

socialist newsletter

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The Miners Began the Job The May March can Finish It **THROW OUT THATCHER!**

The victory won by the miners over Thatcher reveals the real weakness of this government once and for all.

It is a reactionary government. Its intentions are to drive our living standards down. It has attacked our trade union rights. But it is a weak government.

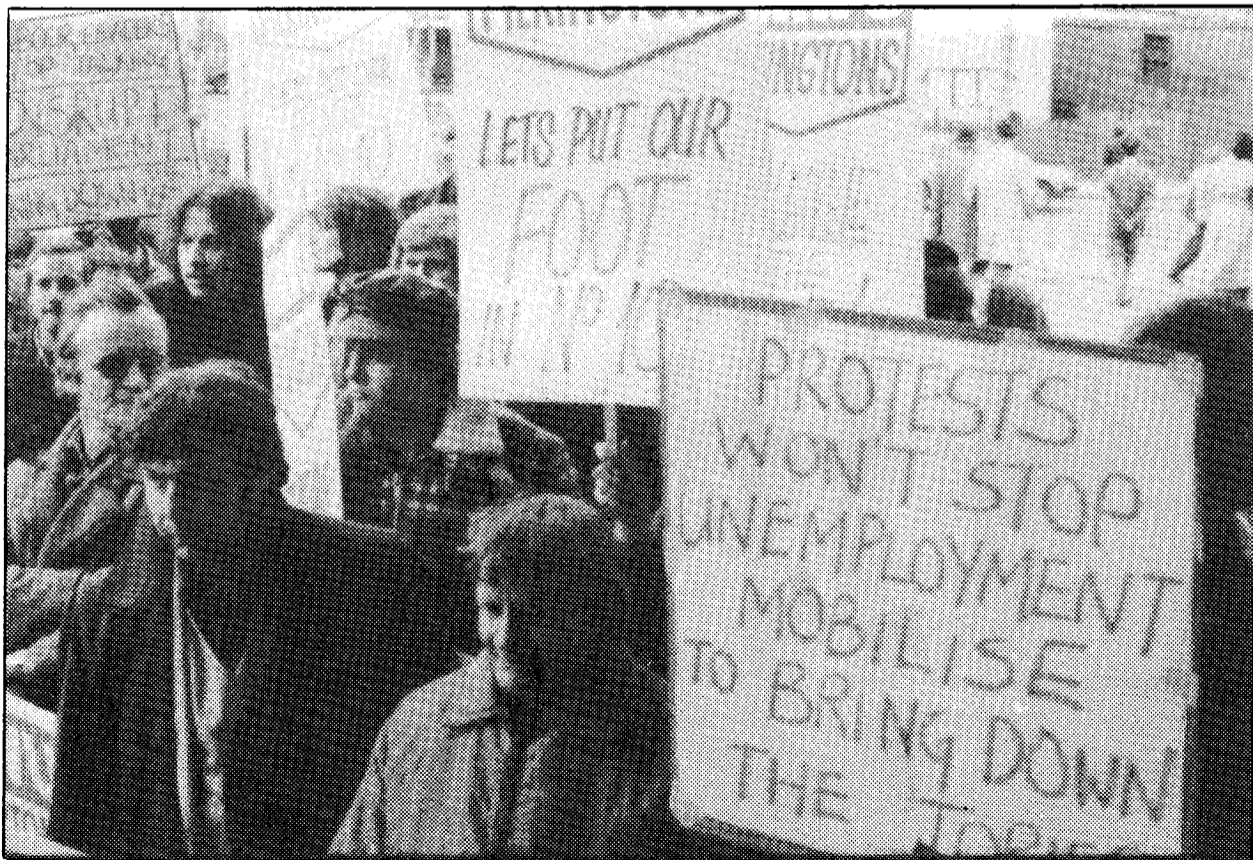
Without going as far as a national strike the miners forced the hardline Tories to withdraw all their plans for pit closures at the cost of £250 million. This is Thatcher's 1972. It is the miners who, once again, have provided the battering ram against the Tories.

The Welsh miners, who came out on immediate and all-out strike to defend their jobs showed us the way. *We have the strength!* They disregarded the vain attempts by Gormley to hold them at work. They knew the surest way to defeat Thatcher was industrial action. They didn't beg, as Len Murray has been doing at talks in Downing Street. *They demanded.*

Now we must all demand – out with Thatcher!

The unfolding miners' strike was not merely a dispute over jobs. It was a political challenge to all of Thatcher's policies. And Thatcher retreated.

Last November the Employment Act was placed on the books. Under its terms pickets are supposed to be



limited to six. Yet when 450,000 Civil Servants struck on March 9th, picket lines of 20, 30 and 50 were to be seen all over Britain. This is the true measure of the balance of forces. Nearly half a million civil servants showed the Tories what they thought of their picketing restrictions.

We must not allow the Tories to regain their balance after the defeat at the hands of the miners. Howe's budget shows what they have in mind for us: Our wages are to be cut. Dole money cut. Rents and rates increased. Unemployment will continue to rise. Education is to take further massive cutbacks.

The budget is a desperate gamble by the Tories. It will not salvage the sinking economy of capitalist Britain. But it will place further intolerable burdens on the backs of all working people. If another reason were needed why the Tories cannot be allowed to run their full term, the budget is it.

On May 1st the march against unemployment leaves Liverpool for London. It will pass through much of England's industrial heart. But a march against unemployment is a march for jobs and a march for jobs is a march to get rid of the Tories.

The fight to turn the Liverpool-London march into a rolling campaign to bring Thatcher down should be started at once. Trade Union branches, Labour Parties, tenants' associations and Trades Councils should support the march behind the call, 'Bring Down Thatcher'. On the way, many sections of working people will welcome and support the marchers. Something more than local support is needed. Much more is possible.

There are thousands of miners living on the route of the march. Thousands of carworkers, of civil servants, firemen and waterworkers. The Liverpool-London march is a chance to send a shockwave across Britain. A shockwave Thatcher cannot resist.

Militants should fight for industrial action across Britain on May 29th, when the column reaches London. This is the day for Michael Foot and the union leaders to translate words into action.

Call out the working class against Thatcher!

All out on May 29th!

For A Million on the Streets in May

SMASH THE NATIONALITY BILL!

All Out on April 5th!

The mass mobilisation of Blacks in protest against the New Cross massacre comes at a very appropriate time. The Tories are currently forcing through their notorious British Nationality Bill. This piece of legislation is an undisguised attack on the rights of Black workers. It seeks to strictly define the rights of automatic entry into Britain on the basis of "full British citizenship". Other categories of so-called British citizenship will not carry the right to settlement. The vast majority of those in these second categories will of course be Black.

If the Bill becomes law some children born in Britain after the passing of the legislation will be stateless. British citizenship will no longer be automatic for those born in Britain. Commonwealth citizens will lose the entitlement to register as British citizens and in future would have to become Naturalised. The Naturalisation process is far longer, more expensive and includes a "character test" which will inevitably be based on political activities.

The Bill will subject many more Black workers to this process. There is no right of appeal and all decisions will be left to the discretion of the Home Office.

There are also provisions in the Bill for future Governments to reduce the civic rights of non-British citizens which will include many rights that Commonwealth citizens are currently entitled to, such as employment in the Civil Service, Jury Service and voting rights.

All these provisions will lead to a tremendous increase in police surveillance and harassment by Immigration Officials. Non-British citizens will have to carry their passports to prove their status when dealing with the Department of Health and Social Security and the National Health Service. Immigration controls are already very strict at the port of entry. But the Bill seeks to strengthen internal control and therefore give the police greater liberty to harass Black

workers. If this wasn't bad enough, the Bill will also make it easier for the Government to repatriate non-British citizens.

This thoroughly reactionary Bill is both racist and anti-working class. In recent years Black workers, who are a main part of the most exploited and oppressed section of the working class, have come increasingly onto the political scene in Britain. Black workers are employed in those industries that are bearing the brunt of the crisis through mass lay-offs and attacks on wage levels. The strikes at Grunwick and Chix in Slough for instance, revealed a growing militancy among Black workers. The purpose of this Bill is to intimidate an important layer of workers and thereby divide the workers' movement. In fact the police have already staged raids on factories in North East London, where they charged into premises separated Black workers from the work-force, interrogated them and enforced immediate deportation on those who couldn't provide legal documentation.

The entire workers' movement must organise a united opposition to the British Nationality Bill, which with Prior's Employment Act is a part of the Tories' offensive against workers' democratic rights.

Labour Party and Trade Union branches must make a call on the NEC and the TUC to organise maximum and total opposition to this Bill as part of the struggle to bring down Thatcher. It is extremely important that all labour movement organisations mobilise for the demonstration against the Bill on April 5th in London and bring their banners to show Thatcher that the workers' movement stands united against her racist policies.

Local bodies of the labour movement must immediately build united-fronts with all ethnic minority organisations to fight for the biggest mobilisation possible against Whitelaw's racist Bill, which when all's said and done, is only the Parliamentary end of the racist murder of 13 Blacks in New Cross.

NEW CROSS

AFTER THE MARCH BUILD MASS SELF-DEFENCE

by Winston Carr

The New Cross Massacre demonstration on March 2nd was a great success. There were about 7,000 marchers made up largely of the Black community from all different parts of Britain. The demonstration started in New Cross and made its way through the back-streets of Deptford, where many more young protestors joined. The march passed the house in New Cross Road where the 13 young Blacks were murdered in January and then the 7,000 made their way through central London up Fleet Street and onto Hyde Park.

Contrary to reports in the Tory press the march was well stewarded. The disciplined demonstration had to deal with violence only when the police tried to block the march in Blackfriars. A feature of the demon-

stration was the determined mood of the young Blacks to organise to fight against the kind of attack that killed the New Cross 13.

