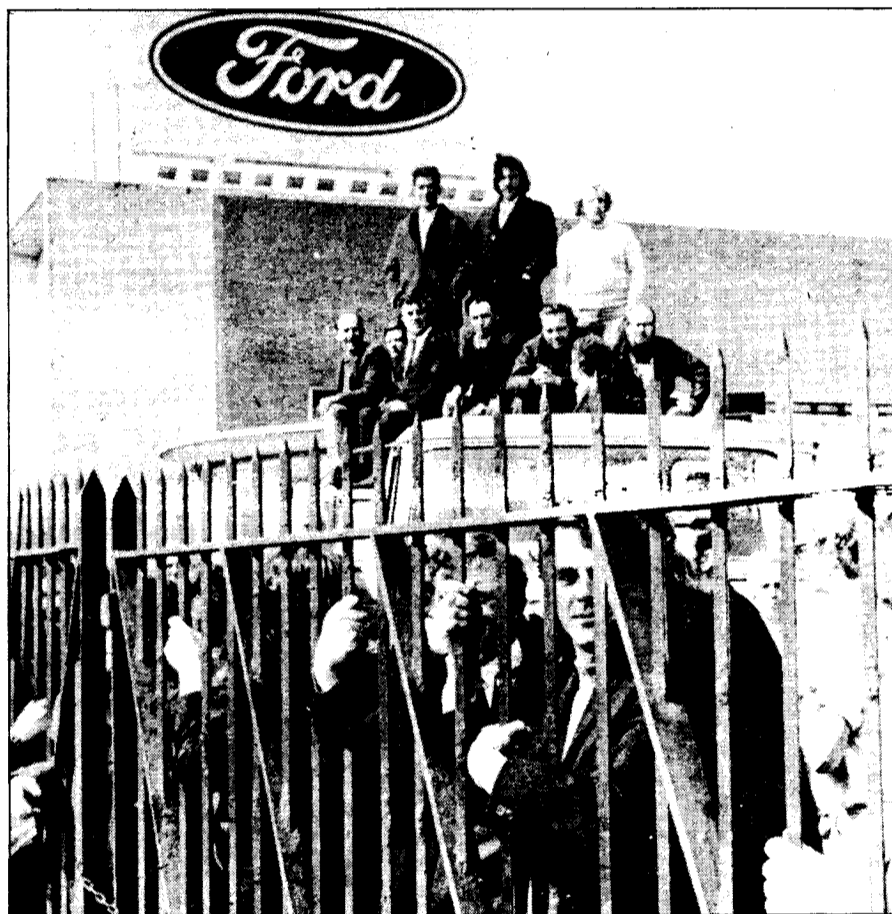
There was less violence but greater confusion in the body plant which did vote to reject. The nightshift had already walked out in large numbers on Tuesday. But at the dayshift mass meeting the stewards recommendation was 'to

reject and strike from Monday'. Consequently, many who wanted to strike immediately as well as those who wanted to accept the deal voted against the recommendation!

The chief architect of this chaos and confusion and misdirected anger was Ron Todd, chief Ford union negotiator. The secret deal he cobbled

together with Ford management undermined the unity of the Ford workers demonstrated in the near unanimous strike votes before Xmas.

Now the fear is that Todd and the union officials will police the new agreement and force its conditions on the stewards' leaderships in the plants.



Ford workers at Swansea previously occupying their plant

'We're left to pick up the bits'

ON 6 January the 1,650 strong Ford transmission plant in Swansea voted overwhelmingly to reject the company offer and to take immediate strike action. convenor, explains his opinion of the national deal to Celia Pugh.

'We are bitterly disappointed with the deal and the way it was handled by national officials. It is fairly certain there will be steps taken through the official channels of the union following what has happened. We will be sending resolutions from the branch to national officials.'

'The efficiency proposals could cost us 95 jobs in Swansea and we've already lost 500 in the last two years. Now we'll have to fight confined by the national agreement. The deal will cause a lot of aggravation for local officials.'

'We're left with the bits to pick up over the year. They've broken us up into small fragments. Each plant will have to negotiate on its own without the umbrella of the National Joint Negotiating Committee, even though this has proved a bit

leaky.

'It's going to be more difficult to take Ford on plant by plant and they'll hold the national agreement against us. If there had been a national recommendation to reject the offer I feel sure the national vote would have gone the other way.'

'We feel disappointed and let down in Swansea. For once most people recognised the Ford proposals were savage and that it wasn't just a pay issue. Just as important as the deal was the way it was concluded.'

'Ron Todd should have put the recommendation to everybody on the NJC before making a press statement. It's an agreement that was made for not by us; it's been rammed down our throats. But there's no loss of confidence in the local leadership.'

'In fact there's been a step forward in relations between local officials and the plant. This has brought us together and the union is strong inside the plant to defend ourselves.'

'I think if we lose confidence in the trade union leadership then we have to change it through the avenues of the union.'



Ron Todd: secret deals with management

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist challenge)

Trade Unions

Miners - strike to defend living standards!

By Bill Alder

THIS WEEK Britain's 250,000 miners are casting their votes on the National Coal Board's pay offer for 1981-82. The pit-head ballot is the latest in a chain of events which began last July at the conference of the National Union of Mineworkers. Not for the first time, conference passed resolutions calling for a £100 minimum wage; improvements in holidays and hours; a salary system to replace the 'day wage'; and protection of earnings for men forced to take lower paid jobs due to injury, illness or age.

The NCB responded with an offer of £4.25 on basic rates for surface workers and £6 for face workers. The rest of the alleged 9.13 per cent offer is made up by the industry's productivity scheme — the miners should pay their own wage rise! Lastly, there is an insulting 'loyalty bonus', with a maximum £70 for miners with over 25 years in the industry.

Pledge

The offer has been almost unanimously rejected by the NUM's national executive and by a special delegate conference in December. The union's incoming president, Arthur Scargill, conducted his campaign on a pledge to carry out conference decisions on wages and conditions. In the coalfields, the feeling of most miners is that the offer is in fact a pay cut when inflation is running at around 15 per cent.

As Alan Harrison from Markham Colliery, North

Derbyshire NUM, says, 'Nine per cent is totally unacceptable, nowhere near the rate of inflation. And just as important, in my opinion, is the rest of the claim — the four day week and the salary scheme.'

'Why should we lose money when we're sick or on holiday? And rate protection — God knows how many older men have killed themselves, slogging away at the face rather than see their money drop.'

The NCB and the Tory government find themselves in a cleft stick. With the memory of February's strikes against pit closures, and remembering the strikes of 1972 and 1974, they do not want a head-on confrontation with the NUM. But big concessions could be the green light for other sections of workers struggling to maintain living standards.

Neither can the union afford to be complacent. The pit-head ballot is likely to reject the Coal Board's offer. But this

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



Scargill: policies not personality

doesn't necessarily mean either a strike or that the full claim will automatically be won.

Many NUM leaders see the threat of strike action as enough to scare the NCB into giving way. But unless the leadership prepares for action now, then bluff alone will win very little. The 1972 coal strike started with unofficial stoppages and delegations from militant Yorkshire fanning out through the neighbouring coalfields.

The fight against pit closures was the same, this time with South Wales and Scotland taking the lead. Arthur Scargill and the militant area and branch leaderships should be

ready to repeat these tactics. The press campaign which will surely follow rejection of the offer will need to be combated.

But as Alan Harrison says, the last word will be with the rank and file union members:

'The men will back the union and reject the offer. Scargill's win was because of his policies not just his personality. But a strike could be touch and go unless the officials at area level really pull their fingers out and put it on the line.'

'The government's not going to change its mind. So it's either strike or let them walk all over us. That's what the men should be thinking about when they vote.'



British Rail regrets to announce ...

By Pete Grant ASLEF, Willesden Branch

ANGER is growing among train drivers to the way the British Rail Board is trying to impose Edwardes' style blackmail onto the drivers union, ASLEF. Reports from all over the country tell of unprecedented support for the union in calling strike action.

The drivers are furious that the demand that the 1919 eight-hour guaranteed day agreement should be sold for the 3 per cent increase, the BRB owe to drivers from the August pay deal (held over to facilitate the Board's short term cash flow problem).

New rosters for the York depots have been circulated and rejected. Kings Cross drivers said, 'They are absolutely outrageous, they cannot be worked.'

The rosters show that some drivers, in a three week period, would go 15 days without a rest day. As part of the 39 hour week over an eight week period, they would work anything between 48 hours and 30 hours.

During this period drivers would only be paid for 39 hours each week. These proposals would make drivers' social lives nearly non-existent.

British Rail Board's press releases and full page adverts in the tabloids have further angered drivers with their bare faced lies. BRB told the press last week that drivers had an hour at the beginning of their shift to book on and read all publications and

notices (for example, temporary speed restrictions) whereas all they have is ten minutes.

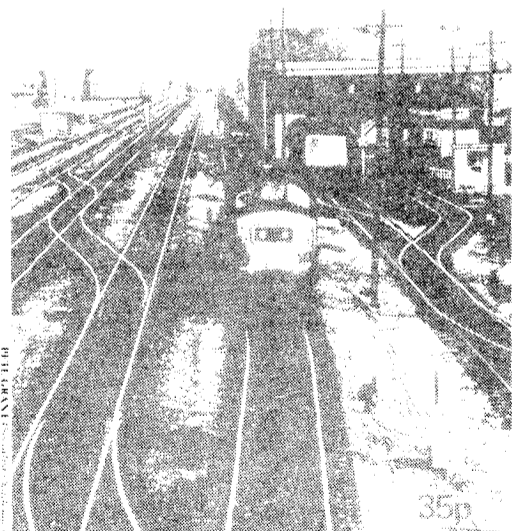
But by far the most despicable act has been the actions of the executive of the National Union of Railworkers in signing away their own members conditions and then saying they had gained vast improvements in conditions and repeating the lies contained in the personal letter sent to all drivers by the BRB as to the nature of the understanding reached during arbitration last August.

The NUR executive is, however, coming unstuck as guards up and down the country threaten not to work to the new rosters and even to join the ASLEF strike.

A mass meeting of drivers at Stonebridge Park depot has decided along with Euston, Watford and Kings Cross to impose a work to rule from Monday 11 January to put pressure to extend the action on the ASLEF executive meeting the same day.

An all-out strike now seems likely unless the Board and its puppet master, the Tory government, give in.

HOW TO FIGHT 'PRODUCTIVITY'



Socialist Challenge PAMPHLET FOR RAILWORKERS

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

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

Don't rely on the Daily Mirror or the Star for your facts (left — part of full page advert appearing in these papers). Get Socialist Challenge pamphlet to arm yourself and your co-workers against the inevitable press onslaught against the train drivers.

GREG TUCKER NUR guard on the Southern Region reports:

Back in August we only accepted the pay deal on the grounds that the productivity discussion was totally separate from the talks on pay. Of course some of us knew that in reality secret deals had probably been struck.

Nevertheless, the extent of the sell-out on productivity has shocked a lot of workers. National Union of Railwaymen guards are say-

ing if the train drivers can fight these deals, why can't we?

Solidarity between guards and drivers this time round is quite amazing. Traditionally the divide and rule tactic has kept drivers and guards at each others throats but not now.

Guards have been asking drivers into their mess rooms to explain what's going on, and what action ASLEF, the drivers union, is proposing to take. We know that any room to manoeuvre in local produc-

tivity discussions will be lost if the drivers lose.

Local negotiations are very difficult when national we're being stabbed in the back. But some guards depots such as Streatham Hill have been out on strike this week.

Railworkers usually try to keep services running when the weather's bad. Not this time. As one driver put it, 'Let's hope it snows when we're out and the roads are blocked. Then we can really bring the country to a standstill.'

Are you still in the dark about flexible rostering?

The modernisation of the railway is in hand and flexible rostering has an important part to play. Stripped of jargon, the benefits for train crews are (1) a 39-hour week for the same money as a 40-hour week; (2) a 3% increase on basic pay, effective immediately, and backdated to August 3rd, 1981.

Also, flexible rostering will make possible a real improvement in working conditions; for example, more occasions when rest days can be grouped together to give more 3 and 4 day breaks. And a chance to achieve more social shift patterns.

Rosters will be planned over 8-week periods. Which

means days off can be planned in advance—and with confidence.

Some weeks will be 35 hours; some 45 hours. But the average over 8 weeks will be 39 hours.

That, in very plain English, is what flexible rostering in British Rail means.

'So what's the problem?' Redundancies? None will be required by flexible rostering. Neither will there be split shifts.

Flexible rostering is the most efficient way to use the manpower we have—for 'efficient' read 'economical'.

'Why?' Because, as everyone knows,

trains don't run on rigid 8-hour shifts; they run from A to B. If the round trip takes a driver 6 hours and there are no 2-hour runs for him to pick up, time—and money—are wasted.

If the working day is varied between 7 and 9 hours, productivity will be increased, thus keeping costs down.

This is the only way the 3% pay award can be funded and the 39-hour week implemented. Without flexible rostering there can be no award, and no change in working hours and working conditions.

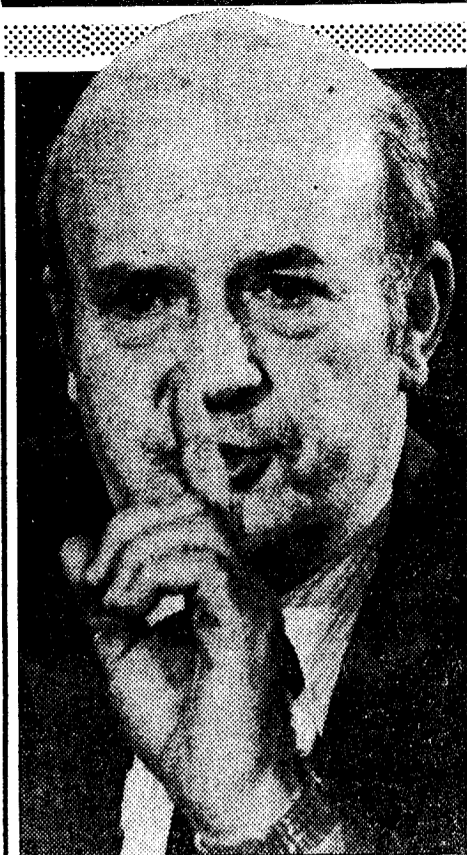
Part of the train crew team—the guards—has already accepted this new system.