A widely expressed sentiment was that March 2nd should be the beginning of firm resistance from the Black community to growing fascist violence and police harassment. There is a long history of action committees in the Black community around various issues of harassment. Yet each time these bodies have disappeared. The appearance of the 'Massacre Action Committee' and its ability to mobilise over 7,000 people was a turning-point in the struggle to unite and mobilise Blacks against racism and harassment from the State. As the *Socialist Newsletter*

leaflet for March 2nd argued, it is crucial that the MAC is maintained as a united-front of all Black organisations to begin consistent work in a long term offensive against all attacks directed at Blacks and in particular to organise Self-Defence for Blacks in those areas where fascist organisations are most active.

If the response of the Black community was a massive step forward then the response of the official labour movement was a disgrace. What did Deptford Labour Party or the Trade Council organise to build the March 2nd demonstration? What plans have they to organise unity with Black organisations to prepare Self-Defence? What has local Labour MP Jon Silkin done?

The complacency of the labour movement about these 13 murders has fed those amongst the Black community, like march organiser Darcus Howe, who believe Black workers have nothing in common with the white working-class. Indeed amongst Howe's supporters there exists a keen hostility to organised labour. When the march passed Peckham Conservative Club demonstrators spontaneously chanted 'Thatcher Out'. One steward clearly disagreed with this and argued that Michael Foot was as much as racist as Thatcher. This hostility is however perfectly understandable when the record of the Labour Party is considered. It has done virtually nothing for Blacks on the questions of housing, employment or physical attacks. It was the Labour Party that was responsible for the racist Immigration Act of 1968.

In the case of Jon Silkin MP this desertion of responsibility is particularly criminal. The sum total of his intervention on these 13 murders has been to organise a petition amongst MPs to express sympathy for the families of the victims and to donate £500 from the sales of a local community pamphlet called 'Up the Creek'. This is an insult to the Black community! *Militants in the local Labour Party should demand that Silkin resign.*

What use is an MP who does nothing even when 13 of his constituents are murdered?

In Brent 500 Asians have just joined Brent Labour Party in an attempt to force it to take up the most burning questions facing the Asian community. This is not counterposed to Black self-organisation. Self organisation amongst Blacks is crucial to maintaining the MAC. But this certainly does not contradict what the Asians have done in Brent. There is one certain way of kicking out the useless Silkin and that is to flood Deptford Labour Party with all those who want to take up a serious fight against fascism in South East London.

The only sure way of driving back the fascists and preventing a recurrence of the New Cross massacre is to maintain the mass character of the March 2nd movement on an ongoing basis. Mass Self-Defence is the key. In areas like East and South East London the need for workers' Self-Defence is clear. Local Labour Parties and Trade Union Branches must be forced to organise protection for those they claim to represent.



New Cross Massacre Demo.

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Defend the 40-30-30!

IMPLEMENT THE WEMBLEY DECISION AT BRIGHTON

by George White

The open and deep crisis of leadership within the Labour Party continues. Last month tendencies began to emerge within the Parliamentary Labour Party. The *Council for Social Democracy* MPs have broken away and opened negotiations with the Liberals. Against this background the apparatus continues to try to find some means of reversing the severe blow which was dealt it at Wembley.

A motion was carried by 98 to 41 at a meeting of the PLP, expressing regret at the Wembley decision. Michael Foot told the MPs that the issue would be rediscussed at Brighton in October. He "prayed" it would be reversed then. The *Labour Solidarity Campaign* revealed its colouration when one of its members called the move towards the electoral college not a "dirty, shabby compromise" but a "dirty, shabby surrender". This is the authentic voice of those grouped around Denis Healey.

The move by Frank Chapple not to follow Williams, Rodgers and Owen into the wilderness has to be understood in association with the methods of *Labour Solidarity*. Chapple has begun to flood a number of constituency Labour Parties, notably in South East London, with EEPTU right-wing delegates. The right are not scuttling ship just yet. In fact a hard fight lies ahead. But it is the ranks and not the right who have the whip-hand. It is the apparatus which is on the retreat.

The job is to follow through the victory at Wembley with a victory at Brighton. At the PLP meeting Tony Benn moved that the Wembley decision be given a trial. This position, supported by 24 MPs, is

the correct one. The large group of MPs around Denis Healey and their allies in the unions are hoping to quickly reverse what happened at Wembley.

In fact, of the candidates who ran for Labour Party leadership last autumn, only Tony Benn now stands in support of the Wembley decisions. Benn has declared that he will fight Healey for deputy leader at the electoral college. Rank and file constituency activists should begin the fight now, linked with the defence of the Wembley decisions, to draft Benn for the leadership contest.

Preparations for Brighton must begin now. Constituency delegates must be mandated to fight for the 40-30-30 and MPs pressed by their constituencies to do the same. Whatever the status quo within individual affiliated unions, their members must make it clear via the branches and committees that union delegations to Labour Party conference should uphold the 40-30-30. This is especially important in USDAW, the union which first proposed the 40-30-30 formula.

As to the moves by Chapple and other right-wing union bosses to pack Constituency Parties, this must be answered, as it was against Reg Prentice in Newham North-East, by stepping up the representation of the Left. Chapple is in retreat as much as the 'Social-Democrats' and Healey. Only defeats of trade unionists at the hands of the Tories would give Chapple an opening to counter-attack. Such a turn is contradicted by the mood in the working class engendered by the miners' victory.

Victory of the left at Brighton will not be an automatic process.



The vagaries of the block vote system and the more determined stand being taken by the right-wing MPs will ensure that. But the laws of history are stronger than the apparatus. Things are moving tow-

wards a showdown with Thatcher. The desire of millions of Labour voters, expressed through scores of thousands of active Labour Party members to control their leaders, is linked to that.

The Labour Party is, with the German SPD, one of two great social democratic parties of the European working class. It now stands at a crossroads. Traditions have been broken and they will never be put together again.

The life of the Labour Party has always been organically linked to the parliamentary system in Britain. It is no accident that the break of the 'social democrats' from Labour coincides with a push in the media for a new 'centre party'. The ruling class greatly fears the possible consequences of a Labour government being returned in conditions where Thatcher has been forced from office. The crisis of the Labour Party both feeds and is fed by an impasse in the traditional oscillation of Tory to 'safe' Labour governments. It is not that a Labour government led by Benn would in itself be revolutionary. But such an administration, and the bourgeois press speculate on the possibility, could only come about at the opening of a pre-revolutionary period.

Trotskyists are not spectators of the crisis in the Labour Party, which is not and never has been the property only of reformism. The Labour Party was once characterised by Lenin as a "bourgeois workers' party". But that idea is not a cold abstraction. It implies a living contradiction. The Wembley decision must be implemented at Brighton. The electoral college must not be altered to give MPs a 50% share, for this will not only be a blow at Party democracy but a means to defend privileges of Parliament and through that the Thatcher government. We must carry the victory through to an end.

HANDS OFF POLISH UNIONS!

The ninety day period of industrial calm, called for by Poland's Prime Minister Jaruzelski has been smashed after only four weeks by 500,000 workers — against the wishes of the leaders of 'Solidarity'. Hundreds of factories were paralysed for an hour on March 10th in Lodz, one of Poland's largest cities. The strike was called to gain the reinstatement of some dismissed workers and this was swiftly won.

Parallel to the Lodz strike breakout has been an 'investigation' by Stalinist authorities into the activities of KOR (Committee for Social Self Defence). KOR was the dissident group which preceded and underpinned much of the massive strike wave last year which led to the formation of 'Solidarity'. The regime claims that KOR receives foreign aid for 'anti-state activities'. According to the official Stalinist news agency in Poland, "KOR activities are supported by foreign centres of political diversion, which deliver all the technical and financial means and support for the anti-socialist activity of the organisation."

Two leaders of the KOR, Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuron, now have to report at police stations three times a day. Four members of another organisation, a Polish nationalist movement with right wing connections, have been jailed.

The apparatus is trying to confuse the work of the KOR with that of right wing groupings. The truth is very different.

Kuron has in fact been accused by the Stalinists of being in touch with Trotskyists in western Europe. Here we see the old Stalinist myth of the Trotskyist-rightist anti-socialist conspiracy coming to light again. The Polish bureaucracy have even leaned on anti-semitism to smear the leaders of KOR. As well as pointing out the Jewish origins of several KOR members, the Stalinists were behind a recent anti-KOR rally in Warsaw which had clear anti-semitic overtones, accusing the KOR of being part of an international 'Zoinist' conspiracy.

Warsaw students held a counter-rally, 1,500 strong, to protest at the victimisation of KOR.

What lies behind these new attacks on KOR is the continuing failure of the bureaucracy to defuse the industrial situation. Every time 'Solidarity' is drawn into action,

sometimes against the wishes of those around Walesa, a direct challenge is made to the Stalinist state. These challenges are aimed not alone at the economic policies of the bureaucracy but at the corruption of the one party system. Many calls have gone out for the removal of Stalinist officials, calls which again amount to demands for an end to the one party state.

In this situation the KOR is seen by the state as a possible focus for a new political party with mass support. This step the Kremlin will not allow. In his speech to the Soviet Communist Party Congress Brezhnev declared that the "pillars of socialist society" were in peril in Poland. Quite simply he was referring to the bureaucratic one party state. After the CPSU congress the Polish leaders were called to yet another meeting in the Kremlin where they promised to 'act quickly to overcome anarchy and disarray' in Poland. The attacks on the KOR are a result of the Kremlin meetings.

However, controlling the working class in its millions is entirely another matter from jailing or harassing a few members of the KOR. It is the Lodz strike, by hundreds of thousands, which sets the framework for these attacks and not any ability of Kania to stage a counter-offensive. In a situation where immediate attacks cannot be made on 'Solidarity' itself, the KOR has been accused of fermenting the whole strike wave which 'Solidarity' was based on.

As well as the mounting confrontation over the one party state, the bureaucracy continues to have no answers to Poland's economic crisis. Exports to other workers states were down 25% in the first two months of this year. Poland's hard currency debt is running at 24 billion dollars and still rising. Poland borrows per capita 10 dollars a month, for food alone. Food supplies in the big cities now depend on capitalist credits, for example

60% of butter supplies now come from the West.

This situation has forced the Polish Stalinists to ask for massive rescheduling of their foreign debts over 8 to 10 years. Such action by the western banks is entirely without precedent and reveals the depth of support that imperialism is prepared to give Stalinism in 'stabilising' Poland.

Even these largescale moves, designed to give the bureaucracy one or two years to get the working class under control, will not help to restructure the Polish economy, which suffers from the classic imbalance between backward agriculture and industrial concentration in the cities.

The movement in Poland has gone way beyond sporadic protest: over pay or even against the corruption of the Stalinist apparatus. What is posed is the political revolution, the destruction of the bureaucracy and its replacement by workers councils. The Kremlin remains poised for intervention into Poland. It cannot allow the political revolution to unfold on its doorstep. Yet socialists should not underestimate the strength and depth of the social process in Poland and the tenacity of the working class.

Whilst the political revolution for the moment focuses on events in Poland, it is already flowing over from there into other bureaucratic workers states.

We demand an end to the harassment of members of KOR, especially Kuron and Michnik. Full support must be given to the just demands of the Polish workers for an end to corruption and the sacking of corrupt officials. Forward to the political revolution in Poland!

Say No To The 7.5%

At the very moment that the civil servants have come out on strike against the 7% pay offer, the Teachers Panel negotiating body have dumped the original 15% claim and have agreed an offer of 7.5%. NUT General Secretary Fred Jarvis who is the Chairman of the Teachers Panel has justified this retreat by saying that the 7.5% offer is the going rate in the public sector.

In the light of the civil servants action, the miners 13% plus bonus, and the struggle of the water workers, Jarvis, in settling for 7.5% puts the NUT way below the going rate in the public sector. The Jarvis leadership is seeking to demobilise teachers and isolate them from a possible united front of all public sector workers against the government's policy of forcing down wages.

Jarvis talks of different Unions striving to get "the best deal they can" independently of each other. This offers absolutely no way forward for teachers struggling to defend their living standards. To talk as Jarvis does of each union in isolation leads inevitably to capitulation before the government. The only way Thatcher can hope to hold down wages is to deal with each union separately. Jarvis is playing Thatcher's game.

It is an urgent necessity for teachers all over the country to move resolutions through their Associations rejecting the 7.5% offer and to raise the demand for the NUT to fight for a public sector trade union alliance against the Tories.

CP Suppresses Discussion

At the AGM of the West London Association of the NUT held in February two emergency resolutions calling for the defence of the Lambeth 8 were submitted. Both of these were ruled out of order by the Chairman and Communist Party member Howard Hollands.

NUT General Secretary Fred Jarvis had ruled that the Lambeth 8 issue was sub judice and therefore must not be discussed, as if the NUT was a court of law. CP member Hollands accepted this and took an active part in the suppression of democratic discussion within the NUT. When Hollands was challenged on his ruling he closed down the AGM. In so doing Hollands lined up with extreme right winger Jarvis in attacking the rights of the rank and file membership.

This incident is one in a long line involving Hollands and the CP in West London. On May 14th last year when all public sector unions were taking action against the cuts Hollands advocated to an NUT meeting at Holland Park School that NUT members should cross NUPE picket lines in the morning and take action themselves in the afternoon!

Holland Park School Branch censured Hollands and the other West London officers for closing down the West London AGM. But if rank and file NUT members are to build a mass campaign in defence of living standards and against the attacks of the right wing national leadership it is vital to remove the likes of Hollands from all positions of responsibility.

In response to Lambeth NUT Association's support for the Lambeth Week of Action against the cuts the NUT Disciplinary Panel has disciplined 6 London members. Left wing National Executive member Dick North has been suspended from the union for 1 year and debarred from office for a further 18 months. The Lambeth officers are suspended for 6 months and also debarred from office. Their crime was simply that they supported a call for Lambeth, and other London teachers to take part in the rally and demonstration held on February 4th.

At a time when the Tory government is engaged in massive attacks on education and social services the leadership of one of the largest public sector unions - the NUT - is disciplining those of its members fighting the attacks. Teachers nationally have to be clear on the implications of the suspensions of the London 6 and take up the fight for their reinstatement against Jarvis and his supporters.

The suspensions are part of an attempt by Jarvis and Co. to keep control of the union by intimidating the membership. By attacking teachers who have fought in their

Association for unity in action of all those facing the Tory attacks, the national right wing leadership and their supporters in the Communist Party are attempting to break the growing militancy of teachers.

It is possible to trace a pattern to the action of the right wing both locally and nationally over the last year:

- In Leicester and Southampton NUT delegates on Trades Councils have been instructed not to participate in or vote on discussions which are outside the aims and objectives of the union. They have also been instructed not to take positions on Trades Councils. This instruction, coming personally from Fred Jarvis is a move to ensure that teachers do not become part of the fabric of the local labour movement at a local level and therefore unable to play a full and active role in labour movement activity against the Tories. As far as Jarvis is concerned links with the Trade Union movement must remain at a bureaucratic level with the TUC.

- The officers of the East London Association have also been instructed to rule out of order certain motions, the content of which Hamilton House has not liked.

- Also in London the Regional Disciplinary Panel have sent disciplinary letters to those members of the ILTA who attempted to attend the recent AGM. Last year no such letters were sent and those members who have received them this year are right to think that there has been a hardening of attitudes in the NUT HQ.

All these examples, which have culminated in the 6 suspensions, are an attempt to keep teachers isolated from other workers who face the same problems. For these reasons the campaign for reinstatement must be a national offensive against the anti democratic methods of Jarvis and Co. Dick North has been suspended because he refused to obey a letter from the General Secretary of the Union.

The 6 can only take up union office again if they write a letter of loyalty in words "acceptable" to the officers of the union.

NUT members in local Associations have been denied the right to discuss any aspect of the case by a letter from Jarvis, on the grounds that it was sub judice.

Jarvis was the officer denying the right of Trades Council delegates to take up office.

If teachers are to successfully fight education cuts and defend living standards then we must launch a campaign to the end against the methods of the NUT national leadership.

Every teacher in every part of the country must become part of the Defence Campaign, and build for a massive lobby of the appeal hearing on April 4th.

Pass resolutions in schools and Associations calling for the immediate reinstatement of Dick North and the Lambeth Officers, without penalties.

Local Associations should sponsor the Defence Campaign and raise money to support its activities.

Support the mass lobby of the Special Salaries Conference on March 21st.

Support the lobby of the Executive meeting on April 4th.

**Reinstate the 6!
For a national defence campaign!**



NUT

Reinstate the Lambeth 6!

Build a national defence campaign!

by Rachel Stein



Lambeth Trade Unionists and Tenants Unite

by Frank Irvine

Against Knight's Cuts

The Ted Knight leadership of the Labour-controlled Lambeth Council has reached the end of its rate-increase road. As *Socialist Newsletter* forecast many months ago, Knight's retreat before Heseltine has forced him to draw up plans to make the cuts he said he

would never make.

At the Lambeth Labour Group meeting on March 9th Knight advanced his plans for £11½ million of cuts as well as further rate and rent increases. Knight formerly based his rate increases strategy on the support of the manual workers, who

feared redundancy. Now Knight's image as a left-winger has completely crumbled because the £11 million cuts will in practice mean the loss of some 500 jobs.

Having attacked working class council tenants and ratepayers for months, Knight now seems equally prepared to tear into the trade unions. In his speech to the Labour Group Knight bemoaned the fact that Lambeth NALGO refused to co-operate with these cuts. Deliberately setting the NALGO rank and file against their shop stewards, Knight said that he didn't believe that NALGO members would go along with the anti-cuts opposition of the NALGO officials. On the issue of inferior office facilities for NALGO workers Knight said that the Council would have to be firm with the unions who would have to accept these attacks on working conditions as part of the cuts package.

From his posture as champion of the anti-cuts fight, Knight has now embarked on a virulent attack on jobs, services and living standards. Perhaps this explains why the *London Labour Briefing* newsheet, which Knight sponsors, makes absolutely no mention of Lambeth in its latest issue.

It is also worth mentioning here the position of the WRP and its paper *Newsline*. In a recent issue it contained a special pull-out with the title "Lambeth - the Council that cares". Still clinging onto the coat-tails of axeman Knight in an attempt to overcome their self-imposed sectarian isolation from the mass movement, the WRP now have egg all over their faces. Council tenants and employees who face the prospect of further rent and rate increases, inferior services and unemployment, certainly don't believe that Lambeth is the 'council that cares' but rather that Knight and Co. are the team doing the Tories' work and the WRP are loyally covering up for him.

Knight singled out the Lambeth Labour Left for particularly vitriolic abuse. He said at the Labour Group meeting that the left are prepared to allow the Tories in to

make cuts themselves. In fact the Lambeth Left has consistently argued that Knight should not do the Tories' work but face the situation and challenge the government with an appeal to the labour movement to rally behind Lambeth and all Labour Councils in a united campaign to defy Heseltine on cuts, rent and rate rises in the struggle to bring down Thatcher.

Knight obviously feels the need to attack the Left because of the growing hostility to his leadership within the Lambeth working class. The Labour Group meeting was picketed by large numbers of angry tenants, Council employees and Labour Party members. Kennington Tenants' Association Reps Committee is demanding full consultation on any rent and rate rises. The recent meeting of South West London ACTSS/TGWU Branch roundly denounced Knight's cuts. Vauxhall Labour Party has voted total opposition to the cuts with significant minorities in Norwood and Streatham constituencies also committed to this opposition. And of course many hundreds of council tenants are making it clear that they can't and won't pay the rent and rate rises.

Knight's capitulations have opened the way for the Tories to attack at both national and local levels. Knight's retreat on rates and rents has enabled Heseltine to keep pushing for the cuts he wanted, and the rate and rent rises have enabled the local Tories to launch an anti-Labour campaign in Lambeth.