It is a good one. One that will benefit everyone.

Labour Party

Portrait of a professional wet

By Geoff Bell



Jim Mortimer, asking for quiet.

HE HAS been a member of the Young Communist League. He has been involved with the Institute for Workers Control, *New Left Review* and *The Week*, a one time revolutionary socialist magazine in the Labour Party.

He has been a shipyard worker and a trade union official.

On the other hand, later on in his life he served London Transport as an advisor on industrial relations. From there he joined the bosses' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry as a member of its employment affairs committee.

He is Jim Mortimer, the newly appointed general secretary of the Labour Party, who claims 'deep socialist conviction', but whose recent history has been to arbitrate between management and unions. Mortimer has done so through the government's Arbitration, Conciliation and Advisory Services. He was appointed to the job by Harold Wilson, way back in 1974, he was confirmed in it by Jim Prior.

Jim Mortimer is like that, he tries to be a friend of everyone. Like his former boss at the Department of Employment Jim Mortimer is a wet. Indeed, as head of ACAS for the last seven years he has turned wetness into a profession.

Take the following example. In 1978 the right wing National Federation of the Self-Employed, in

a rather hysterical report, accused ACAS of being 'politically motivated' and exposed Mortimer's left wing past. ACAS was accused of siding with unions in cases involving union recognition.

Mortimer replied with statistics. Defending the record of ACAS he explained that 'out of 555 references settled or withdrawn, 291 (52 per cent) were cases where unions were fully or partly successful in gaining recognition. In 239 (43 per cent) the unions' applications were unsuccessful.'

There was an almost perfect case of wetness — siding with the workers half the time, siding with the bosses the other half. 'ACAS should be judged by what it is doing', defended Mortimer, 'It is not an argument about politics.' All reasonable moderates would agree with that — politics should be kept out of disputes between management and unions.

Going one stage further, Jim Mortimer may even have the view that politics should be kept out of politics. Reporting on his press conference after he was appointed, *The Times* said: 'He clearly sees his job in terms of the overall membership and Labour's appeal to the electorate rather than the excessive fervour of socialism.'

And yet Mortimer was the left candidate for general secretary. One explanation was the man he was opposing — the trade union bureaucrat Alex Ferry who was, if the rumours were correct, a great

believer in purges and, who as general secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions is currently doing his best to smash the Laurence Scott strike in Manchester.

By contrast Mortimer, despite his recent past, continues to claim left credentials. He says he is a unilateralist, supports withdrawal from the Common Market, and advocates a reduction on military spending.

But he is also a firm believer in incomes policy, having began his career in arbitration between management and unions on the Prices and Incomes Board in the late 1960s. His politics were summed up this way by the *Financial Times*: 'He has never disguised his commitment to radical change, but he has always argued for it in a commonsense way.'

So what will the appointment of this commonsense radical mean for the Labour Party? That will depend on forces outside of his control. On how willing the Bennite left is to arbitrate and conciliate with the right wing leadership of the parliamentary party.

But one thing can be predicted. If, with his experience at ACAS behind him, Jim Mortimer is asked to give judgement on the case of the unfair dismissal of the Labour candidate for Bermondsey, he is unlikely to pronounce in favour of Peter Tatchell.

From Brighton to Bishop's Stortford

By Brian Heron

'PEACE has broken out in the Labour Party', proclaimed the *Daily Mirror* on 7 January.

The occasion was the Bishop's Stortford meeting between leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party.

In practical terms the meeting achieved little. But, behind the scenes, Tony Benn is reported to have promised not to contest the deputy leadership of the party before the next general election. In return, further financial support for the party is to be forthcoming from the unions. Other reports suggest the anti-left witch-hunt may be slowed down.

At first sight, Bishop's Stortford appears to be the end of a road that started with set-backs for the left at the Brighton conference. The intervening months slowed some debate and confusion in the Bennite camp as to the next steps. At the same time the new centre-right NEC began to revive one of the oldest traditions of the party and launched a witch-hunt.

The wide scale of the attack took some by surprise. Not only was the marxist left to come under the hammer, but the middle-of-the-road Bennite, Peter Tatchell, despite overwhelming support from his local Bermondsey Party, had his selection rejected. Over 300 constituency parties have so far sent resolutions calling for the reversal of these attacks.

Thus the stage was set for the trade union bosses to make their move. With the party finances in a desperate state, they felt they had the whip hand.

Their first objective was to secure the 'no election' promise. Their second aim was to reconstruct unity around Foot's leadership. The Bennite left were invited to take the honourable course of participating in their own murder by kindly committing suicide.

Fortunately for the workers movement the feelings of union leaders are far from an accurate indication of how things stand in the party and the unions. The terms of the confrontation between the left and the right in the party will change, but it will not subside. On the contrary, that confrontation is written into the basic realities of present day British politics.

This is illustrated by the other event, which startled the party between Brighton and Bishop's Stortford, the Crosby by-election. The SDP/Liberal Alliance romped home,

Labour were humiliated by being pushed into third place, and its vote dropped by nearly 16 per cent.

But another, less publicised statistic which came out at Crosby was the enormous size of the Tony Benn meeting. As many as 1800 attended with a further 500 turned away.

To put it another way, the party's support in the workers' movement may be being whittled back to a minority, but that minority is more and more committed to some radical change in a socialist direction.

The same situation is visible in the unions. The deputy leadership campaign revealed a powerful minority of the workers' movement moving in the direction of radical change. Despite the heavy hand of the bureaucracy, this movement surfaced at the unemployment marches, the election of Scargill and the anger of the BL and Ford workers at their betrayal. That is the case which prevents the right from crushing the Bennites in the party.

The right in the party and the unions face a massive dilemma. They wish to be seen as the 'natural' alternative to the Tories. But their struggle to present the Labour Party as the real party of the centre has the sole effect of building the SDP/Liberals.

The way out for the Labour right wing has been offered by none other than Jim Callaghan. He wrote recently, 'if the election results in a stalemate, the Labour Party must take the immediate decision whether to stay in opposition or to co-operate with others to remove the Thatcher government'.

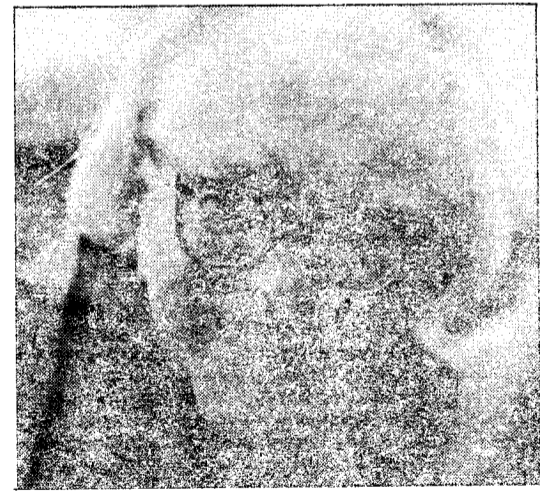
Spelt out, Callaghan is preparing for a coalition government between Labour's right in parliament and the SDP/Liberals. The programme of such a government will be written in the Bank of England, the Pentagon and Wall St. — not by Labour Party conference.

For the Bennites, the struggle is to ensure that the future lies with the most active, radical and self confident section of the working class giving a lead to the whole of the workers' movement in the anti-Tory struggle and the fight for socialist policies. That is the only way to fight the right in the party and the unions. That is the only possible policy for a Labour victory.

Therefore, not the slightest possible concession is possible to the witch-hunt. This would concede the argument that the left bears responsibility for Labour's dismal election prospects, and would prepare for the biggest betrayal since 1931.



Photo: JEREMY NICHOLL



Smiles all round after Bishop's Stortford?

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW CROSS MASSACRE

Public Meeting on Monday January 18, 1982

at Deptford Town Hall, New Cross Road,

London SE14 at 7.30pm

Are British politics breaking up?

SDP — Three Card Trick

I ADVISE Phil Hearse if he ever goes down London's Oxford Street to keep away from the shady-looking characters who play the Three Card Trick. On the evidence of his article on the Crosby by-election (SC 224) I reckon he would get taken every time.

The Trick relies on sleight of hand. The punters' eye is distracted from the real action and he gets conned. So with Phil's article.

Overly impressed with what he calls 'the consensus among political observers' (ie Tory press pundits) in their speculations about the next General Election, he seems to have momentarily lost sight of class reality through being dazzled by the 'prospect' of the SDP in power.

Although the programme of the SDP (in so far as it has one at all) is a

bourgeois one, so far no significant section of the bosses have switched their allegiance from the Tory Party.

The SDP's main base is with those social layers squeezed between the two major classes in society and depends upon the bloc with the Liberals who on many key issues of the class struggle have sharp tactical differences with the 'Gang of Four'.

The Alliance has no coherent alternative strategy to Thatcher's. All of this makes extremely unlikely the possibility of an SDP or Alliance Government.

So what would happen if the Alliance's bandwagon rolls on unchecked by an offensive from the labour movement? The most likely outcome surely would be a government of 'National Unity' of all the bourgeois parties.

The ruling class would find the option of chopping Thatcher and conceding proportional representation to retain the Tory government in the disguise of a national coalition.

A far more attractive choice to that of relying on an inexperienced Cabinet dependent on the shifting sands of middle-class electoral support.

The media's support for the Alliance should be seen therefore as part of a

ruling class plot to give them a second chance in the ever more likely event of Thatcher being overwhelmingly rejected.

Ted Heath himself rehearsed the 'coalition option' in 1974 when after the election he hung on to try and get a deal with Jeremy Thorpe's Liberals.

Our job as Marxists is to expose this Three Card Trick not to play the game. If we can turn the labour movement to a strategy which nails the lie of the SDP being an alternative to the Tories we can ensure the next government is a Labour one committed to socialist policies.

The balance of class forces is on our side. The very fact that the bosses are playing such a risky game with the SDP instead of relying solely on the right-wing Labour bureaucracy as their 'se-

Letters
Letters
LETTERS

The SDP is not a side show...

Phil Hearse replies

THE QUESTION to come to grips with in dealing with the rise of the SDP is whether it represents anything fundamental in British politics. Is there a split developing in the labour movement? Is bourgeois politics recomposing? Or is the SDP just a marginal side-show?

The point I was making in the article is that the rise of the SDP is a product of the profound political crisis in both the labour movement and the ruling class, brought about by both the failure of successive Labour governments and the failure of Thatcherism to solve the crisis.

Thatcherism, far from solving the crisis, has made it worse for those sections of the bourgeoisie based on manufacturing. If the Tories stay wedded to Thatcherism and monetarism, there is no doubt that large sections of the bourgeoisie will be prepared to dump the Tories and switch their allegiance to the SDP/Liberal alliance.

Of course, this could easily lead to a national government, involving people like Heath and/or the Labour right wing. The political essence of such a move would be exactly as I outlined — a big switch of the political allegiances of the ruling class.

Let's look at the problem from the point of view of the working class. The rise of Bennisism has made Labour 'unsafe' as the second line of defence for the ruling class. Even a right wing Labour government would be under the pressure from the Bennis ranks — both in the unions and the constituencies. That's why the bourgeoisie has engineered a split in the Labour Party, not yet involving a split in the unions, but with that potential.

We are faced therefore with a massive recomposition of British politics, involving both the major classes. To be as much as not to be 'dazzled' by the media or conned, but to recognise the reality. These developments are not just a 'ruling class plot'. They represent profound differences inside the bourgeoisie about how to deal with the labour movement and the crisis. That's why the face of British politics is being completely transformed, and why there will almost certainly be three major parties in parliament after the next election — Labour, Tories and the SDP/Liberals.

I agree with comrade Cusack that we have to expose the SDP as not representing a working class alternative to the Tories. But to get a Labour government committed to socialist policies elected, it is not enough to campaign for Socialist Challenge's programme. We have to fight for adoption of an anti-capitalist programme by the labour movement. That's why the Labour Party needs a debate.

Our programme is very different from Bennisism. Fighting here and now, having a line for this or that struggle, is not counterposed to conducting the broadest possible debate about a programme for government. On the contrary, the combativity of the working class needs to be orientated towards an anti-capitalist plan to solve the crisis.

Regretfully, Socialist Challenge will not form the next government. The Labour Party can. To abstain or to debate about the programme for the next Labour government in favour of 'keeping your eyes on what the workers are doing' is to retreat from the real political debates going on, and to surrender in advance to left reformism.



Two new journals of the Fourth International

AT THE END of January, two new journals of the Fourth International in English will appear — *International Viewpoint* and *International Marxist Review*. *International Viewpoint* will be a fortnightly news service produced in Paris. Its aim is to provide the workers movement with more in-depth coverage of world events than is possible in the framework of a weekly paper. It will translate into English major articles from the press of the entire Fourth International.

The introductory issue will be a double issue and appear on 25 January. It will contain major articles on each sector of the world revolution. Starting regular publication on 22 February, *International*

Viewpoint will be an indispensable guide to world politics for militants in the revolutionary movement. We appeal to all supporters of the Fourth International in Britain to subscribe to and support this journal.

International Marxist Review will be the English language version of *Quatrième Internationale* the theoretical journal of the Fourth International, which appears three times a year and contains longer theoretical articles from leaders and militants of the Fourth International.

The first issue of *International Marxist Review* contains articles on Poland and the bureaucracy by Ernest Mandel, the French OCI by Daniel Bensaid, Soviet influence and neocolonialism in Africa by Claude

Gabriel, as well as articles on France, the Fourth International and a major editorial on problems of the Central American revolution. *International Marxist Review* will make available in English many of the theoretical writings from Fourth International leaders which are at present only available in French.

To subscribe to *International Viewpoint*: Make out bank or postal cheque to 'PEC' (£16 for 25 issues surface mail, £18 airmail) and send to *International Viewpoint*, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France. North American readers send \$31 (surface mail) or \$39 (air mail).

To subscribe to *International Marxist Review* send £4.50 (\$11) to IMR, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



Scotts hit back at union leaders

By Pete Clifford

AT THE start of the year Laurence Scott strikers have hit back hard in their nine months long fight for jobs.

Last Friday, 8 January, over 200 mounted a mass picket and demonstration at their Manchester factory. They were addressed by local MP Charles Morris, who told the strikers he had been with them on day one and would stay with them 'til the finish.

The mass picket was called when strikers obtained a copy of a letter being circulated to miners in an effort to stop blacking of the Scotts motors.

Smear

The letter, written by Alex Ferry, CSEU general secretary, and distributed by miners' president Joe Gormley claims the pickets are not even ex-employees.

This view was first put about by employer Arthur Snipe, later to be backed up by Ken Cure, engineering union executive member, and is now being used as a smear in the miners' union.

But the message from the convenor Denis Barry was clear. 'Today's picket has produced 200 and odd strikers, we intend to stay until we get a satisfactory settlement.'

Phil Penning, TASS steward said, 'This demonstration proves we aren't going to walk away. All we've got to walk away to is the dole queue.'

Picketing is being organised on a round-the-clock basis, and a call will be made for a mass picket, if any efforts are made to break the picket line.



Charles Morris MP

But the strikers are not leaving it at that. The fight outside the factory is to be escalated.

Denis Barry explains, 'We're dealing with an unscrupulous employer, but you expect that, from the Snipes of this world. 'What we cannot ac-

cept is being treated in a worst state by our national official.'

Since dispute benefits were withdrawn in late July, the engineering union leaders have pulled every trick they could to undermine the strike.

The constitution of the AUEW has been ignored and open collaboration with the employer has gone on.

Ballot

Recently, when picketers faced injunctions under the Employment Act, the union went so far as to withdraw legal facilities.

Denis Barry believes, 'Laurence Scott isn't an isolated example, we've seen a pattern of this. I feel Derek Robinson should have been defended by the trade union movement, but the AUEW assass-

inated him.

'We saw the same problem in relation to the Plansee strike. The executive council and full-time officials are petrified of people fighting for their jobs, they want an easy ride.'

The strikers have therefore decided they've had enough of being pushed around by Boyd, Duffy and Cure.

A campaign has been launched into the engineering union, calling for a ballot on the removal of the executive council.

Under rule 14 of the AUEW constitution, if ten per cent (approximately 260) of the branches calls for this, the general secretary must conduct a ballot.

Over the last five months the strikers have won resolutions of support from 1,060 branches of the union, so the target is realisable.

A new strike bulletin has been produced and copies mailed to all 2,600 branches of the union as the first stage in this campaign.

Duffy, Boyd and Cure may want an easy ride, but the Scotts strikers can make it very rough for them.

It is high time these sell-out merchants were challenged in the union for the role they play. Workers at Laurence Scott have given a lead on this to all engineers which must be followed.

Laurence Scott Strike Bulletin No 3

NEW issue with the case of the Scott strikers and their appeal for action by engineers against the AUEW council NOW OUT.

ORDER, 2p each plus postage, from LSE strike committee, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire. All donations for the AUEW 'rule 14' campaign gratefully accepted.

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.

Confederation of Shipbuilding & Engineering Unions
140 142 Walworth Road
London SE17 1JW
Tel. 01-703 2215/8

Mr J Gormley,
President,
National Union of Mineworkers,
222 Euston Road,
London, NW1 2BX.

7 December, 1981

Dear Brother Gormley,

Laurence Scott and Electromotors, Manchester

Earlier this year you were kind enough to meet representatives of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions when we asked for your union's support to bring pressure on the management of the above company arising from their decision to close the Manchester establishment. In actual fact we met you on Thursday, 25 June. Shortly following that meeting, and no doubt arising from your own and other pressures on the company on the 12 July, 1981, with the Chairman of the company on the 12 July, 1981.

At that meeting which was attended by National and Local representatives of all the unions concerned a formula was negotiated which was unanimously recommended for acceptance by the trade union negotiating team, including the local representatives. Unfortunately the terms of the formula were rejected by the members in dispute and the CSEU subsequently considered their decision and instructed them to resume work on the basis of the formula which had been negotiated. This decision was supported by all of the unions concerned.

Despite this instruction the dispute has continued and we have now reached a very serious situation where continued picketing and blacking of work is seriously jeopardising the jobs of our members employed at the company's other factories of Mining Supplies Ltd.

The matter was again considered by our Executive Council on 3 December, 1981, when they decided to reaffirm their previous decisions that this dispute was terminated. During the discussion that took place it was reported that the majority of people involved in picketing and who are continuing this dispute in actual fact were not ex employees of the company but nevertheless they were receiving support from trade unionists in Manchester including members of various regions of your own union. We believe that this support is misguided and is also being given contrary to the feelings and decisions of the unions at national level and we would therefore once again be obliged if you could use your good offices to inform your members to cease blacking work from the factories of Mining Supplies Ltd. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours fraternally,
Alex Ferry
General Secretary



Photo: LAURA MITCHELL

24 hours strike against Tories called in Sheffield

By Pamela Holmes

'CALLING all workers in South Yorkshire! Join forces on 25 January to protest against this Tory government policy, they are crucifying the living standards of our people.'

This is the call from the South Yorkshire engineering and steel committee for a 24 hour stoppage of work and day of action to start a campaign against the Tory policies.

Closures and redundancies in steel and engineering over the last 18 months are affecting the whole region. Unemployment figures now match the national average and are likely to go on rising.

It is not just that closures in steel and engineering cause closures and redundancies in other sectors as David Blunkett left Labour leader of Sheffield City Council pointed out at a meeting of shop stewards on 11 January.

Government proposals for cutting back on local authority spending also have a knock on effect. Public spending cuts don't simply mean redundancy at the town hall, they also mean less work for the private sector.

It is this interdependence of different sectors that explain why the call for action includes workers in transport, hospitals and other public services.

The 24 hour stoppage and march are seen as the start of the campaign which as one shop steward put it, 'is more likely to be a marathon than a sprint'.

Bill Owen, president of the South Yorkshire Association of Trades Councils explained that the aim of the day of action would not simply be a protest against unemployment. In his view, the campaign also has to oppose government cuts in local government spending and the proposals to restrict trade union rights and local authority democracy.

The alternative policies he put forward are those of the TUC and the alternative economic and political strategy.

The meeting on the 11 January heard six reports of the response to the appeal. In British Steel for example, although the crafts committee has received the support of its members it appears that the ISTC has not even informed their workers.

Officials of the National Union of Mineworkers were reported as saying that their contribution will be winning the strike ballot.

Support is coming in from some of the traditionally well organised engineering plants but other areas are more doubtful.

A proposal to use picketing to make the 24 hour strike effective was viciously rejected by the Communist Party spokespeople — their alternative was to 'have a chat' with different union officials.

However increasing numbers of people in the Labour Party and trade unions are realising that simply talking is not the way to beat the Tories.

If this can be expressed on 25 January then an effective campaign to defeat the Tories may get us away.



What your union/Labour Party/students union can do

- + Issue statements of support for Solidarnosc
- + Organise fact-finding delegations to go to Poland
- + Demand of Polish Embassy that the TUC delegation to Poland is allowed in
- + Twin your workplace, union branch with similar unit of Solidarnosc
- + Sponsor local meetings, marches to support Solidarnosc, invite the London Solidarnosc group to speak
- + Continue links with Solidarnosc, boycott links with any phony new 'union'
- + Order *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* for all the facts on Poland

Solidarity Committees with Solidarnosc

- Birmingham Polish Solidarity Committee**, c/o Roger Murray, Sparkhill Labour Club, Stratford Rd, Birmingham.
- Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee**, c/o Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd, Glasgow, G43. Ring 041-632 1839.
- Greater Manchester Polish Solidarity Committee**, c/o Jon Silberman, 51 Montrose House, Crete St, Oldham, Lancs. Ring 061-620 2885.
- Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign**, 10 Park Drive, London NW11. Ring 01-458 1501.
- Labour Focus on Eastern Europe**, Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.
- Polish Solidarity Campaign**, 69 Edinburgh Rd, London E13.
- Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group in UK**, 64 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, London SW5. Ring 01-373 3492.

Solidarity events with Polish workers

- BIRMINGHAM:** Rally and march on Sat 6 February, called by Birmingham Polish Solidarity Committee and the Trades Council.
- CARDIFF:** March and rally called by Welsh Polish Solidarity Committee on Sat 16 January. Assemble 1.30 at Sophia Gardens for march. Rally at 3pm in Cardiff City Hall with political and labour movement speakers.
- GLASGOW:** March and rally called by Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee on Sat 23 January. Assemble 1.30pm, Queen Margaret Drive for march. Rally at 3pm at Patrick Burgh Hall with labour movement speakers.
- MANCHESTER:** March and rally called by Greater Manchester Polish Solidarity Committee on Thur 28 January. Assemble 6.30pm All Saints, Oxford Rd for march. Rally at 7.30 at Free Trade Hall with labour movement speakers.

Lancashire association of trades councils back Solidarnosc

This County Association condemns the sheer deceit of those who claim to defend Solidarnosc whilst simultaneously,

- conspiring to prop up military dictatorships in El Salvador and other Latin American states, justifying the racist South African regime, its military occupation of Namibia and its incursions into Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, and the Seychelles,
- conspiring to escalate the number of nuclear warheads in Europe pointing at the heads of the Polish and other European and Soviet workers as part of their Cold War plans,
- sabotaging the economies and preparing contingency plans for the military invasion of Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua,
- arresting and jailing striking and picketing workers, while seeking even further legal restrictions to undermine the ability of unions in their own countries to pursue the democratic right to a job, a living wage and sexual and racial equality.

Only the labour and trade union movement internationally can legitimately defend its right to an independent existence. In Poland we therefore call for:

- an end to repression and martial law,
- the release of all political prisoners,
- no intervention in Poland by outside nation states,
- food aid for the Polish workers,
- material aid to Solidarnosc by the TUC,
- trade union delegations to visit Poland,
- labour movement and Solidarnosc speakers under the auspices of the TUC to tour the Lancashire area,
- resolutions and discussion to be encouraged and future trades councils and branch meetings to continue the discussion on the problems facing the Polish workers,
- to sponsor a national labour movement conference to discuss the situation in Poland and solidarity with Solidarnosc.

Passed by executive committee of Lancashire association of trades councils to go to North West TUC quarterly on 23 January.



Glasgow solidarity with Solidarnosc demo before Xmas

Solidarity in Scotland

Solidarity activist, Marek Garztecki, will be touring Scotland next week.

His visit has been prompted by the Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee, a body of trade union and Labour Party activists whose aim is to build support in the labour movement for an end to the repression in Poland.

Garztecki, a worker at Warsaw Radio, had just started a course here when the military coup took place. He is a member of the Solidarity trade union working group in Britain.

During his visit it is hoped to arrange a series of meetings with shop stewards committees, trades councils, and other labour movement bodies. Garztecki will be in Glasgow on 20 January, the Stirling/Falkirk area on 21 January, and Lothian on 22 January.

On Saturday 23 January the Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee is organising a demonstration followed by a mass rally at which Garztecki will be one of the main speakers. Others who have agreed to speak are Lee Jeans convenor Helen Monaghan, former UCS workers' leader, Jimmy Reid, and Labour MP John Maxton and Denis Canavan.

Support for the demonstration was overwhelmingly voted last Saturday by the branch council of Strathclyde region NALGO, which represents 20,000 members. The Scottish TUC will be discussing this week whether to send a speaker to the rally.

The demonstration will assemble in Queen Margaret Drive (near Polish consulate) at 1.30pm, marching off at 2pm for the rally in Patrick Burgh Hall, at 3pm.

Socialist Challenge says

Solidarity with Solidarnosc

By Penny Duggan

THE IMPOSITION of martial law in Poland represents a severe setback for the workers' movement in Poland and internationally. The internment of many of the leaders of Solidarnosc, the crushing of the factory occupations and the rolling back of the gains made by the independent working class organisations have halted the development of the anti-bureaucratic leadership. However the workers' movement is not defeated.

The resistance goes on. Solidarnosc bulletins are still being circulated clandestinely and passive resistance in the workplace continues. Through such resistance the re-establishment of the class struggle leadership that has characterised Solidarnosc can take place. We cannot predict the timescale. But the Polish crisis will be prolonged.

Solidarity with Solidarnosc is a major task for the whole of the left, and will be so for a protracted period. There are big opportunities within the ranks of the workers' movement and among young people for a campaign of solidarity with the Polish workers.

But the traditional leadership of the workers' movement acts as a block to developing this campaign. The right wing leaders join in Cold War-mongering and seek to ally with imperialism. The silence of the left is deafening.