The local rate-strike organised by the Streatham Chamber of Commerce is of course thoroughly reactionary because it seeks to replace the Labour Council with a pro-Thatcher regime. But Knight's anti-working class attacks cannot be defended. There is a clear tendency on the council estates towards a rent and rate strike. *Socialist Newsletter* is in favour of a working class rent and rate strike in unity with the Lambeth trade unions on the basis of no cuts and a national fight against Thatcher. The example of Camden is important here. There the local government

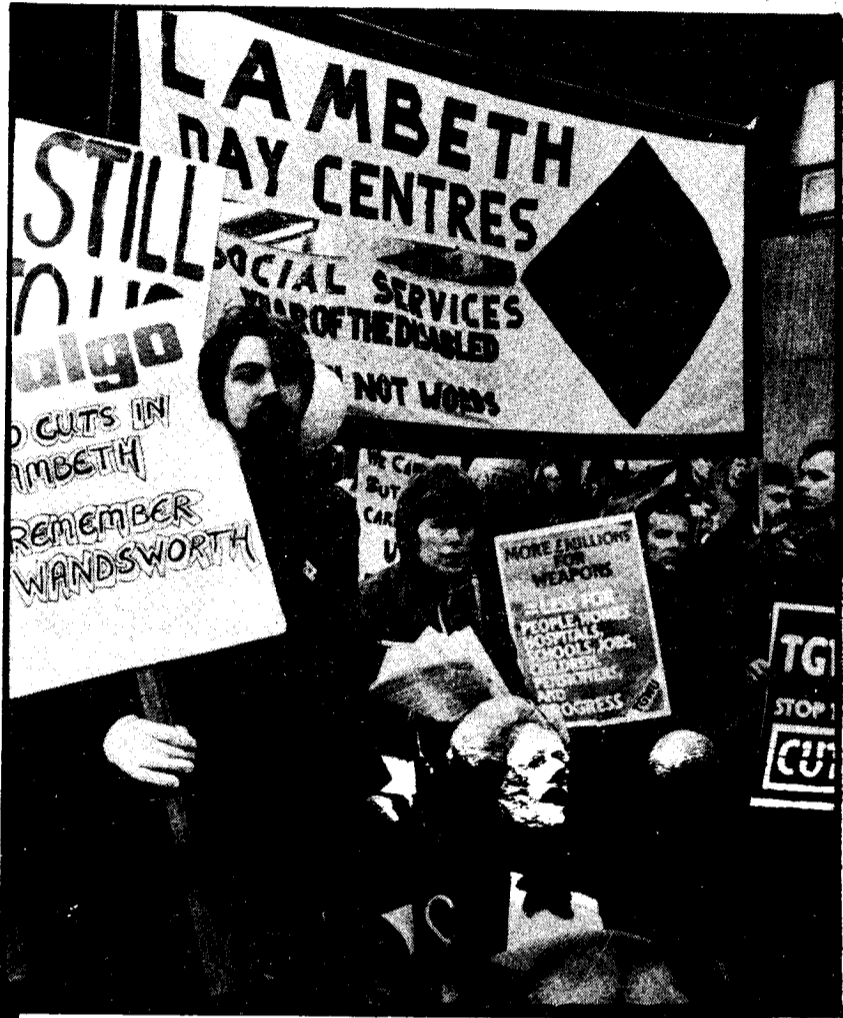
trade unions and the tenants' associations have decided to take a united stand against cuts and rent and rate rises. This form of united-front is now an urgent necessity in Lambeth.

The position of the Lambeth Left is also crucial in the light of Knight's surrender on cuts. In Camden ten Labour councillors refused to take part in the rate making procedure. A similar stand must be made by Left councillors in Lambeth. It has now become clear for all to see that Knight will not fight the Tories. The Lefts must head the struggle and fight to remove Knight. The Labour Left groupings that exist in numerous London boroughs must immediately seek to build London wide unity in the struggle against the surrender of the likes of Knight - not to mention traditionally right-wing leaders like Roy Shaw in Camden.

Despite the setback that Knight's surrender represents militants must continue the struggle to build a national campaign against Heseltine. The first step towards this is to build an all-London fight on the basis of united trade union and tenants' association committees and a united front of Labour Councils and local government trade unions against the Tories.

These Labour Left groupings must begin immediate work to base themselves on the battle of local government unions opposed to cuts and council tenants opposed to any further attacks on their living standards. The forthcoming all London Labour Left meeting in Lambeth can undertake this task.

Knight's surrender is not the end of the struggle. On the contrary, in the light of Thatcher's defeat at the hands of the miners, the struggle must now centre on unifying Council employees and tenants in a battle to throw out the likes of Knight who have refused to confront the Tories, and to build a national campaign headed by those Labour councillors, trade unionists and tenants' leaders who genuinely want to bring down Thatcher.



Lambeth Clerical Workers Defend Their Jobs

One of the first groups of workers to protest against Ted Knight's £11 million cuts package in Lambeth were the Voluntary Sector workers of the South West London Branch of ACTSS/TGWU. At a meeting in Lambeth Town Hall on March 3rd, 60 workers packed a small committee room to hear Councillors Lansley and Bright, Chairman of Community Affairs and Amenity Services respectively, explain the cuts in grants to voluntary organisations. Nigel Siederer, Chairman of South West London ACTSS/TGWU, asked Lansley to justify the cuts, the effect of which he said would "... Put in jeopardy the jobs of many of our 150 members in Lambeth."

Siederer accused Lansley and Bright of attacking voluntary organisations because they have no direct bargaining or negotiating procedures with the Council. That didn't mean to say, however, that they were prepared to negotiate cuts.

When Lansley asked ACTSS members to sit down and negotiate with him "humane" cuts, he was met with angry jeers from the meeting. One member shouted "This shows we just can't rely on Ted Knight." The thread that ran through the whole meeting was total opposition to the cuts being proposed in Lambeth. More importantly there was also overwhelming opposition to any further rent and rate rises because this would split Council workers from working-class Council tenants and ratepayers.

It was on the question of opposition to all cuts and rate and

rent rises that two other Labour Councillors spoke. Councillors Stannard and Bowring have consistently opposed all cuts in services, jobs and living standards. Bowring spoke of the need for unity among all Council workers. Stannard echoed this but spoke of the urgent need for unity among Trade Unionists and Council tenants to defend jobs, services and living standards as the only way to force local labour movement leaders like Knight and the national leaders on the Labour Party NEC and TUC to begin the fight to bring Thatcher down.

Many speakers referred to the cynical way in which Knight and his supporters have derailed a movement which started with 17,000 on the streets of Lambeth in November 1979. Nigel Siederer referred to the November 1st 1980 and January 17th Lambeth Conference called by Ted Knight which Knight had rendered ineffective by ignoring all the decisions taken on cuts, rate and rents rises and on the need for unity.

At the meeting it was clear that the workers were determined to stand up to the cuts and to demand a united front against them.

Ted Knight's strategy of dividing the working class by attacking the unions and tenants is being exposed. The workers are determined to bring down the Tories and to make way for a new government.

Ted Knight is a traitor to the working class. He is a sell-out who has sold out the workers to the Tories. We must bring down the Tories and make way for a new government.

LABOUR DIVIDES

by Simon Banks

The discussion in the Lambeth Labour Parties over Ted Knight's proposed £10.5 million cuts has been varied. Vauxhall Labour Party voted hugely against all cuts and against rent and rate rises.

Speaking to the GMC before his announcement on cuts, Knight prepared the ground for this surrender by questioning whether all Lambeth's services were necessary.

Left councillor Neil Turner argued against all cuts and any further rent and rate rises. Turner's position was backed by the 2000 members of the Vauxhall Labour Party who voted against all cuts and against rent and rate rises.

Turner's arguments were backed by the 2000 members of the Vauxhall Labour Party who voted against all cuts and against rent and rate rises.

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evaders voted down even Tulse Hill's guarded support for cuts and opted to totally support Knight's cuts with no conditions. As the results were announced Knight and his apparatus smiled with glee at the fatal blow they were dealing to Thatcher's government!

Some people in Norwood who previously opposed cuts and rent and rate increases have capitulated under the pressure of Knight's 'catastrophe if we don't cut' arguments. Or perhaps they were misled by the matchless arguments of the Tories. We must not let this happen in Lambeth.

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In Streatham Labour Party there continues to exist a group of members, including Cllr. Steve Stannard, who vote against any form of cuts. But recent battles against Knight's cuts show that there are some who will pay no more than lip service to this position. Cllr. Steve Stannard attacked the cuts, rent and rates rises and spoke of the movement to fight Thatcher in Lambeth, which began with 17,000 on the streets and ended with 3,000 and massive cuts. This, he said, was the tangible result of Ted Knight's betrayal and the loss of the battle.

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LONDON RALLY-FORUM



Ninety people attended the Rally/Forum held in London on February 28th to open discussion in Britain on the work and politics of the Fourth International (International Committee).

Comrade Alan Bridges, a member of the Trotskyist movement for 47 years, opened the meeting by describing the FI(IC) as the "largest regroupment of revolutionaries since the early days of the Communist International." He went on to insist that the FI(IC) was the inheritor of the struggle against the liquidation of Trotskyism waged by the old International Committee created in 1953, and that the Socialist Labour Group, British section of the FI(IC), continued in the traditions of the old Socialist Labour League before its destruction by revisionism in the early 1970s.

Bridges said that anyone who writes off the struggle of the SLL writes off the struggle for Trotskyism since World War Two. Bridges recalled the SLL's implacable opposition to imperialism in the Korean war; the work in the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism, opposition to the Suez War; defence of the Hungarian and Polish revolutions in 1956; the creation of a Trotskyist group in Nigeria. In Britain the pre-SLL broke

the TGWU bureaucracy on the docks in 1955. In the late 50s it won militants breaking from the Communist Party. In 1959 the SLL fought the Gaitskill witch hunt and won people from CND to a revolutionary position.

Bridges said that the SLL's degeneration can only be understood in relation to these developments. "What we have salvaged" he continued "is due to the fact that the SLG and the FI(IC) puts first the construction of the international." Consequently "the FI(IC) today offers the only framework within which those efforts can be carried forward."