Their refusal to build solidarity with Solidarnosc strengthens imperialism

and helps the right wing to gain credibility. They weaken themselves by appearing identified with the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In this situation many of the traditional alliances within the workers' movement will be upset by the events in Poland and their impact on the world political situation. Only the revolutionary Marxists within the labour movement oppose the imperialist offensive against the colonial revolution, against Thatcher's austerity policies and are also prepared to organise the anti-Stalinist struggle in defence of the Polish workers.

Socialist Challenge believes that there are two major tasks. First, to organise support for the workers' resistance in Poland. This creates the

best conditions for the emergence of a new politically stronger leadership of the rank and file Polish workers.

Second, Socialist Challenge, representing the most consistently internationalist current also aims to extend its support. Socialist Challenge supporters up and down the country should be wearing Solidarnosc badges, selling Socialist Challenge which has had the best record of coverage on the Polish events.

Until now the response of the British labour movement in defence of their Polish sisters and brothers has been a disgrace. Socialists should argue for the TUC and the Labour Party to organise support for the Polish workers. We should demand that solidarity actions are organised calling for

- * an end to martial law
- * full rights for Solidarnosc
- * release of all internees
- * no Soviet intervention

The Eastern European Solidarity Campaign is organising a major rally at the beginning of February

for which it is seeking national Labour Party and trade union sponsorship.

Moves are also underway to organise a national Solidarity with Solidarnosc conference that will lay the basis for ongoing solidarity action, particularly in the rank and file of the labour movement.

Socialist Challenge opposes the Cold War calls for boycotts of Polish and Soviet goods, proposed by some right wing trade union leaders and President Reagan, who openly supports the suppression of democratic rights in El Salvador.

Contrary to other press reports Solidarnosc representatives in this country and in Europe have not called for such boycotts. Nor would they be in the interests of the Polish workers themselves.

The British labour movement should also have nothing to do with any new phony 'trade union' set up to replace Solidarity in Poland.

It will be just like the other unions in Eastern Europe, with no right to strike, and with all appointments in the union totally under the control of the ruling party. In any contact with these 'unions' the labour movement should insist that they publicise the TUC's support for Solidarnosc.



For labour movement solidarity

THE Polish workers are still fighting the junta of General Jaruzelski. Miners have been shot, thousands arrested and interned in concentration camps, and many more have been sacked by the authorities.

The fight against the Polish armed forces and the bureaucracy which has ruled so corruptly and incompetently is a workers'

fight. It needs the immediate and unconditional support of all workers East or West.

The labour movement needs to organise its own class solidarity with the Polish workers, completely independently from the Cold War politics and actions of Reagan and Thatcher. Build labour movement demonstrations, rallies and meetings. Build understanding and sup-

port in the unions, Labour Parties, and communities for the Polish workers' fight.

End martial law. Free Lech Walesa. Release all political and union prisoners. An end to all restrictions on Solidarnosc. No Warsaw Pact intervention. No to the state unions: build links with the underground workers' resistance. Send money, food and literature to

these organisations. Unconditional support for the Polish workers' fight.

Reg Race MP, Jonathan Hammond (vice-president NUJ), Oliver MacDonald (Labour Focus on Eastern Europe), Socialist Organiser Alliance, Socialist Challenge, London Labour Briefing.

Socialist Challenge Poland forums

- Hounslow:** Sun 17 Jan, 7pm at George IV pub, 185 Chiswick High Rd, W4.
- East London:** Wed 3 Feb, 7.30pm at Dalston Library, Dalston Junction, E8.
- Newport:** Thur 21 Jan, 7pm at YMCA, Commercial St, Newport.
- Southampton:** Thur 21 Jan, 1pm at University clubs and societies rooms, students union building.
- Lambeth:** Fri 22 Jan, 7.30pm at Lambeth Town Hall.
- Swansea:** Thur 21 Jan.
- Leicester:** Thur 28 Jan.

Socialist Challenge national school on Poland

Two day educational school on Poland and political revolution for Socialist Challenge supporters on 13/14 February. If you would like to come, see your local SC supporters or write to: Socialist Challenge school, PO Box 50, London N1.



25p

Socialist Challenge PAMPHLET

Solidarity with Solidarity

New Socialist Challenge pamphlet now out! Just 25p, or 20p for bulk orders from supporters' groups. Get your copy now!

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

A Socialist Defence Bulletin on Eastern Europe and the USSR. Vol.4 No.44 Winter - Spring 1981 £1.50 52c

POLAND: Solidarnosc IN ACTION



Labour Focus on Eastern Europe For all the news, facts in Poland, the best journal on the left. New issue out soon, Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.

Graphic: PETER KENNARD

AS POLAND enters its second month of martial law the workers' resistance continues. Latest reports speak of the underground Solidarnosc putting out a twice daily bulletin, a weekly journal, and of clandestine co-ordination growing in the major cities.

International solidarity with the Polish workers is also building up. Solidarnosc representatives in Europe have called for an international day of

action on 30 January.

But the repression against Solidarnosc within Poland is severe. Tens of thousands have been sacked from their jobs, thousands more are interned and hundreds have been sentenced to prison terms for organising resistance.

We reprint on these pages two accounts of the resistance at the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk, birthplace and symbol of Solidarnosc.

The last hour of the Lenin



The occupied yards in the days after martial law was imposed

Eyewitness report by Bernard Guetta reprinted from Le Monde

Over there, some 200 metres from gate number two of the Lenin shipyard, made famous by numerous photos, the large meeting room is completely empty. The national strike committee which was formed on Sunday is meeting somewhere else, carefully hidden in this vast expanse of quays, recesses, dozens of workshops, offices and metal gates which form the cradle of Solidarnosc.

Passes, obtained with great difficulty as they distrust everyone, are not enough to tell you where to go. But if you recognise you, they take you, one way then another, until you finally come across the delegates.

'National strike committee' is really an overstatement. There are only really delegates from the shipyard workshops, representatives of 48 Gdansk enterprises, and about 20 members of Solidarnosc's staff who have escaped, and one member of the national presidium, Waszkiewicz. It's not much, but on Sunday the shipyard was empty and today, Monday 14 December, the workers are all here, with their helmets on, red and white armbands, on strike.

The day before, when there were only forty representatives here from factories and twenty other workers at most, it did not seem that anything other than token gestures could be made. It was nice to be in the refectory again, first one person then another turns up free, they hug and laugh, and tell tales of how under the noses of the militia they escaped the net. But with so few, what can be done?

It is clear that these men and women have not regrouped only to be picked up again. After a long debate they decide to leave the shipyard before ten o'clock, the hour of the curfew decreed by the authorities. A good job too as the militia invaded the shipyard at 8 minutes past two during the night. The 'forces of order' break the roneos and the typewriters that they come across moving in columns between the workshops, arrest seven militants, handcuff them, and then leave again.

The guiding theme of the communiques of the Military Council for

National Salvation is that everything in the country is calm and that everyone should go to their place of work. To make the militia occupy the yards in these conditions would be a blunder. Monday morning, the first working day since the state of war, the workers flock to work.

In the suburbs of Gdansk, the army has taken up its positions, but in the town all is normal and calm. This calm is the master card of the authorities: to show that the one proclamation of national salvation has been enough to normalise the situation, as if each Pole was just waiting to hear it. The people, on the other hand, think only about building barricades.

They are afraid, it's true. But at the same time they do not believe,

they do not want to believe that their liberty is over. It's a bizarre game of cat and mouse which allows the workers to enter the shipyards as if nothing has happened. In less than an hour the Polish flags, a symbol for 15 months of strikes and struggles for democracy, fly over the gates. Guard rotas are organised. From the rooftops they scan the horizon.

They listen politely to the factory director who, in a choking voice, calls for a return to work, insisting on the threats which go with the state of war. They like the director a lot and while listening to him, they whisper: 'It's not his fault, they made him do it.' And then, after his fruitless appeals for ten minutes or so, a young worker reads out in a loud voice the strike communiques.



The first worker falls dead in the snow

The first death in Gdansk

THE SOLIDARNOSC bulletin number 9 announced that Antoni Growarczyk aged 23 died in Gdansk on 17 December close to the Gdansk monument to the 1970 dead. The bulletin described the scene as follows:

'From the morning the ZOMO (motorised militia) had closed off all access to the monument. In the afternoon more and more people tried to reach it but at the

same time ZOMO reinforcements were despatched. The crowd shouted: 'Gestapo' and sang the national anthem. The ZOMO used their guns, and tear gas grenades which the crowd threw back at them.

'In the afternoon, a whole crowd of people were arrested and the struggle became increasingly bitter: one side with stones, the other with guns. We now know the name of one of those killed: Antoni Growarczyk, aged 23.'



From the other side of the gate, the crowd, which has also grown since yesterday, applauds incessantly the repeated demands for the immediate lifting of the state of war, the release of all the prisoners whose names are read out. They would have liked to have heard something else, to hear that region after region, the whole of Poland, is standing together in opposition, and that a triumphant Lech Walesa is making his way to the shipyard. It's far from being the case. But this monotony of communiques serves as an antidote to the hammering away of the radio and television since six o'clock on Sunday morning.

Every hour like clockwork in between two pieces of classical music, a voice like an automaton weighs down

on Poland: 'As previously announced by the Military Council for National Salvation has been constituted under the leadership of General Wojciech Jaruzelski ...'

And each time the voice drones on for twenty minutes: 'It is forbidden to meet, to move around without authorisation, to stick up posters, to circulate leaflets, to loiter in public places, to go out between 10pm and 6am, for anyone over 13 to go out without identification cards, forbidden to buy petrol, to draw more than 10,000 zlotys from one's bank account, to wear badges, to send parcels, to make collections, to organise sporting activities, to stop in border areas, to carry knives.



Tanks crash through the famous shipyard gates

s of freedom n Shipyard

Workers



Workers fraternise with the soliders when the tanks first appear

The continuing story of the events at the Lenin shipyards was taken up by the Polish correspondent of Le Matin.

TUESDAY morning, the first tanks appeared. At first the people were able to fraternise with the soldiers but their officers very quickly forced them to stop. 'The soldiers explained to us that they would never fire at us,' said Jan, a young student.

'We managed to put flowers in their tank barrels. These tanks were replaced by others who kept on the move around the shipyards all day. The tension increased later in the day with the workers exasperated by the violence of the militia.'

The real 'pacification' of the yards took place on Wednesday. The tanks smashed down the yard gates at six in the morning. They were followed up by the militia and the ZOMO. 'The workers were completely exasperated and ready for trouble,' said Julian. 'They had their helmets on, their lead pipes, stones, tools and their fists.'

Two doctors managed to calm the more radical ones down and bloody confrontations were avoided. 'That did not stop the militia from beating people senseless and from using their grenades,' Julian went on.

The shipyard fell quickly, but in the afternoon things really degenerated. The military government of Gdansk refused to allow an open air mass to be held at the monument for the victims of 1970. The site was blocked off by the militia and, at about three o'clock, the crowd, mad with rage, attacked them.

The battles lasted for three hours; fists and paving stones against bludgeons, then water cannons and plastic bullets. Officially, there were more than six hundred street casualties.

'I saw a stupid thing,' said Zbigniew, a young student, 'the police were in the process of beating up a young kid of 15 or so on the ground, near the station. The crowd went crazy, stormed over there and freed him. He got up, covered in blood, and took a pistol out of his pocket, and fired at the police. He hit one of them in the head before getting away.' There do not seem to have been any deaths on Wednesday.

Thursday it started up again. Police cordons against groups of youth, this time with molotov cocktails. Near to the station a police vehicle was burned out. The police were overwhelmed. Commander Kulikowski ordered one of his units to open fire. A man of about 21 was hit in the head and died in hospital.

The authorities admitted his death, But, according to the doctors in Gdansk, there were at least two other deaths: a woman shot in the stomach, a soldier thrown off a high bridge by the demonstrators. And six more seriously wounded. 'The people cried, "Gestapo, Gestapo, traitors" to the police,' said Julian, 'It's a terrible thing for Poles to kill other Poles.'

were it not for the secret whispering.

There is an all-embracing shadow which has cut up Poland into towns and villages between which one cannot communicate or move around, and which has broken up the whole of society, which is now merely a collection of individuals who are completely vulnerable. It is extremely effective. Whilst everyone realises that a refusal to go along with this would reduce it to nothing, everyone is also asking if their brother, their cousin, or their workshop manager is going to refuse or not. Fear takes a grip, grows and paralyses. And then, too much, it's too much. Through dulling people's senses with the same communiques, the propaganda gives itself away: there is nothing other than the same constantly repeated threats.

Lenin shipyards, Monday eleven o'clock in the room where the national strike committee met. 'We are,' says an old worker, 'citizens with full rights of the Peoples Republic of Poland, and we will not give up our rights.' One cannot take his hopes for realities. We know that if the mines are on strike in Silesia, it's not all of them, it's only 27, or some say only seven.

The other shipyards, whose delegates are there, are militarised from this point on and whilst their workers are only pretending to work nevertheless they are still at their post. No, they don't delude themselves but they say: 'We must hold out for 36 hours, then something will happen.'

A young worker begins a long discussion on Gandhi and his methods of non-violence. 'If the army comes,' he says, 'we will give them flowers and perhaps they will withdraw their arms.' He has little success, and everyone insists that we be careful of provocations, that nothing damaging should be done, that we shouldn't leave the shipyard, that we should stay here even if they produce all the paralysing gases, tear gas etc.

They discuss for ages to decide whether to give passes to those who want to leave the shipyards. They don't really take a decision but the general sentiment is that it would be best to have 5000 convinced people than 15,000 undecided. This hesitation, one feels it in the room, one reads it in people's expressions; it's anguish.

'Dear brother workers of the shipyard,' says an old peasant 'in 1980 the spark which inflamed the whole of Poland began here because you took the decision. Today again you have decided: not to leave your workplace. We the agricultural workers, we will bring you everything to make sure that you do not starve. We will manage somehow. We will kill our animals to feed you. We will help you, I ask of you just one thing, do not give in! Don't let yourselves be terrorised!