Paddy Healy, from the League for a Workers' Republic, Irish Section of the FI(IC), spoke of the leading role the LWR had played, within the National H-Block Committee, in organising solidarity strikes during the last Hunger strike.

Healy said the LWR's intervention in the Hunger strike manifestations was conducted "as a disciplined section of the Parity Committee/FI(IC) and was based on the political gains made in preparing the World Conference" (The founding World Conference of the FI(IC) took place in December.) He laid great stress on the method of the FI(IC)'s Theses, an application of which

was the "fight for the anti-imperialist united front shoulder to shoulder with the revolutionary nationalists of the Republican movement."

Comrade Healy described how the LWR "organised with the revolutionary Republicans, what the Pabloites and ultra-lefts said could not be done. We were able to get strike action and to organise against all wings of the trade union bureaucracy, stalinist and social democratic." The LWR opposed those who made appeals to the liberal wing of the national bourgeoisie.

Healy asserted that Thatcher's first defeat occurred last November 12th when the Derry working class staged a General Strike which left the British Government's policy of 'criminalisation' in ruins. He went on to say "If the Tories are brought down on the Irish question specifically, that is the most explosive and dislocating way to tear down the British state. Let us deliver a blow shoulder to shoulder with the revolutionary nationalists of Ireland, shoulder to shoulder with the miners of Britain, to bring down the Thatcher government." Comrade Healy was greeted with chants of 'Britain Out of Ireland - Political Status Now!'

Betty Hamilton, a comrade with more than 50 years standing in the revolutionary movement in Britain, introduced Comrade Moreno and spoke of the long fight for an international revolutionary party of the working class, in which she had taken place.

Nahuel Moreno, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the FI(IC), discussed in detail the reasons for the crisis of the Fourth International since the 1950s. He talked about the notion of 'entry sui generis' (of a special kind) into Stalinist parties, which Pablo and Mandel advanced in the early 50s because they believed the Communist Parties would lead the next stage in the world revolution. This policy led to the liquidation of thousands of Trotskyist militants.

Moreno asked the question "Why is the Pablo/Mandel current revisionist? Because it attacks the principle of all principles, it revises the role of the Fourth International. The role of the FI is to wage an implacable struggle against the corrupt leaderships of the workers' movement and in particular Stalinism. The fundamental objective of the FI is to destroy these leaderships and to win the leadership of the working class."

Moreno then addressed himself to

Castroism. He said that if we accept that Castroism is a revolutionary leadership of the working class then there is no need for the FI and Trotsky was a utopian. He said that since 1951 the revisionists have looked for leadership outside the Fourth International. If the crisis of leadership can be solved outside the FI we have no reason to exist.

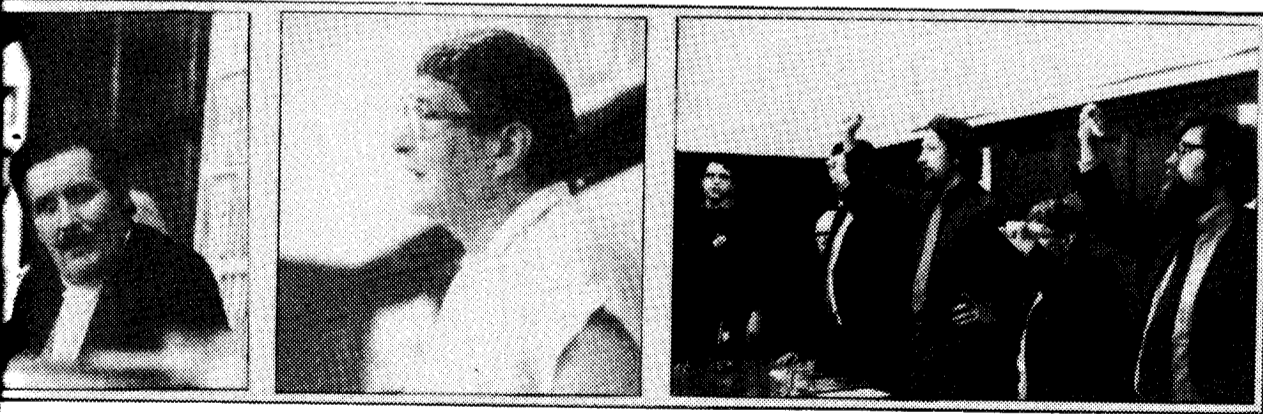
At the level of economics-Mandel has a conception that capitalism developed the productive forces since 1945. If a worker, using sophisticated technique can produce more bombs, then for Mandel, capitalism has developed the productive forces.

Moreno dealt at length with the practical consequences of revisionism. In the 1952 Bolivian revolution in which the Trotskyists played a leading role and the influence of Stalinism was negligible, the Pabloites called for support to the bourgeois government instead of calling for workers' power.

This was the policy of the Stalinists in China and Spain before the war and in Bolivia ended in the defeat of the revolution and a severe setback for Trotskyism in Latin America.

In the 1953 General Strike in France the Pabloites looked to the Stalinists to

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...ad the movement, which the French CP were seeking to demobilise. In the same year Pablo and Mandel refused to support the struggle of the East Berlin workers against the Russian tanks. In Latin America where guerillism was dominant they abandoned the struggle for Trotskyism. Mandel himself has subsequently described this policy as a "catastrophic mistake". More recently in Nicaragua the Pabloites abandoned the defence of Trotskyist militants, who were imprisoned and tortured by the FSLN.

Moreno went on to explain that the Unified Secretariat is today in a deep crisis. The SWP(USA) leadership is calling for a 'new international' with Castro and the FSLN. But Castro is conditionally for the repression of the Polish workers by the Kremlin. He is conditionally on the side of the Videla dictatorship against the Argentinian working class. Castro was the first to defend the Kremlin invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Argentinian affiliates of the FI(IC) were the strongest Trotskyist organisations in the world. The crisis of the FI has led us to make serious mistakes in the past. But basing ourselves on the Theses we will rebuild the FI.

He referred to the particular problems in Britain where there exist over 20 groups claiming to be Trotskyist. "But starting from this meeting I hope we can begin the battle to put a stop to the dispersal of Trotskyist forces and draw together into the FI all those who want to fight for the revolution." The meeting gave Moreno a standing ovation with chants of 'Long Live the Fourth International'.

In the discussion that followed Comrade John Lister of the Workers' Socialist League welcomed the meeting as an opening of the discussion between Trotskyists in the battle for the rebuilding of the FI. He also described the IMG's refusal to attend the meeting as "a scandal". The Workers' Power Group made a contribution which typified the outlook of a national sect with no ability or intention to build a mass revolutionary party.

In response to the idea that what was needed was endless abstract discussion, George White, chairman of the Rally,

said "Our programme is not one simply for discussion but one for mobilisation, and called on young militants at the meeting to join the SLG/FI(IC) and take part in the struggle to build the FI.

In reply Moreno took up the problem of method. He said there is a sharp difference between historians and marxist politicians. He warned against those who "protect their own little businesses and avoid the struggle to build a great party." He went on to say "No party can have a correct national policy if there is no international - that is the basis of Trotskyism."

The Rally/Forum ended with the singing of the Internationale and with chants of 'SLG! SLG!'. The high morale of the meeting demonstrated the will of the SLG and its supporters to build a large section of the FI(IC).

The Socialist Labour Group intends the Forum to be the first of several this year, aimed at discussing the positions and work of the Fourth International (International Committee). It is our urgent wish for the comrades of the International Marxist Group to put an end to the senseless boycott of all discussion and for open and fraternal discussion to begin on points at issue.

ARGENTINE PST Interview

The Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) of Argentina, although prevented by reactionary laws from being a member of the Fourth International (International Committee), works in political solidarity with it. The PST has organised several thousand militants underground in Argentina and, with the OCI of France, is one of the largest Trotskyist organisations in the world. Two of its leaders gave an interview in Paris in December, part of which we reproduce beneath:

Q. How has the combativity of the Argentine working class been manifested in the past months?

A. The situation in the working class has to be seen in the light of the overall resistance. The whole Peronist trade union bureaucracy is tending to go along with the severe restrictions imposed on it by the dictatorship and has stopped calling national mobilizations to pressure the regime, which it did in 1979. The Peronist union bureaucracy, like the Stalinists, gives critical support to the military dictatorship. As a consequence of the policy of the leaders, the workers' struggles went down in number in 1980. They never stopped but rather began to take forms hitherto unseen under the military such as factory occupations and street demonstrations.

Q. How does the Argentinian CP's support for the dictatorship concretely manifest itself?

A. In our last paper we had an article on the CP's policy called "Officialism in a red mask". For the Argentinian CP the military regime has a progressive character because it has begun largescale trading with the USSR, Poland, Cuba and other bureaucratic workers states. A month before the Argentinian military carried out their coup in Bolivia, Fernando Navarra, one of the main CP leaders, wrote that "the most progressive aspect of the Argentinian government is its foreign policy." The CP's support to the dictatorship is shown in all areas. While increasingly important sectors demand the total abolition of censorship, the PCA argue that it should be centralised and better organised. As for the thousands who have 'disappeared' the PCA propose that the military say when and where they were killed and see that as the fundamental problem. The PCA does not call for the release of prisoners but for a reduction in sentences passed by military tribunals and the application of civil laws. This includes sentences of 30 years!

Q. On what slogans is the Argentine PST fighting today?

A. Our whole policy is concentrated in two slogans: "Down with the dictatorship!" and "For a General Strike to bring it down!" In fighting for this perspective, our party bases itself on the struggles of the workers and other sectors of the population who are increasingly confronting the dictatorship. The struggles for wages, for the defence

of the workers' organisations and the CGT, the struggle for the prisoners and the 'disappeared' against censorship, and for the demands of the students - our party works to translate all of these into one mighty torrent which will lead to a general strike to get rid of the dictatorship.