'Who is this general who directs his guns at his own people and declares war on his own nation? The

radio bombards us with propaganda, but our unity can achieve everything. Dear workers, fear nothing, for God is with us, the Blessed Virgin will not desert us. Save our honour!'

Anna Walentynowicz, this small gentle woman with caloused hands — over whom the whole thing started, when the workers began their strike to prevent her being sacked in August 1980 — entered the room. She weeps on recognising her friends. She is a tiny woman, and looks very tired, but she would not give in for anything in the world.

Waszkiewicz explains that several other members of the presidium have succeeded in hiding and that a link up with them is underway. He reads a communique (the strike is continuing and growing) and concludes: 'There are no instructions, for each person knows what they must do.' Next meeting Monday at 6pm — in another place in the yards of course.

At two o'clock the same day: a column of nine armoured tanks are visible on the roads parallel to this one. It is 348 kilometres to the capital and several police roadblocks to cross. Vehicles are few and far between. Some 50 kilometres from Warsaw one must pass a column of 29 tanks and armoured transporters. In the centre traffic is almost non-existent; the large crossroads are under surveillance.

At this time no one can say what is to become of Poland. Eleven years ago the strikes began in Gdansk. Three days later, on 17 December 1970, they were drowned in blood and this blood soon led to the fall of the first secretary of that time, Gomulka. The radio quotes extensively the long sermon of the primate: this certainly isn't a call for a general strike..



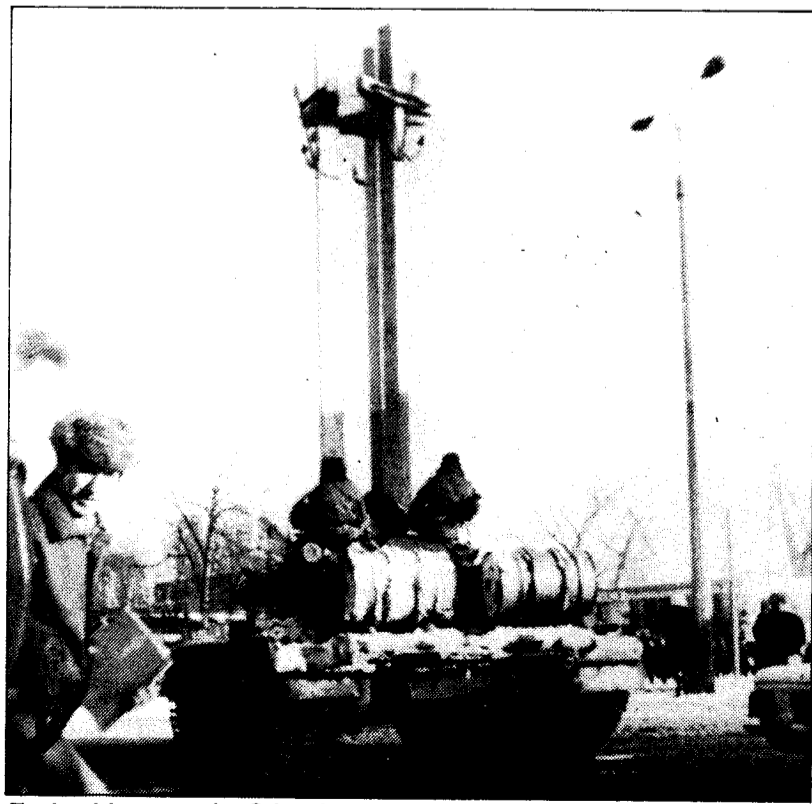
The activities of Solidarity, and also those of the Journalists Association, the Independent Students Association, are suspended. The property and monies of Solidarity are impounded. Constitutional freedoms are suspended and the inviolability of residences is lifted. All citizens between 16 and 65 can be placed in forced labour for renewable periods of seven days. All military leave is suspended. Reservists are liable to immediate call-up.

The terms of reference of the military tribunals have been enlarged and the judicial proceedings speeded up. Post, transport, petrol stations, refineries, mines, ports, firefighters, are all 'militarised'. Their employees no longer have any employment con-

tract, nor do they any longer have the chance to resign, and any refusal to obey orders from now on is considered an act of insubordination.

Schoolkids and students are given holidays till 3 January. Regional radio and television stations are shut down. The national networks are reduced to one voice, the official voice: the voice of the army.

Sunday evening at 7.30pm is the first televised day of the state of war. Men in uniform read out the news in a cold and expressionless face. It leaves a strange impression: all these measures amount to a coup d'etat, though they don't want to use the word which is reminiscent of South American generals. However in the streets life would appear to be normal



Tanks drive past the Gdansk movement to the 1970 dead



The reaction of the Western European CPs to Polish crisis

On the one hand... on the other...

The imposition of martial law in Poland has shown the Western European Communist Parties to be at odds with one another, to say the least, argues TESSA VAN GELDEREN. From outright condemnation to faint praise, the CPs have also found themselves in conflict with their own membership.

The French CP argues that the balance sheet of the intervention of the army is 'overall positive', and that the prime responsibility for the events lies with 'extremists' inside Solidarity. The imposition of martial law is a process of 'normalisation'.

Although the French CP admits that major errors occurred during the 1970s, and that Gierek and the other Polish leaders failed to solve the problems, it also argues that Solidarity was going beyond being a trade union. It wanted to create a 'self-management republic' and — crime of crimes — 'contested the leading role of the Polish Communist Party'.

But the French CP has by no means carried its supporters with it. When 50,000 people marched in Paris on 14 December at the appeal of the pro-Socialist Party CFDT union federation, many members of the rival CP dominated union federation, the CGT, marched as well. When the CFDT called for a one hour's strike, many from the CGT also came out.

CGT

Since then, dozens of CGT federations and branches have expressed opposition to the position of the CGT leadership, which is, in effect, the leadership of the CP. Not since May 1968 has there been so much opposition to the leadership.

Even the editor of the CGT journal has attacked the official position, while rank and file members of the union have set up a national CGT for Solidarity group.

But the leadership remains unmoved. 'The CGT,' it says, 'will not appeal for support for every form of trade unionism on the grounds it calls itself trade unionism...the enemies of socialism gathered behind Solidarnosc...it is not possible to say that those imprisoned are trade unionists.'

Within the French Communist Party itself, although opposition has been less strong, leading intellectuals such as Jean Ellenstein have openly denounced the party leadership. What opposition there is, has generally gathered round those sympathising with the Eurocommunists.

Joint

In contrast, both the Italian and Spanish CPs have openly condemned the military takeover in Poland. A joint statement by them called for an end to the use of force in Poland, a return to normal civil liberties and the resumption of a dialogue between the authorities and Solidarity.

The Italian Communist leader, Enrico Berlinguer, went so far as to say that the Warsaw

Pact countries had 'exhausted their capacity for the renewal of their political life'.

The Spanish CP leadership has been equally forthright. It condemned the military takeover as 'unacceptable and demanding the strongest condemnation'.

Defence

One leader of the Spanish party insisted, 'this is not the way to solve the kind of political problems gripping Polish society'. Another called for the 'defence of Solidarity, the only institution capable of guaranteeing the rights of trade unionism in Poland'.

point where that phase is closing,' he said.

What he described as 'the dynamic forces of development and renewal' has finally 'come to a halt, met its point of exhaustion'. The initiative now lies with 'the working class movement and democratic parties in the Western world and our country. In this new phase Western workers will be able to help those in Eastern Europe towards "an effective democratisation of their political life."

Such biting criticisms of the Soviet Union find no place inside the British Communist Party, although Gerry Pocock, head of the international department of the CPGB, does describe Berlinguer's analysis as 'absolutely new and extremely important — it will echo round the world and influence all of us'.

But the British CP, while

failure of Solidarity to maintain its own coherence and discipline.'

The CPGB and the *Morning Star* have made many valid criticisms of the Polish authorities, but throughout they have tempered such criticisms with attacks on Solidarity. 'Certainly some of the statements and calls made by Solidarity...have actually been provocative. But this cannot justify the attack on the democratic rights of the Polish people as a whole.' (*Morning Star* 17 December, our emphasis).

Demands

Gerry Pocock argues against those who say that 'Solidarity was more than a trade union, it made political demands.' As he explains, 'It is hardly likely that a trade union born in the circumstances in



Tanks and riot police launch an attack on the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw on 15 December

The Soviet Union has been quick to take up these 'malcontents' within its ranks. A fiercely worded TASS commentary said the majority of sober-minded observers in the West accepted that the intervention of the military was vital to save Poland from catastrophe.

'Alas,' it continued, 'what is clear to the governments and press of many Western countries...somehow turns out to be unclear to representatives of some parties which carry socialist slogans.'

Berlinguer would have liked to see 'a historic compromise' in Poland between Solidarity and the party, like the 'historic compromise' he favours in Italy with the Italian Tories. He has gone further than any communist leader. He announced the ending of the era which began with the Russian Revolution. 'Now we have come to the

condemning the events in Poland, has been quick to lay some of the responsibility on the shoulders of Solidarity.

'On the one hand,' writes the *Morning Star*, 'there has been a ban on strikes from the government. Such a ban is incompatible with the rights of trade unions which are independent of the state. On the other, Solidarity did not assist the search for compromise by its call for a national stoppage and demonstrations...'

Torch

Such an even handed approach is reminiscent of *The Times* leader which spoke of 'two major failures. The most important has been the failure of the party apparatus...to seize the torch of reform and run forward with it...The second failure has been the

which Solidarity appeared would be just like a trade union that had developed over generations in a capitalist society.'

Yet in the same article in the *Morning Star* (19 December), he writes, 'The Polish people have to overcome both the efforts of those who seek to block change and of those, including sections of Solidarity, who are motivated by anti-socialist and reactionary measures.'

The editorial in the same issue takes up the tragedy of the Polish miners killed in Upper Silesia. 'It is the result of...the imposition of martial law, with the military power controlling all the organs of civil government.'

Unfortunately, the *Morning Star* seems to be obsessed with the view that the real problem with the military takeover has been the suspension of parliament. According to the

THE UNITED SECRETARIAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL has issued a long statement on Poland. Next week we will publish a summary of the Fourth International's position. Here we reproduce some extracts which comment on the positions taken by the Western European Communist Parties.

THE powerful rise of the political revolution in Poland and the setting into motion of the bureaucratic counter-revolution have resulted in a new stage in the crisis of the communist parties which had already been fuelled in most countries by internal developments in the class struggle ...

At one extreme are the positions of the French, Portuguese, West German and Danish CPs. Fundamentally they support the establishment of the state of siege which is supposed to have permitted 'Socialist Poland to escape the mortal danger of the counter-revolution'.

It is an apparent paradox, but in fact there is a convergence between the difficulties of the Soviet bureaucracy and its own organisational interests when some of these CPs present the 'exceptional measures taken by Jaruzelski' as the best solution to avoid a possible Russian intervention! ...

The bureaucracy of these CPs not only firmly defends the status quo but identifies socialism and the struggle against capitalism with the policy of the ruling bureaucracy and their regimes.

At the other extreme is the position of the Italian CP. It has vigorously condemned martial law in Poland, called for the freeing of political prisoners and the elimination of measures outlawing trade union activity. It is against the 'blow that the coup (use of military force) represents against the very cause of socialism'.

When it states that it is time "to recognise that the phase of socialism opened up with the October revolution has exhausted its own energies" and links the Polish events to the policy of the USSR and its internal developments, the Italian CP is going a long way in its conflict with Moscow.

However, the whole line of this CP is situated in the framework of the 'historic compromise' for Poland between all the "fundamental components of Polish society".

In no way is it a question of a declaration in favour of the democratic power of the workers but for the 'co-responsibility' of workers within the framework of the regime, with the PUPP, the Church and the peasants ... The Italian CP's position on Poland remains the faithful reflection of its class collaborationist policy.

The Fourth International will commit all its weight inside the international workers' movement to develop the solidarity campaign with the Polish proletarian masses. All those who today, inside the workers' movement, refuses to develop this mobilisation divides the working masses — in their own country and internationally.



Inside a Warsaw detention centre — a photo smuggled out by Solidarnosc supporters

same editorial everything would have been fine if only the army was under the control of parliament which is, apparently, 'the supreme authority in Poland representing the people as a whole.'

The *Morning Star* complains, 'If there were severe problems of food distribution, if there was black marketeering and breakdowns of law and order beyond the control of the

ordinary police, surely the army could have been called upon by the government, with parliament's approval...'

As Gerry Pocock says, 'our programme, "The British Road to Socialism", stands for the primacy of parliament. The same should apply for Poland.' Does that mean that if only an elected leader, like Margaret Thatcher, was in power in Poland then everything would be fine?

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

Scotland

ABERDEEN: SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.

DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, Thur 4-5.30pm, Fri 4-5.30pm, Sat 11-4pm.

EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

GLASGOW: SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barretts, Byres Rd; Clyde Books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop Collective, Cresswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.

HAMILTON: SC sale every Sat 1-5pm outside Safeway, shopping centre. For more info contact John Ford, 53 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton or Paul Youngson, 18 Forrest Crescent, Hamilton.

Wales

BANGOR: Sat 10-12 town centre.

CARDIFF: every Sat in Bute Town 10.30-12. Also available 1-0-8 Books, Salisbury Road.

NEWTOWN: every Sat in town centre 11-12.30

PONTYPRIDD: SC sales every Sat outside Open Market 11-1pm.

SWANSEA: SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.

England

BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.

BIRKENHEAD: SC on sale at Labour Club, Cleveland st, Thur nights; in precinct outside Littlewoods, Sat 11-12.

BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.

BOLSOVER: Cross Keys, every Fri 8-9pm, Bluebell 9-10.

BRADFORD: SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.

BURNLEY: SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.

CHESTERFIELD: SC sold outside Boots, Market Place, 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 Plaza. SC also available at Peaceworks.

LEEDS: Sat 11-1 at Lands Lane Pedestrian Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Headingly Arndale Centre. Corner Bookshop, Woodhouse Lane.

LIVERPOOL: SC on sale from News from Nowhere, Whitechapel and Progressive Books, Berry St.

MANSFIELD: Stockwell Gate, Sats 10.30-12 and 2.30-3; West Gate, Sats 10.30-12; Four Seasons shopping centre, Sats 10.30-12. Phone 653216 for further details.

Bookshops

BANGOR: Rainbows, Holyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.

BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.

BRIGHTON: The Public House, Little Preston St.

BRISTOL: Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.

BIRMINGHAM: Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.

DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a South Street.

FURFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Hey Street.

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

OXFORD: EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.

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

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.

SOCIALIST FORUM for Southern African Solidarity (SOESAS) next meeting, on Zimbabwe, will be held at Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, N19, at 3pm on Saturday 16 January.

Richard Carver will give an overview of political developments since independence, while a second speaker will discuss the trade union movement. The introduction will be followed by discussion, ending at 6pm.

SPARE BOOKS! Any books you don't want taking up valuable space on your bookshelves? Send them to the Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1 2XP.

BADGES: Make money for your organisation or branch. Huge reductions on anti-racist, Irish solidarity, women's badges and many more. Write for lists of incredibly low bulk rates - from as little as 5p. Free offers for large orders. Send to: SC/D Badges, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

BADGES: Available from Revolution Youth, 20s each plus postage. Big discount on bulk orders. Write to: Revolution Youth, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

MANCHESTER SC sold 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.

NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. Every Friday outside Newcastle University between 1-2 and outside Newcastle Polytechnic between 12-1 every Monday.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.

STAFFORD: SC on Sale Market Sq Sat lunch-time.

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).

SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat, Regent St (Brunel Centre).

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

YORK: on sale every Thursday, dole office Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Coney Street 11-1.

London

BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.

EALING: SC sold Thur, Ealing Broadway tube, 4.30-5.30pm

ENFIELD: SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

HACKNEY: SC on sale on estates throughout Hackney, at public meetings, and local factories. Contact us c/o PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NF or phone Megan or John at 359 8288.

HILLINGDON: SC sold Fri, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; Sat 10.30-12.00 outside Woolworths, Uxbridge shopping centre.

ISLINGTON: SC sales every Wed, 5.30-6.30pm at Highbury tube; every Fri, 8.15-9am at Highbury tube and Holloway Road tube.

KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.

LANBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also 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.

LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1

LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Colletts, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn High Road, NW6; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centerprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC; Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's.

YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

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.

FILM SHOW: Rebellion. From series on Ireland, 'The Troubles', Leeds Troops Out Movement, Wed 20 Jan, 8pm at Trades Club, Savile Mount Leeds 7.

REMEMBER Bloody Sunday - a national demo in Coventry, Sunday 31 Jan. Leeds coach tickets £3/£2 by post from TOM, Box 1969, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2.

COR, IT'S A FREEZER! Any sort of electric heater needed for Socialist Challenge urgently - our central heating is on the blink. Phone Nick 01-359 8371.

COVENTRY YCND RALLY: Saturday 23 January, 12-4pm near Apollo Theatre under ringroad. Free. April First Movement; N-directors; Hot Bed; Annex; Quiet Riot. Further info contact ad hoc YCND c/o the international centre, Coventry.

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Revolution Youth

Revolution Youth conference

Step forward for youth

By Toni Gorton

ON the eve of the first national conference of the Revolution Youth since its founding in 1980, some 250 people attended a lively international rally in solidarity with workers' struggles on Friday 18 December.

A spirit of unity with revolutionary endeavours in Central America and Caribbean; and the ongoing national liberation war in Ireland; pervaded the meeting, as well as deep anger at the week-old military takeover in Poland.

Amilcar Navarro, first secretary of the Nicaraguan Embassy spoke of his country's achievements since the overthrow of the dictator Somoza.

He declared that Nicaragua wanted to be friends with the people of the United States and would always keep the door open for this friendship. But the US government have made that door so small that they'd have to go down on their knees to go through and this they'll never do.

Rohima Miah a black woman steelworker and a leading member of the Young Socialist Alliance in the US spoke of resisting the attacks of Reagan and the movement in solidarity with the Central American and Caribbean revolutions.

Ireland

The international understanding of youth was brought out graphically by Brian Peelan of People's Democracy in the North of Ireland.

He told the story of two 12 year olds throwing rocks at British troops in Belfast. One turned to the other and said 'This is just like Nicaragua, you know!'

He explained how during the Brixton uprisings, black soldiers serving in Ireland were told to go back to Brixton and fight the cops to end the oppression of black people in Britain and not to stay in Belfast helping to oppress the Irish.

Richard Rozanski, a member of Revolution Youth gave an account of the achievements of Solidarity, the meaning of the military repression unleashed against the Polish workers and the need for youth in Britain and around the world to help build support for Solidarity and isolate the military rulers.

A highlight of the evening was the rousing speech from Helen, a busworker and leading supporter of Revolution.

She pointed to the banners decorating the hall which bore portraits of revolutionary leaders of many generations, and from many countries such as Lenin, Marx, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Malcolm X, and James Connolly.

'We are trying to build a movement based on their ideas, linking up with the struggles of the working class world wide to fight against imperialism and injustice where ever it exists,' she said.

Over £400 was raised a result of her appeal.

Debate

The next two days were jammed full of hard debate and discussion as 57 delegates, half of them women representing over 150 members of Revolution Youth across Britain argued out their perspectives for the coming year.

Again, an internationalist outlook underpinned their considerations. The main political resolution reviewed the situation in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, capitalist countries and the workers' states.

Pointed out was the leading role of youth and the strategic role of industrial workers in Nicaragua, Grenada and Poland.

In Britain, the world wide polarisation between right and left was shown to be deepening with the battles in the Labour Party as one of the clearest examples.

Further, the mass movement against nuclear weapons which achieved new dimensions, with many young people in the autumn of 1981 shows the depth of dissatisfaction with the Tories.

The growing economic crisis which is hitting youth, and especially black and female youth hard is contributing to the deep alienation of young people from a society which offers them nothing.



Keep the youth smiling - all donations warmly received!

Revolution Youth will prioritise building Youth CND, to get an even greater mobilisation against the missiles in 1982.

And, following Tebbit's new proposals for youth training, they will prioritise the fight against unemployment especially in solidarity with struggles like Laurence Scott's and for the unionisation of the Youth Opportunity Programme.

RY supporters are continuing their drive to get into industrial jobs so as to take up the task of creating a new leadership in the main industrial unions.

LPYS

The potential of the Labour Party Young Socialists for organising the struggles of working class youth was underscored.

The YS must be made into a body that anti-missile activists, feminists, black youth and all young workers will see as campaigning on their behalf.

Supporters in the YS pledged themselves to increase their efforts in the coming period to enable the YS to do this job.

Notable throughout the weekend was the number of black delegates and observers and particular attention was paid

to the role of black youth in the coming British revolution.

A separate resolution was adopted outlining the Revolution Youth programme for black liberation.

Special efforts will be made to help the campaign to defend the Bradford 12, who are black youth threatened with life imprisonment as a result of charges following last

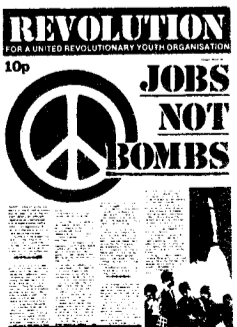
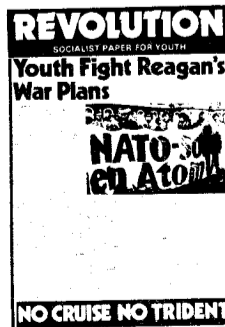
summer's youth rebellion. A move to change the name of the newspaper was rejected and a new leadership was elected.

It wasn't all hard graft for the youth, many a chat over a cup of coffee and a good time was had at the Saturday night disco.

For further information about Revolution Youth contact them c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP



Black liberation - one of main discussions



SUBSCRIBE to Revolution the paper for youth. Send £3 for a year's subscription (at least nine issues) or £1.50 for six months (five issues) Send to Revolution (d) PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

The Orange R.U.C.

By Tom Marlowe

There may be a few healthy apples in the rotten barrel of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, but they aren't in much evidence of late.

For the recent revelations concerning the Police Federation — the semi-trade union of the North of Ireland's police force — have once again thrown public light on the bunch of sectarian Orange thugs known as the RUC.

The latest disclosures came from Ian Paisley who, brandishing minutes of a meeting of the executive of the Police Federation, revealed that its top brass had discussed giving official backing to a 'third force' in the North of Ireland. There were arguments as to whether these proposals involved endorsing Paisley's own 'third force', or whether what was being suggested was a revival of the 'B' Specials.

Specials

The Specials, in which Catholics were allowed, was originally set up through local Orange orders. It was abolished in 1969 after a government report had exposed its members as Loyalist louts.

The same report also sought to reform the RUC, in an attempt to make it more acceptable to Catholics. The latest revelations show how much of a failure that exercise has been. Because, the ranks of the North of Ireland police force do not just want to terrorise Catholics with a new band of Paislevites in uniform. They have made all sorts of other proposals.

One came to the surface at the start of last month when the Federation called for re-introduction of internment without trial in the North of Ireland. Alan Wright, who last week resigned as chairperson of the Federation, declared that internment was 'an important weapon'. He demanded: 'The government must take some cognisance of what we say.'

When RUC members have not been given official backing for their sectarianism they have been quite happy to take their own initiative. A few examples from the last couple of years give a flavour of the type of activities of these guardians of law and order.

There was Sergeant Gary Armstrong and Constable William McCaughey who were found guilty of kidnapping a Catholic priest. Then there were RUC men Ian Mitchell and Laurence McClure, convicted of bombing a Catholic owned bar in Keady, near Newry. Or what about Ian Henderson who as well as serving in the RUC, was convicted of belonging to the Loyalist assassination gang, the Red Hand Commandos.

Even when such characters are found out, the RUC and the courts are liable to adopt a very forgiving attitude. Priest-kidnapper Armstrong was given a suspended sentence. Another RUC miscreant Sergeant Robert Dodds, who took part early in 1981 in a 'third force' type vigilante group, was 'punished' by being reduced in the ranks to a constable.

Critical

The present furore was sparked off last November when a meeting of the Federation discussed a vote of no confidence in RUC chief constable, Jack Hermon. The motion was defeated by only one vote.

The RUC ranks are critical of Hermon because he is seen as too lenient towards Republican suspects. In fact, Hermon has constantly defended the excesses of the RUC.

At the end of last year, when Tory Home Secretary Willie Whitelaw was outlawing the use of plastic bullets in Britain,

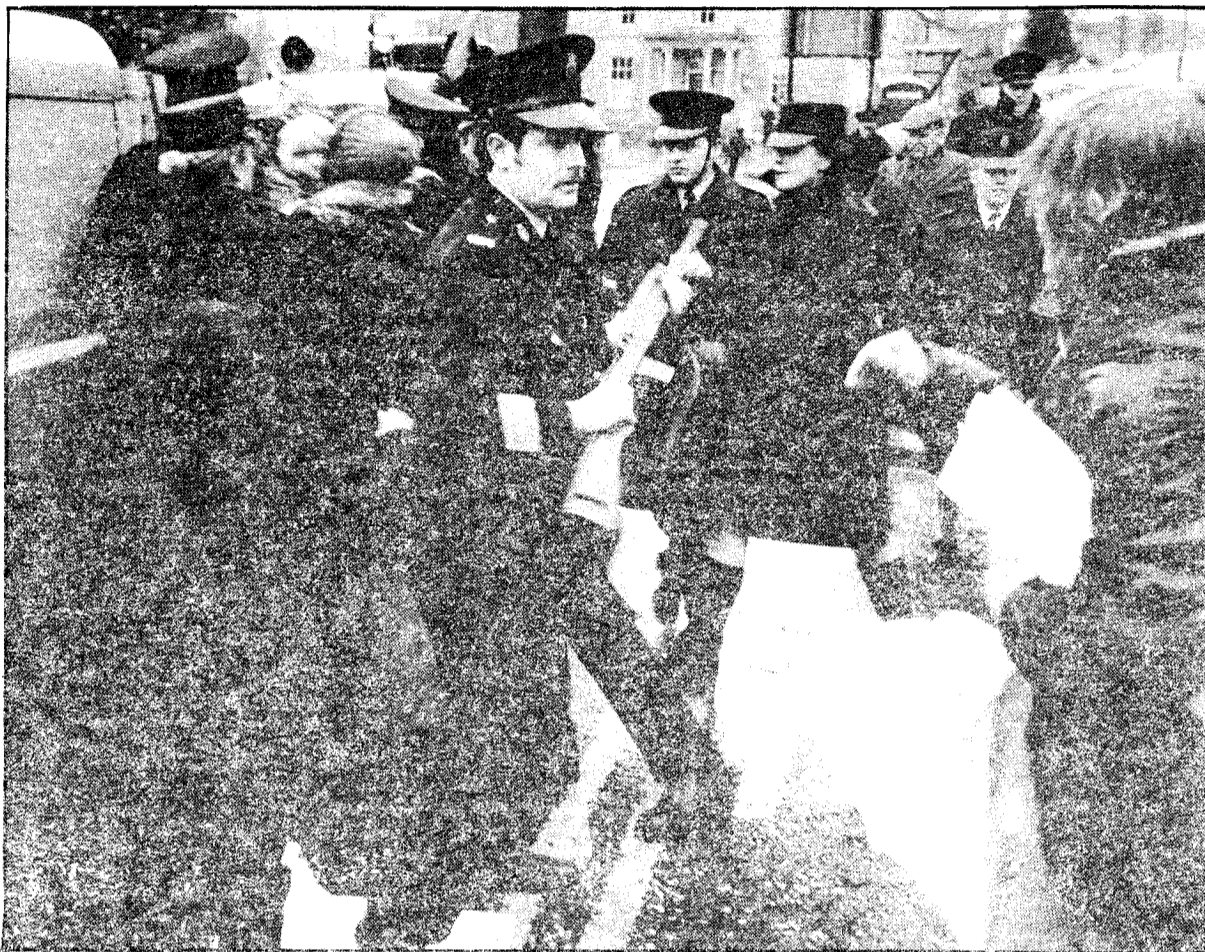
in all but the most exceptional circumstances, Hermon defended their wholesale use in the North of Ireland. At least seven people — all Catholics — have been killed by plastic bullets in Hermon's territory in the last 18 months.