Q. What does the foundation of the FI(IC) represent for the PST?

A. The situation of our party is contradictory. On the one hand, we are the only force which opposes the dictatorship and consequently the present circumstances of military dictatorship couldn't be better for our development and transformation into a party with wide influence amongst sections of the masses. On the other hand, because of this, the repression of the dictatorship is focussed against us. One hundred comrades have 'disappeared' and a hundred more are in prison. That is the price which our party has had to pay for its determined battle against the military regime.

As well as this, we were the only party to participate actively in the first attempt to organising a general strike on 27 April 1979. In 1980, we took part in 80% of the conflicts which developed, and we led a good number of them.

Also, only the PST fights in a determined manner for the slogan of a general amnesty without conditions, and for the handing over of all the 'disappeared'. All the other political forces oppose this slogan. (It is worth noting that certain organisations like the CP and 'Politica Obrera' (a petty-bourgeois nationalist organisation which broke with Trotskyism in 1979, ed.) oppose this slogan, pretending that if an amnesty was promulgated, certain torturers would be freed. We answer this by saying that the real torturers are not in prison, but sit in the government).

Since its foundation our party has been based on internationalism and on the impossibility of remaining on national terrain, if we are to build a big Trotskyist party. For more than 30 years, we have fought for the building of the Fourth International as a single movement, based on principled policies and centralised in accordance with the needs of the world class struggle.

Because of reactionary laws in our country, our party cannot adhere organisationally to the FI(IC) but is in political solidarity with it. The recent founding of the FI(IC) represents an immense step forward in the fight that the PST and others have waged for the building of the World Party of Socialist Revolution, which our fight in Argentina is a part of.



Speaking in Moscow recently, a Stalinist foreign policy specialist told reporters, "If the Americans invaded Nicaragua, what would we do? What could we do? Nothing." Clearly, what applies to Nicaragua also applies to El Salvador. Soviet support for the uprising against the Junta there has always been minimal. When Jorge Shafik Handal, general secretary of the Salvador Communist Party was touring, looking for arms, Moscow was not a main stopping place. The Kremlin has strictly controlled arms reaching Central America, so that the fighting never got 'out of hand'.

Now that Reagan has declared his intention to confront the guerrillas in Salvador and the Junta has been able to throw back the January offensive of the FMLN, the Kremlin is breaking off from even nominal immediate support for the war. The *Guardian* of March 5th carried an article entitled "Brezhnev fears to tread where Reagan rushes in".

The FSLN regime in Nicaragua followed a US ultimatum, coupled with the cutting off of economic aid, with the announcement that all movements of arms through Nicaragua (which it said had never happened anyway) to Salvador, would stop.

The revolution in Salvador has not undergone a decisive defeat. However the offensive opened in January, which the leaders called the 'Final Offensive', has been fragmented as a co-ordinated national armed movement. Many of the guerrilla units have retreated to the remote areas along the border with Honduras after clashes in which thousands were killed. Repressive and murderous activities by the Junta and paramilitary bands have been widespread in the towns and cities since the end of February. Armed sorties into country, for a while under revolutionary control, just outside some of the major cities, are under way.

Despite this, the revolutionary movement in Salvador maintains mass support and a basis for wide-scale military offensives against the Junta. Recent brief occupations of towns show this. But they also reveal a certain adventurism, with no prospect of holding the towns in sight. The FMLN has shown an inability to carry the fight into the towns and cities and to arm and mobilise the working class. This state of affairs is partly caused by a lack of weaponry and trained personnel, a condition which increasingly tells against the FMLN as US aid and 'advisors' are poured in behind the Junta.

But there is another side to the problem. This is the political nature of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the political front linked to the FMLN, which actually does the fighting and includes those not supporting the politics of the FDR, such as the Salvadorean Trotskyists. The FDR is a coalition of a Popular Front type which includes Christian Democrats and 'Social Democrats'. The right wing of the FDR, which has links with the Torrijos government in Panama, itself and repressive regime, has been seeking a deal with the ruling Junta in Salvador. Such a deal might enable fake 'elections' to be held and a sellout of the interests of the workers and peasants to occur.

This activity, which the religious representatives of the FDR have been trying, not without success, to sell to the Socialist International of Willy Brandt, the European Socialist Parties (including the Labour Party) and even to elements in Washington, poses a threat to the success of the armed movement in Salvador.

The Salvadorean masses will not be easily betrayed. Tens of thousands of young people have staked their very lives on the success of the armed struggle. It is these young people that the Junta is setting out, with the help of Reagan and the support of Thatcher, to physically wipe out. Despite their lack of medium and heavy weapons they will hold out for long periods and the mass struggle will be placed on the agenda again. We must recall that the FSLN in Nicaragua failed a number of times before Somoza was brought down. But the revolutionary will of the masses is not enough in itself. We must also recall that Haig has declared the end of the 'Vietnam syndrome'. Active intervention by the US in Central America is very much under way.

The aid Reagan is pouring into El Salvador is not simply to allow the stalemate situation to continue. It is the spearhead of an intended counter-revolutionary push across Central and even Latin America. And the Kremlin has made it clear, in line with 'peaceful coexistence', that it cannot interfere. Indeed, the growth of revolutionary mass movements and with them the potential to build Trotskyist parties with mass influence is what the Kremlin fears most.

If the FMLN and the Salvadorean people are to succeed in toppling the Junta and driving off the reactionary offensive of Reagan, then political solidarity and material aid are ever more urgent. The young fighters in Salvador do not need the offer to 'mediate' which Michael Foot has made. Nor do they get much from the preaching of the Pope and his supporters in the FDR about civil rights. They need the support of the international working class and its parties and trade unions.

The Socialist Labour Group stands not for a deal between the Popular Frontist and class collaborationist FDR and the Junta, which could present itself, as it has before, as a new 'liberal' regime in El Salvador while the US led forces continued to butcher revolutionaries. We are unconditionally for the bringing down of the Junta and the total smashing of its armed forces. Only the armed workers and peasants will continue this fight to its conclusion. The SLG does not for a moment confuse support for the armed struggle to bring down the Junta, in which the Salvadorean members of the Fourth International (IC) are fighting shoulder to shoulder with supporters of the FDR at this stage, with support for the politics of the FDR.

Militants in the British workers' movement should fight in solidarity with Salvador on the following basis:

- Down with the civilian-military junta!**
- No to imperialist intervention in Salvador!**
- Material aid to the FMLN and the armed struggle in Salvador!**

SALVADOR

DOWN WITH THE JUNTA!

**NO TO IMPERIALIST
MILITARY INTERVENTION!**

MATERIAL AID TO THE FMLN!

by George White



PERU TROTSKYIST JOINT STATEMENT ON SALVADOR



The leadership of the Socialist Labour Group has written an Open Letter to the International Marxist Group and the Workers' Socialist League, proposing a joint Trotskyist campaign in solidarity with the revolution in El Salvador.

The letter, published below, reproduces the text of a joint declaration of the Peruvian POMR and PST, which adhere to the Fourth International (IC) and the PRT of Hugo Blanco, which adheres to the USFI.

Dear Comrades,

Below we reproduce the text of a declaration jointly signed by the PST and POMR of Peru, which adhere to the Fourth International (IC) and the PRT, the party led by Hugo Blanco, which belongs to the USFI.

The Peruvian Parties have agreed a joint initiative, in view of the developments in El Salvador and the danger of increasing American involvement. The organisations in Peru are co-operating on the principled bases of opposition to US intervention, victory to the FMLN and the establishment of a workers government.

The SLG welcomes this important initiative and believes that it is an urgent task for Trotskyists in Britain to undertake a similar campaign.

Concretely, we propose that the IMG, WSL and the SLG join in the holding of a public meeting, which would be non-exclusive and not aligned with any party in Salvador to express Trotskyist solidarity with the revolution there.

**IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE
SALVADORIAN MASSES
JOINT DECLARATION OF THE
POMR, PRT AND PST OF PERU**

The Trotskyist organisations present at this meeting in revolutionary solidarity with the struggle of the Salvadorean people, agree on how to take forward this campaign by carrying out the following proposals:

1. Systematically issuing appeals to the workers, the Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Campaign, the 'United Left' and to all organisations which base themselves on democracy and the anti-imperialist struggles to take the lead in the fight for Peruvian people's solidarity with the Salvadorean masses, starting with immediate preparation for a mass mobilisation outside the American Embassy to prevent the threat of military intervention in El Salvador.

This plan of action must begin by demanding of the Belandé Government and of Parliament that it breaks its links with the Salvadorean Junta and recognize the FMLN as a party at war.

2. At the centre of this joint mobilization, in the course of which we will vigorously defend the widest unity in action, with no preconditions, of all those who want to mobilize in defence of the Salvadorean people, we Trotskyists will develop an ongoing propaganda campaign to affirm that the only guarantee of the victory of the Salvadorean Revolution is the battle to put in power a government of the workers, without bosses or generals. That is to say, without Majanos or Christian Democrats like those who today take part in the FDR.

No to American invasion and intervention in El Salvador!

Down with the Military-Civilian Junta!

Long live the struggle of the FMLN and the Salvadorean people!

For a government of workers without bosses or generals!

Hernan Cuentas
POMR
Enrique Fernandez
PST
Raul Castro Vera
PRT

LIMA JANUARY 19th 1981



BRAZIL

The advent of Reagan to power has provoked an increasing repression by the regimes in Latin America. As Secretary of State, ex-General Haig stated last January 28th, "The fight against international terrorism must henceforth take priority over the question of human rights."

The Figuerido dictatorship in Brazil has followed Haig's advice with the trial and jailing of eleven trade union leaders for terms of 2

to 3½ years. The charges were 'civil disobedience' and the distribution of 'subversive propaganda'. One of those jailed is Lula, the leader of the Sao Paulo steelworkers and the president of the newly formed Labour Party in Brazil. Lula was due to come to London recently to speak with Tony Benn but the trial prevented this. He was the leader of the great metalworkers' strike last April in

WORKERS LEADERS MUST BE FREED!

by Sara Bennet

which over 100,000 workers defied the military government. In reality the union leaders have been jailed for fighting for free trade unions, independent of the state. In Brazil the dictatorship runs its own 'trade unions' which are strictly controlled.