Chief Constable Jack Hermon, a character witness for Paisley.

Hermon's record also includes an appearance in court three years ago as a character witness for none other than Ian Paisley.

What RUC members really object to, is the effort Hermon had to make to try and moderate some of the torture techniques used on suspects which were exposed by Amnesty International in 1978. With the eyes of the world on the RUC it was felt advisable to try and tone down some of the more unsavoury methods of questioning.



RUC dispersing women Republican protesters outside Armagh prison.

That's why the RUC ranks are now pleading for a return to other traditional methods of Orange repression — internment or a 'third force' which could give summary 'justice' to anyone suspected of having even the most tentative links

with Republicanism.

It is all very bad public relations, not just for the RUC but for the British government as well. The Tories, as with the last Labour government, set great store by having the RUC gradually replace the

British Army on the streets of the North of Ireland. Undoubtedly, some success has been had in this area, but the net result is that the RUC are just as hated by the Catholic community as the Army.

The recent revelations

show what justification there is for that hatred. They also show how impossible it has proved to reform a police force, whose very basis is to defend the North of Ireland state by any means necessary.



Every little bit helps!

By Pauline Ryan

OUR coverage of the Polish workers struggle has dramatically increased the sale of Socialist Challenge.

Our Xmas issue was a bumper 20 pages. This week we are publishing a new Socialist Challenge pamphlet on the Polish events.

These things have only been made possible by your excellent response to our special Polish fund drive appeal, which we are now extending to £1,000.

Good as the response to such special appeals is, however, what Socialist Challenge needs most is regular income. This means two things:

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Standing orders can be for as little as a fiver a month — every little helps. On the other hand some of our supporters have bankers orders for as much as £40 a month.

Far be it for us to indulge in "socialist competition", but ...



Our thanks this week to the following supporters for their donations:

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Brazil- Workers Party fights regime

1982 looks like being the most decisive year yet for the workers movement in Brazil. The country's military rulers though eager to present an ordered and 'democratic' face to the world, are in deep trouble. With the recession exacerbating an already floundering economy, the country which was once the showcase of capitalism in the third world now has an annual inflation rate averaging 110 per cent, a foreign debt of \$75,000m and a regime imposing even greater unemployment and misery than before on an angry working class.

A series of land occupations and strikes — in particular the 1980 strike of 200,000 metalworkers in Sao Bernardo — have demonstrated the vulnerability of the dictatorship and the potential of the workers movement. Out of these struggles came the impetus for a meeting last August of 5200 trade unionists which decided to set up this year the country's first independent central union federation (the CUT). And the metalworkers strike led to the setting up of the Workers Party (PT), the largest non-social democratic non-stalinist workers party in the capitalist world.

Already the PT has won 300,000 members across the country and has more than met difficult government conditions for legal recognition. At their head is the internationally known metalworkers leader Luis Ignacio da Silva ('Lula'). With ten other union militants he was put on trial for inciting the 'illegal' 1980 strike and condemned to three and a half years in prison although the sentence has not yet been carried out. Despite the continuing jail threat he is defying the government by standing as the PT's candidate for the governor of Sao Paulo in the general election due to take place this year.

The regime meanwhile in an attempt to sew up the elections in advance in favour of its own Social Democratic Party (PDS) has just announced new rules which bar opposition parties from forming electoral pacts.

As political tension mounts much will depend on how quickly the PT develops and how it puts flesh on its vision of socialism. Kathy Kirkham discusses its evolution with LUIS EDUARDO GREENHALGH, a member of the PT executive and the lawyer defending Lula, and hears what happened when Lula met Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa.

How do you explain the rapid growth of the PT?

The PT brings together progressive trade unionism and the popular movements here in Brazil after a period in which most of the opposition had been destroyed by oppression. It's a party born out of a historical moment: the emergence of new popular movements and the need of the regime to give the impression of a return to democracy.

PT leaders describe it as a socialist party. What kind of socialism is it?

Certainly ours is not a pre-packaged or imported socialism. The PT intends to learn from the many socialist experiences that could be applicable to the Brazilian people. Just as the Nicaraguans are constructing a socialism based on their own historical experience, so we want to take our own way. We want a wide movement where all tendencies are expressed.

How do you see this Brazilian socialism being built?

We want to gather together all sectors of the opposition under the leadership of the working class. In this way we intend to improve the conditions of the people and we are trying to integrate all struggles into this PT project.

Are there divisions in the PT between those who see it as a political party and those who view it as an opposition front?

That problem exists. But the majority think it must be a party and as it is becoming stronger there is less of a tendency to regard it as a front.

Is the PT prepared to make alliances with the bourgeois opposition parties?

We will make alliances with all parties and all groups, legal or illegal, that are against the government. But we will always maintain our independence as a party.

The PT calls itself a workers' party. Does it only defend workers or other oppressed groups in Brazil as well?

We represent workers in general and all oppressed minorities such as women, blacks, Indians and gays.

What percentage of PT members are women?

We estimate something like forty percent. The majority of the leaders of the feminist movement in Brazil belong to the PT. We are trying to facilitate the participation of women in the party. For example, some of our cells are taking collective responsibility for the care of children of the women members who have to take part in meetings.

What channels exist in the party for women to discuss and raise their demands?

Traditionally, in the Brazilian political parties, legal and illegal, the problems of women have been discussed in a special department. In the PT we have no such department, though we do have women's commissions (in the different states) to help us to link women's problems with the problems of the whole party. We recognise that the women have specific problems but that doesn't mean they should have to fight on their own. The whole party must struggle for their demands. Women have



Striking metalworkers. Inset, Luis Eduardo Greenhalgh (left) with Lula (centre).

importance in the PT not only because the party has given it to them. It is something that they have won.

As the lawyer who defended Lula and the ten other union leaders sentenced for inciting the 1980 metalworkers' strike, what do you think are the political implications of the court case?

The government's purpose is to persecute the PT which it feels represents the most advanced sector of the opposition. But it won't do the regime any good because the condemned people will go all over the country and make a campaign out of it. The

only way the government could really succeed would be to physically eliminate the leaders of the PT.

Could Lula still go to jail?

Personally, I believe that it would be very dangerous for the regime to imprison him. The fact that all the men are still free shows that the government is not strong enough to put them in prison. And in the eyes of the people they have been victimised so that if the government does jail them they will be martyrs.

Will Lula continue to stand as governor for Sao Paulo?

Of course. We must

demonstrate that the PT intends to break down any law or obstacle it may find in its way.

Does the PT see the government's new package of election conditions imposed on the opposition as a big setback?

This *pacote* is an arbitrary act of a government that intends to guarantee its own election victory in advance. The restrictions affect all sectors of the opposition so they affect the PT. We call on all other groups and parties to struggle against the *pacote* on the streets through popular mobilisations. That's the way to fight it

— from the base with the people, not through an alliance of party leaders.

We think elections in Brazil are very important but they are not fundamental for putting into practice the political project of the PT — that of building a party of workers.

What was the purpose of Lula's recent visit to Europe?

To tell European parties about the experiences of urban and rural workers in Brazil and to inform them about our project of building the PT. Lula believes he was successful on both counts. A lot of

those he met in Europe thought he was looking for funds and some social democratic parties offered him money. The PT won international respect because Lula refused the money. People realised that the PT was really independent.

Lula also had talks last summer with Polish Solidarity leader, Lech Walesa at the Vatican. What happened at that meeting?

The meeting got off to a tense start. Walesa suggested that he thought Lula was making a mistake in trying to mix trade unionism with creating a political party. Lula replied that in the Brazilian situation the trade union struggle was insufficient to carry through a process of social transformation that would benefit the workers.

For the Brazilian working class to reach its objective it would need to make a qualitative jump from trade union to political action and that's what the PT was trying to do.

Lula observed that even though the PT was attempting to organise both politically and through the trade union movement, it hadn't yet been able to undermine the military dictatorship in Brazil, whereas Solidarity which was 'only' a trade union had rocked the Polish regime.

Lula then went on to say that it seemed to him that the capitalist countries, through their international press, were trying to use events in Poland for their own ends. Solidarity should be wary of being used by world imperialism which was out to discredit socialism.

After this tense beginning Lula and Walesa had a very good exchange of experiences.



Hoover sweeps women's jobs away

WOMEN workers at Hoover in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales, have been told that their jobs will be the first to go in the latest round of redundancies at the plant.

HELEN SLYMOVICS and VERA McELHONE visited the factory and spoke to the women whose jobs are being threatened.

HOOVER has made huge redundancies in what used to be the major source of employment in the area. Out of 5,500 workers in the 1970's, only 2,000 remain, including nearly 200 women.

Until recently, redundancies had been voluntary. New management has asked for a further 400 jobs to go — 300 in the semi-skilled areas and 100 in management. Women workers were told that over 100 of the jobs for the chop would be theirs.

Breach

This move clearly breaches an agreement between the Hoover workers' union — the engineering union, AUEW — and management, that all redundancies should be made on a 'last in, first out' basis.

But the AUEW don't see things this way at all. Judging by its treatment of women, it appears all too keen to lend management a hand in sending its women members down the road.

For example, when the announcement was made, the union joined the management in refusing to allow the women to discuss their position. The women were forced instead to call a special meeting in their own time.

Over 60 women attended and decided to organise themselves to fight the redundancies. They agreed to call upon the Equal Opportunities Commission to take up their case against management for instituting discriminatory lay

offs. The EOC has agreed and all redundancies are now frozen.

All the women feel that the real fight should be with management over jobs but the local AUEW leadership is proving to be a real obstacle in organising any fight at all.

The women in the plant work mainly in the semi-skilled

jobs. Although they have received equal pay since 1975, they are denied the chance to work on the assembly lines, in the die-cast, foundry or paintshop. No women have been recruited to the plant for the last eight years.

They feel that the source of

their current problems lies in the fact that they have been restricted in this way to sub-assembly work.

Pat Goode, a shop steward at Hoover told us, 'After equal pay, the union and the convenor, Bill Bish, should have been building bridges for us and not barriers.' But Bish has stated that he would prefer to take redundancy himself than let women go on the line.

This type of attitude has not helped to encourage good working relations between men and women union members.

Stewards

For instance, the men in the sub-assembly line did not want Pat Goode, with 18 years experience at Hoover, to represent them as shop steward in the bagging department. The

union plant leadership aggravated this division between the men and women by allowing the seven men involved to have their own male representative while Pat Goode represents 40 women.

Jackie Trailor, the only woman steward until the recent dispute, has been transferred to the canteen without any protest from the union. Here it is increasingly difficult for her to represent her members in the sub-assembly section.

Jackie told us, 'We need positive discrimination for equality, the union is trying to tie us up in knots.' She is also the only woman on the AUEW district committee where support for the women is not forthcoming either. The district secretary and the divisional organiser have said that they will not support the women if they take their case to an industrial tribunal.

As Jackie says, 'The district committees are not interested in women workers. The union should have fought for job sharing with no loss of pay rather than all this back-biting.'

The women at Hoover agree that, if properly led, the men would have fought for jobs for all the workers. Unfortunately this is not likely in the present circumstances and the women are continuing to fight on their own.

Special

Pat Goode is optimistic: 'As women, we are so much together now, we know we have support and know that we can organise outside Hoover even if it is difficult inside.'

Jackie agrees, 'We have no alternative. It's not the men but the union leadership — Bill Bish is as powerful at Hoover as Reagan is in America.'

The women are now discussing ways of forcing the AUEW to take seriously the fact that all the workers, both men and women, need jobs. They are going to other unions, including the miners, and the Labour Party to put their case. They want a special AUEW women's conference to be called to discuss their case and the wider issue of increasing redundancies under the Tories.

Messages of support for the women should be sent to: Jackie Trailor, 63 Rhydach, Pentrebach, South Wales.



Women workers support every struggle — now the unions have let them down

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist challenge)

Scotland — an occupational disease

By Ralph Blake

'We are fighting to win.' These were the words of Archie McCreedy, chairperson of the shop stewards' action committee at the Invergordon aluminium smelter, after the 890 strong workforce had voted to occupy the plant to stop it from closing on Wednesday 7 January.

The workers at Invergordon in the Highland region, north of Inverness, first learnt of the British Aluminium Company's decision to close the smelter on New Year's Eve. Some workers attempted to start a work-in on that day but the company switched off the power to the cells which meant that the molten metal became frozen and thus made the site unworkable.

Work in

The company was set on closing the works despite large government subsidies. £115m had been spent on subsidising electricity to the plant over the last ten years. The government offered British Aluminium a further £48m to support the company over the next three years. But British Aluminium wanted £16m every year until 2001!

Faced with 20 per cent levels of unemployment locally, the workforce decided overwhelmingly to start a work-in despite the company offering redundancy pay 50 per cent above the statutory minimum.

A 25 strong action committee was set up to run the occupation. It was overseeing the start of limited production to ensure that the plant could go into full production once again.

Archie McCreedy said after it was clear that the British Aluminium Company were not going to keep the plant open. It was vital, he said, to get the truth out about the work in.

In the next few days the action committee will make links with the other British Aluminium smelters. The one at Falkirk in central Scotland is threatened with closure with over 1000 jobs at risk.

The Labour Party has a special responsibility to help the Invergordon workers as it was the Harold Wilson government in the '60s that brought the smelter to Scotland.

The potential is there to get the Scottish working class behind this fight. Unemployment which is standing at over 14 per cent in Scotland is the major issue which will dominate Scottish politics in 1982.

Only last week in Glasgow over 3000 people queued in the freezing cold for 160 hotel jobs. And days after the work in at Invergordon was announced, there have been two further occupations and a third one is imminent.

Sixty women cleaners barricaded themselves in at the National Savings Bank office in Glasgow last Friday. The women launched their sit-

in after finding out that the company that they worked for had lost the contract to clean the bank. And they vowed 'we won't give in until we get our jobs back'. The women are being supported by their union, the civil service union.

And support is growing for the women who are staging a sit-in at the Cumbernauld Lovable Bra factory. The local trades council is backing them. The sit-in started last Friday after the women failed to win assurances about the factory's future.

Guarantee

Senior shop steward Sadie Lang said, 'We want a guarantee that there will be no further redundancies and that this factory will remain open.'

Finally at the Plessey factory in West Lothian the workforce are prepared to stage a sit-in in a bid to prevent the closure of the plant. If these occupations are able to share the lessons of previous ones — Upper Clyde, Lee Jeans and Laurence Scott — and the massive potential sympathy is tapped that exists in Scotland for workers fighting to save their jobs, then these jobs can be saved. It will be another nail in the Tories' coffin.

Send messages of support to Shop stewards action committee, British Aluminium Company, Invergordon, Highland Region, Scotland.



Photo: MORNING STAR

Women's Right to Work Demonstration

THE Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work is holding a meeting to discuss their slogan and what should be raised under this heading. It will be held on 16 January at Birmingham University from 1pm to 4pm.

The Labour Party has now been joined by the public sector workers' union NUPE in organising a festival on 5 June and committee has been set up.

However the Action Committee is still pressing for a

demonstration to be held as well and wants trade union and Labour Party bodies to send resolutions to the Labour Party's executive and the TUC. For information contact 181 Richmond Rd London E8 or phone A11 01-691 7865.

Soft Machine and socialism

CONSIDERING the number of bright young agit-rockers who have emerged on current affairs programmes recently it is interesting that the most coherent radical pop figure comes from a much earlier generation.

In the mid-sixties ROBERT WYATT was drummer and vocalist with the quirky and influential Soft Machine. Combining light surrealistic songs with free jazz and straight music innovations they are one of the few 'experimental' groups of that era who do not make excruciating listening today.

In the early seventies he was paralysed from the waist down in a fall but came back with his finest work yet. Rock Bottom written largely from the trauma of his accident is one of his finest records.

Over the years Robert Wyatt became increasingly politicised, culminating in his joining the Communist Party about three years ago. He has recently re-emerged musically producing a number of (recommended) singles for the independent label Rough Trade. Here SIMON LOCKHART interviews him.

Why the CP?

Having talked to people of all political persuasions on the left the CP admitted it had blood on its hands.

What vis-a-vis Stalin?

Vis-a-vis just about anything in the history of the labour movement, anywhere real power has been established in the name of socialism.

By joining the CP I am acknowledging all the mistakes that have been made in the name of socialism and still saying its worth it.

To me an eccentric version of how it looks (I am not a scientist after all) is that the rise of the Trotskyist left has a psychological basis in the desire to separate themselves from the burden of having to acknowledge the history of socialism as it has been handed down to us.

Would you consider yourself definitely anti-Stalinist?

No, to that extent I would be a positive embarrassment both to the British CP and the Soviet Union.

My view is that there is a primary cause that upsets me about the world. That is the spread of imperialism by capitalism from the advanced industrial states. If the left on the whole is guilty of anything it is underestimating the power of capitalism in the west and the ease with which workers united can overthrow it.

I won't attack the Soviet Union except when I'm writing letters to Radio Moscow. I'm impressed by anyone who can provide a substantial threat to what would otherwise be the total ownership of the world by western monopolies.

What depresses me about the Soviet Union is the extent to which they imitate western habits to maintain their power. But I don't think that I'm in a position to condemn the amazing contortions people have gone through in order to resist capitalism.

What about the CP's reformist profile?

I would not place the amount of faith that the CP establishment does in the



potential of parliament. It seems clear to me that capitalists sorted parliament out years ago. By the time the left get there it'll be about as useful as the royal family.

The CP has a history of trying to give people experience of administration and for that reason the parliamentary road has never been cut off.

The trouble revolutionaries find themselves in when they've overthrown the establishment is simply lack of administrative skill. Within six months the revolutionary body has to import political technicians from abroad like the situation Robert Mugabe is now in.

Would you describe yourself as a revolutionary socialist?

Well yes... I come from a world of gestures and shadow boxing... I look, I just saw a film about a Finnish writer in the early twentieth century, one of the only members of the bourgeois drop-outs who sympathised with the Bolsheviks.

In effect this bloke was a visionary, exhorting the peasants and workers of Finland to their slaughter.

He was absolutely right in what he said and the bourgeoisie imported a load of German soldiers and just wiped them out. If you're not in the front line yourself, you have an incredible responsibility about how and who you exhort. We aren't exactly in the front line in England.

Feminism does not exactly strike me as the CP's strong point?

I know lots of old socialists who don't like rock and don't understand feminism, but in terms of what they were dealing with when they were in the battle I think they had their priorities and they still do. I think the new left will find itself in the same position in fifty years time.

I think what I am arguing against is probably quite simply ageism. Do you keep on splitting away when older people refuse to learn or do you pool resources?

The International Marxist Group is comprised mostly of people over 25!

Well, I'm very comforted to hear that and I love them straight away.

There's no way elderly ballet-loving CP members will get off on a Sound System. I don't think it matters that they like Gilbert and Sullivan because in terms of priorities they know what's right and wrong in this area and culturally they may be capable of amazingly racist assumptions — to dismiss them because of this would be unfair.

Surely it's one thing not to follow cultural fashions and another to become less culturally sharp. It seems to me that there's very little socialist perspective on popular culture.

Popular culture is and always has been politically ambiguous. If you take a folk song as a piece of music it can be the voice of the underprivileged or a fascist can take that same song and use it as the voice of the heart of his people or it can be tarted up and used on the Eurovision song contest. I think it's difficult for people in cultural pursuits to do it on their own.

I know lots of musicians and artists trying to make a contribution to

the labour movement. I used to make an assumption that because the music I liked was on the whole ghetto culture that it was inherently revolutionary because it celebrated dispossessed people without access to power, it celebrated their lives and aspirations.

Like Pete Townshend saying 'I believe in rock and roll'. I think he would think that was a culturally revolutionary thing to do. In hindsight we can all have a chuckle at that, nevertheless it's where a lot of us came from ten to fifteen years ago and we've simply underestimated the enemy — the power of capitalism to absorb.

I don't go around blaming punks for selling out as reminding people just how powerful organisations like CBS really are.

We're talking about white male European culture?...

Yes we're talking about the strongest people in the world...

And most of them are oppressed by it...

Yes of course and one of the things that drew me to the organised left from having been a rock musician was feeling totally betrayed by my own ideology just as a rock musician.

It's hard to learn from the established left because they have such a cynical attitude towards popular culture that they don't know enough about it to talk about it.

A big problem the left has is that at one time it made this assumption that capitalism was a revolutionary force because it represented the overthrow by the bourgeoisie of the aristocracy and that during that period its culture was revolutionary culture.

What we call progress has been brought about by capitalism and proves capitalism is still the most powerful way of operating. Socialists have great difficulty with this because you can't think of bourgeois culture being revolutionary after 1917 therefore anything that comes from America must be reactionary. Which suits a lot of old Europeans very well 'cos they're snobs and don't like a loud off-beat or flashy clothes. So what you get is cultural Luddites.

Would you say that effective socialist pop is a contradiction in terms?

If it doesn't represent a strong working class movement it has to be. If an artist points his finger at something and says, 'Look, I have noticed this.' You think ah yes that's useful. And you've had an insight that's useful.

But time and again people start looking not at what he's pointed to but start saying 'This man's got a wonderful finger, let's photograph this incredible finger.' And eventually everybody tries to grow a finger like his finger. That's the history of art and religion — every good idea manifests itself as an icon.

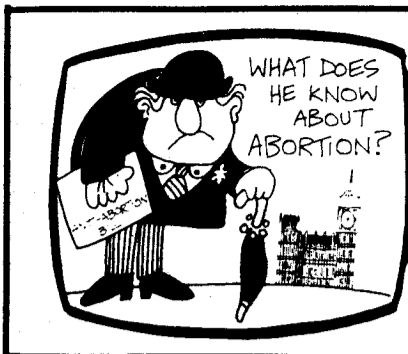
What about groups like the Beat and the Clash who have a left profile but no affiliation with working class movements.

All you can say is their priorities aren't your priorities.. A positive way of looking at it is to nurture what there is in common with other people.

I would say just cut your losses and look elsewhere. In the Morning Star world you'll find a lot of discussion centred on 'Oh dear how can we politicise the local Sun-reading factory workers?'

My attitude to that is instead of haranguing those people look around the world for where there are totally politicised people struggling on the front line and find out what support you can give them.

Socialist Challenge



Abortion rights - Corrie through the back door

By Jude Arkwright

Women's abortion rights are under attack again. This time from the Department of Health and Social Security.

Last March a new form was issued to be filled in by doctors performing abortions. The newly worded form does not allow for non-medical reasons to be entered as grounds for the abortion. The implication is that all those women seeking abortions for anything other than medical reasons are not really entitled to them under the 1967 Abortion Act.

Afford

If this interpretation were to be taken seriously by doctors it would mean refusing abortions to 80 per cent of women seeking them on the NHS.

Any woman seeking an abortion on the grounds, for example, that she could not afford another child, or as a young girl still at school, or because her marriage was breaking up, would be turned down.

The 1967 Act has never given women the complete right to choose for themselves but the liberal interpretation of the Act has always acknowledged that such social reasons must be taken into account.

The intention behind the changing of this form is now clear. Any doctor who does not fill in the form correctly is liable to prosecution.

Letter

The National Abortion Campaign have just disclosed a confidential letter from Sir Henry Yellowlees, the Chief medical officer, to all those doctors who have continued to enter social reasons regardless.

It states: 'Lest there be any misunderstanding I should point out that non medical factors alone do not provide legal justification for termination on the grounds you have entered on the form ...'

It is possible that this action has already affected women seeking abortions. It is vital that the pro abortion lobby acts now to stop this.

What Benyon, Corrie and White could not achieve because of the massive demonstrations against them, the civil servants and the government are trying to achieve without recourse to parliament. They must be stopped.

Socialist Challenge urges all its supporters to:

* Write to your MP, asking her/him to demand that doctors be encouraged to grant abortions on social grounds and that the wording on the form be changed.

* Table a motion for your trade union, reaffirming support for the 1967 Act and for the social clause embodying the spirit of the Act.

* Support the National Abortion Campaign by asking your trade union or group to affiliate.

Fares farce



Ken Livingstone — fine speeches but no action

THE MANIFESTO of the Labour Greater London Council is an empty shell. As we go to press it appears that the GLC will vote to increase fares and make cuts and redundancies of London Transport, in line with the House of Lords ruling.

It will call on the government to change the law, whatever good that may do. And on this sorry day in County Hall, certain Labour councillors will have kept to their principles and voted to defy the law, in the full knowledge that this would have no chance of getting through.

What a farce, what a fiasco! The left should have voted — and organised — a massive campaign of resistance in favour of the GLC's fares policy.

Principles without action, don't pay the increased fares; principles won't save the jobs of the bus and tube workers, principles won't stop bus and tube routes being slashed. Not when those principles are paper votes, when they are not put into action to openly defy the Tories and their puppets in the courts and the House of Lords.

Nor was the issue whether or not the Labour group should be allowed a free vote, once a majority had voted to defy the Law Lords ruling. What is really at stake is how the Labour GLC should be leading the campaign in support of its manifesto and against the Tories.

They have failed to do that. Instead they have at best taken positions of principle and at worse voted against pledges made in the manifesto. No-one is concerned with making martyrs out of bankrupt or surcharged councillors. But when the manifesto was passed by the London Labour Party what did the would-be councillors think

would be the outcome?

That the Tories, Heseltine and so on would allow their policies to be implemented without opposition? That money would be forthcoming from central government because the people of London had voted for the manifesto?

If the Labour group, especially the left, thought this was the case, then it's naive to say the least. But the left knew, and promised, that what was needed to implement its policies was to lead a massive and continuing campaign to take on the Tories, the press and the courts.

Because what is at stake is not the reputation or political purity of a dozen or so councillors. What is at stake is the living standards of the working people of London who are facing a tremendous onslaught from a vicious government. The working class of London looked to the Labour GLC elected in May to give it a lead where its own union leaders nationally have failed.

A mass campaign against the Law Lords' ruling on fares would have, and still can, meet a tremendous response within the labour movement. Whatever the outcome of the council meeting, all those in the GLC, London Labour Party and the trade unions who oppose the judgement should fight through the organisations of the working class to have a massive campaign of action.

The working class has had enough of fine words.



Fit for a queen? But not for the likes of us once the fares go up

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