The emergence of the Labour Party posed a threat to the regime which the dictatorship could not leave unanswered.

The so-called trial of the trade unionists was a sham from beginning to end. Neither they nor their lawyers were present in court. The proceedings were held in secret with one civil judge and four representatives of the military presiding.

After decades of repression, when independent unions and

political parties were illegal, the Brazilian working class has, in the past two years, fought back to make great gains. Several independent unions have been set up, including a teachers' union and a building workers' union. The Figuerido dictatorship is trying, by jailing these leaders, to behead this movement.

In a trial last year, as false as that of Lula and the ten others, a leader of the independent teachers' union in Minas Gerais province, David Maximiliano da Souza, was sentenced to one year in jail for planning the 'assassination' of the dictator. Fascists are conducting terror attacks in most of the major cities, with the connivance of the military. Bombs have been planted in kiosks which sell public-

ations of the workers' movement. Trade union leaders have been murdered.

The working class in Brazil is not staying silent in the face of these attacks. Thousands of workers have taken to the streets to protest against the attacks. They are demanding the immediate release of the union leaders. The labour movement in Britain can play a vital role in winning the release of the 11 in jail. Union branches and Labour Parties should call on the Brazilian government for their release and send copies of the call to the Brazilian Embassy in London. Labour MPs and union leaders must be asked to make representations to the Brazilian government on behalf of Lula and the others.

SPAIN: After failed coup MONARCHY OUT!

On 24th February, troops of the Civil Guard, an institution handed down by the Franco State, staged an armed takeover of the Cortes in Madrid. The Cortes, supposedly a fully democratic parliament, acts more as a fig-leaf for the Francoite monarchy and its pretence to be 'democratic'. For seven hours it was not certain whether the 'democratic' King and his generals supported the coup or not. Meanwhile, another general, Millans del Bosch, had tanks rolling through Valencia, which was placed under martial law.

That the attempted coup had support among certain elements of the military who did not take an active part has never been denied. That the King hovered in indecision is equally clear.

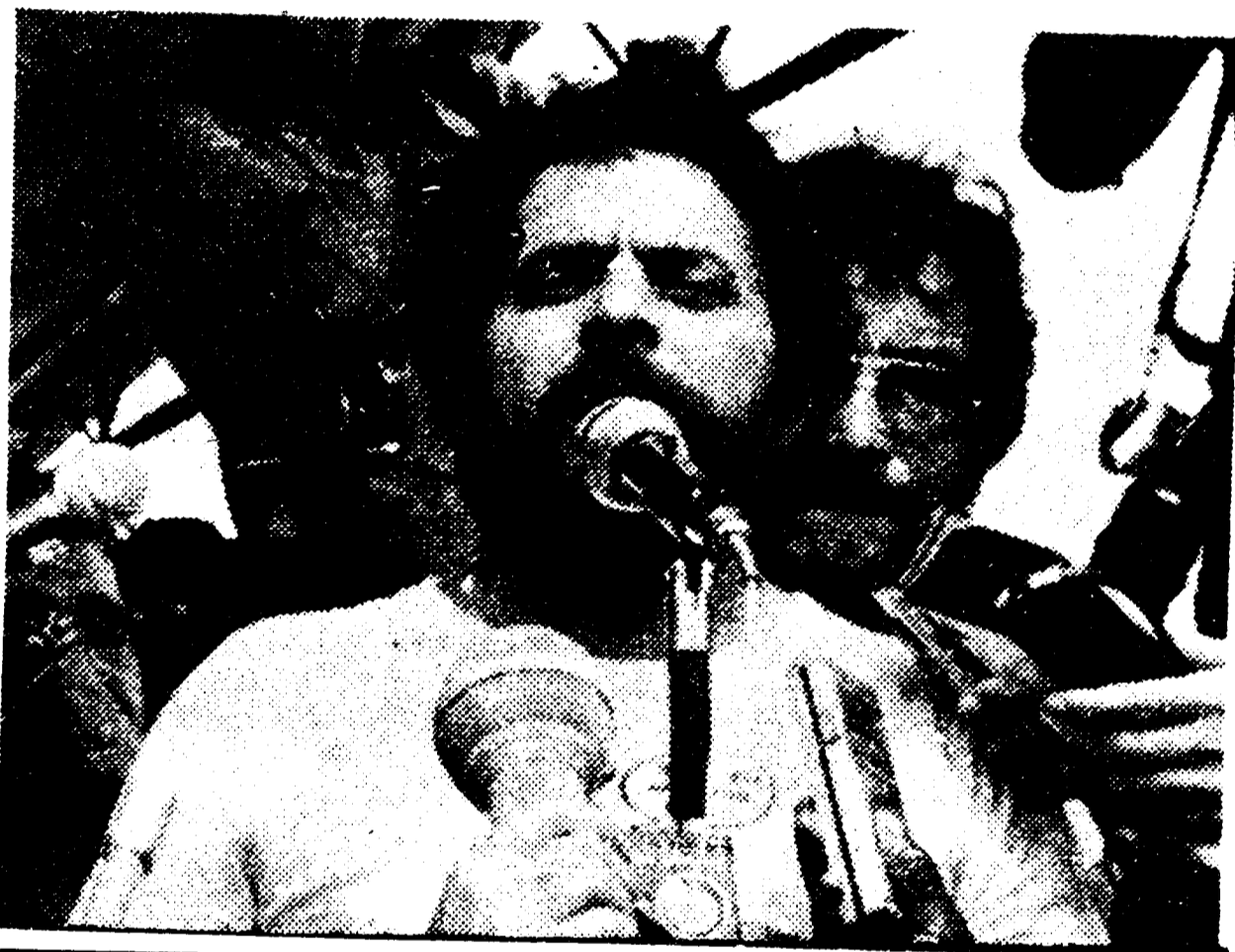
The ruling class in Spain, both the military and the 'democrats', have been in constant crisis since the death of Franco. Unable to stem the upsurge of the masses after Franco's death the state struggles to find a method to regroup its forces and attack the working class, farmers and the Basque and Catalan nationalists. The attempted coup followed only a short time after supporters of ETA, the revolutionary Basque nationalist

party, shouted down the King in the fake Basque 'parliament'.

The leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties tried to prevent immediate mass action against the coup attempt. Carrillo, the Stalinist leader of the CP, spoke warmly of the 'democratic' role of the King and called for support for the monarchy. Meetings were called in factories to urge the workers to stay off the streets.

When the masses took to the streets four days later in their millions, the leaders of the CP and SP tried to impose slogans supporting the monarchy. They thus stood in line of defending a state which continues to be that inherited from the fascist Franco, who personally put King Juan Carlos at its head.

The Spanish Trotskyists, organised in the PST and the POSI, call for an end to the Francoite monarchy, for a Republic, for a union of free Republics of the oppressed nationalities of the Spanish State. For them, no confidence is to be placed in the King or any ruling class politicians to act in workers' interests in Spain. The way forward lies in the breaking up of the Francoite state and the imposition of a workers' government.



ZIMBABWE

The week leading up to February 12th saw Bulawayo become a war zone. It was the bloodiest day since Zimbabwe's Independence. 150 guerillas and at least another 150 died. The Mpilo mortuary was brimming, families had to queue for their dead.

The ruling class was quick to talk about tribal war in Zimbabwe. The fact is that the real causes of the fighting were not touched on in the yellow press, which reduced to beerhall brawl status a battle between fighters who for ten years had to rely on discipline and dedication for their very lives.

The most poignant indicator of what the fighting expressed was Nkomo saying, "you ask them, I won't", in relation to the disarming of ZIPRA forces. A ZIPRA high command representative was killed trying to order the fighters from the Gwai assembly point.

The militant young leadership unfolding in the ex-guerilla forces increasingly feels betrayed by the ZIPRA and ZANU leaders. ZIPRA obviously sees ZANLA as identical with the Mugabe government.

Members of ZAPU and ZANLA are being led to think that ZIPRA is the cause of Zimbabwe's unsolved social and economic problems. Members of the ZANU hierarchy are advocating a one party state ... with them as the party!

The young guerillas are now entering their second year fenced in at the assembly points. Meanwhile the white-officer led battalion of

the 'Rhodesia African Rifles' still wear their old Rhodesia insignia and are called, "the unit Mugabe can most trust".

As the *Times* put it, "The combined existence of two heavily armed rival forces has become one of the main problems facing the Government". The *Times* carefully forgets the continued existence of the Rhodesia Army - despite its

implication in many murders and a plotted coup last year. The white arsenal, with the white farmers armed to the teeth, also seems to be no problem to Mugabe and the *Times*, not to mention the 5,000 former Rhodesia auxiliaries South Africa is training.

The only real defence of the gains of the Zimbabwean masses is the guerillas. These, according to

MUGABE TRIES TO DISARM THE YOUTH

Mugabe and the *Times*, must be disarmed at all costs. Those not 'integrated' into the state forces are to be made agricultural labourers, over 20,000 of them.

No wonder ZIPRA militants are increasingly bypassing Nkomo as their leader. He has not raised a murmur of protest. As the opposition leader he has not proposed a single alternative policy. With mass

unemployment, homelessness, low wages, lack of farming land for the peasants and so on, still the main questions which Mugabe will not tackle, the militants in ZANLA will soon follow the example of the young ZIPRA militants.

Zimbabwe needs not a Mugabe-Nkomo coalition, collaborating with international imperialism and holding the social questions in check, but a workers and small farmers government which will implement land distribution, provide a programme of public works and break with the rich white farmers and their South African backers. The ex-guerillas must be turned into an embryonic peoples' militia, under popular control and not kept penned up in 'camps' with nothing meaningful to do unless they hand in their arms. The defence of the continuing revolution cannot be entrusted to ex-Rhodesian soldiers, rich farmers and international capitalism. Only the freedom fighters, whom Mugabe wants to disarm, guarantee there will be no sell-out.



Civil Service Dispute: All Out Now!

by Peter Lane

The vicious press campaign against the civil service pay strikes, from the *Sun* to *The Times*, is an indication of the seriousness with which this defiance of Thatcher's cash limits is seen.

After the massive display of strength shown by nine clerical unions on March 9th *The Times* complained that "trade union morality" had taken over the minds of the country's administrators — and advised the government to make it illegal for civil servants to strike.

There is no longer any doubt that industrial action by civil servants would cripple many services within days and put this government in a crisis situation, nor any doubt about the willingness of civil servants to use their strength to break through the 7% pay limit barrier.

Neither is there any doubt that the leaders of the civil service unions themselves are playing the key role in holding back their members from using the strength they possess and increasingly wish to use.

Less than 2,000 of their 530,000 members are being allowed to stay out indefinitely: tax computers, VAT collection, companies registration, etc. Right-wing President of the 230,000 strong CPSA, Kate Losinska, has already admitted that this is unlikely to push a pay offer into double figures and nowhere near the 15% claimed.

Such "selective strikes" serve not only to dissipate the unions' strength (85% gross pay is being paid to strikers) but are already spreading bitterness amongst the 99.9% of members prevented from taking part in further action.

In the Departments of Employment and Social Security, for example, the Newcastle Records Computer strike makes it impossible for National Insurance records to be obtained. Meanwhile the unions insist that their members in the local offices work normally and cover the work normally done by the computer, by making payments manually! In this way civil servants are being asked to break their own strike!

The leaders say this is necessary in order to avoid hurting the unemployed and the sick — hoping thereby to get a 'good press'. The main effect of the Newcastle strike therefore is to give civil servants an extra workload. This reactionary subordination of the strike to arguments about 'not hurting the disadvantaged' plays right into the hands of the government, who are not averse to shedding crocodile tears for the welfare claimants Thatcher herself is pauperising. In addition, this refusal of the civil service union leaders to call thoroughgoing strike action is sabotaging in advance those other unions whose action affects the public — including the firemen, to

whom the civil service unions gave thousands of pounds during their dispute!

Head of the Civil Service, Lord Soames, has warned that a pay offer above 7% is "impossible". What he means is that any obvious climbdown by the government, after the blow inflicted on them by the miners, would smash apart cash limits on pay rises and place the very existence of the government in immediate jeopardy.

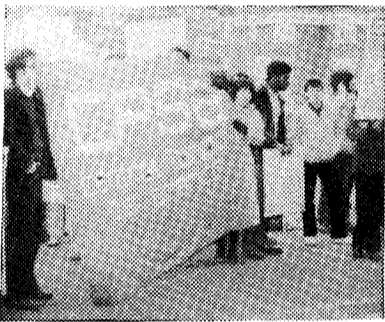
The civil service union leaders, following the example of Duffy, Fisher and Sirs, fully appreciate the fears of the Tory government. If they have to betray the hopes of their own members in order to stop an all out confrontation with the government developing, with themselves at the centre of it, then that is exactly what they will do.

Such a sellout will not be easy for the bureaucrats in a situation where even higher grade civil servants, who regard themselves as professional people, are so incensed by the breaking of their Pay Agreement that they struck for the first time. The announcement of further attacks on living standards in the Budget will only confirm the resolve of the overwhelming majority of civil servants to fight. In these conditions the 'selective strikes' of the union leaders are not only inadequate but are seen to be inadequate by many of the members of the civil service unions.

The miners spelt out a message which reached many of those who took part in the one day stoppage — ALL OUT NATIONAL STRIKE ACTION is the only language which this government understands. The one-day stoppage on March 9th has come and gone, but the scores of

rank and file strike committees set up then have not. The way forward for rank and file unity to defeat the government was shown by a number of areas where members forged unity across the different unions and departments, especially in the larger workplaces. In some places 'Building Committees' were established. These should be linked across the workplaces in the local areas.

In offices up and down the country civil servants are urgently working to break out of the inactivity forced on them by the union HQs. In West London members are demanding that the union leaders call a national demonstration against Thatcher's cash limit. This is the way to draw in the waterworkers, teachers and all the others who are currently fighting the very same cash limit methods which hold down the wages of civil servants. The fight against cash limits is a fight against the government and public sector unity would create the conditions for the defeat of the government. This is why we never hear the leaders of the public sector unions calling for a public sector alliance. The lessons of the 'Triple Alliance' formed between the NUM, ISTC and NUR must be carried into the public sector.



Massive solidarity picketing is being organised around the 'selective strikes'. But if the action stops there — as *Militant* and the Communist Party supporters in the Broad Left are suggesting — the government will be allowed to ride out the action unscathed.

There is a lesson for militant civil servants in the recent miners' strike. That strike, which began in a few pits in Wales, was quickly spread by the sending out of pickets to other areas to call them out in solidarity. In the civil service the 'selective strikes' must be used in the same way. Those on 'selective strike' and those who support them should send 'flying pickets' to other workplaces with the demand, 'ALL OUT FOR THE FULL PAY CLAIM!'.

A Socialist Newsletter reporter conducted the following interview with 3 Civil Servants on strike in East London on March 9th.

What do you think of the 7% offer?

C : Crap. We're losing out. It means £4.50 a week and after inflation that's nothing. It means 1/2% in real terms. The minimum rise should be £10 a week.

N : I've worked in the private sector and this offer just doesn't compare. Thatcher is setting jobs against pay. 6% for the low paid is nothing. Thatcher won't even negotiate. If the waterworkers and the miners can do it, so can we. We should get the same as the waterworkers.

S : The Government has broken the pay settlement. Instead of spending so much on defence they should give us our pay rise.

What do you think of Selective strike action?

S : If selective action doesn't work we'll come out indefinitely. If the computers come out we'll be more effective.

N : We should have all out strike like the waterworkers. We need the airports to come out. If we went on indefinite strike more of our office would come out. Some of those who worked today said they'd support it if we came out for a week. It would be more worthwhile. With unemployment so bad and the pay offer so low those who haven't come out today won't have any choice in the end but to support strike action.

What do you think of the CPSA national leaders like Losinska?

N : The CPSA leaders are very right wing. The rank and file should have more say in the running of the strike and the campaign. We didn't ask for 15%. Our local Union rep. is good but we get instructions handed down from the national executive which we can't discuss. There are not enough rights for the rank and file. We need a closed shop. If we'd had our way we'd have been out a long time ago.

What do you think of the Socialist Newsletter headline which calls for a million on the streets in May to bring down Thatcher?

S : It's a good idea. We'll be going on it. But it will be a hard struggle. Thatcher is blackmailing us because we're frightened of unemployment. Thatcher and Reagan are hand in hand. They're both lunatics. Reagan was a B-movie actor now he's a B-politician! What choice did the Americans have! A peanut farmer or a cowboy!

N : Look at our job. Thatcher doesn't have to do it. She doesn't understand our problems. Thatcher is ignoring unemployment. Everyone should come out in May and the unemployed should march as well, they've got nothing to lose. We support making the demonstration one to bring down the Government. Thatcher needs public support but with all this unemployment and with these strikes she's losing the little support she's got left. She's got too much to contend with. If we had an all out strike Thatcher couldn't touch us.

C : CPSA should support one million on the streets in May. If the Miners and the Waterworkers called for all out strike in May we'd support it in CPSA. All the Unemployment Benefit Offices, Social Security offices and all the public sector should join together to get over the problem of lack of unity.

What do you think is going to happen in the next year?

C : Thatcher is going to find herself out on the street.

S : Thatcher has got the police on her side. She's given them a big pay rise. The minority who support her have got all the power. But the majority are against her.

N : It needs all the unions to band together to get her out. If we had Trade Union unity, less talking and more action we could get her out.



RAIL

Fight the Cuts!

Defend Jobs!



The NUR, together with the NUM and ISTC, has drawn up an agreement, the so-called new 'Triple Alliance'. It is supposed to defend jobs in the rail, coal and steel industries. So closely connected are the three industries that the recession and the attacks of the government are hitting them all together. Cut backs in steel and coal production are affecting the railways because 70% of rail freight traffic consists of these products. The interconnection of these industries, the threat to jobs in all of them, has pushed Weighell, Gormley and Sirs into their 'united front' of the leaders.

Railworkers will ask the question however, of how Weighell

is to defend jobs when the NUR leadership just accepted 6,000 redundancies in the parcels section of British Rail. The NURs position is that opposition to government policy must be by pressuring parliament. For this purpose Weighell has joined with rail boss Sir Peter Parker, the very man who threw the 6,000 parcels workers out of their jobs.

Railworkers need cross-union discussion in the workplace and areas on the new 'Triple Alliance' and how rank and file members of all rail unions can organize jointly to campaign against all cuts and job losses. A rank and file movement, organized in the localities, demanding that our unions act

independently of British Rail management in defence of jobs, is an urgent necessity.

Members of ASLEF and TSSA, which stand outside the 'Triple Alliance', must fight for their unions to become involved.

One of the major obstacles we face in defending our interests is in the Local Divisional Councils (LDCs), a form of institutionalised collaboration with management, imposed by law after the General Strike of 1926. These structures divide the workforce into parts. They act as a blockage to the unification of grades and trades-in struggle. A fight for a real shop-stewards' movement, independent of the LDCs, is another necessity in order to build a fightback in defence of jobs.

Conditions on the railways are fast approaching the intolerable. Yet the basis for driving back the cuts and the plans of the Tories is there. Action has been taken by a whole series of sections already. Now we need not only the unity of the leaders but of the rank and file. It is time to put an end to the old divisions, to end the participation in the tame LDCs and to put together a broadbased, united and independent fightback against cuts in the rail industry.

Left Alliance OUT!

April NUS Conference will take place in the context of Tory plans to make another £442m cuts in education over the next 3 years. This attack is being aided by the continuing refusal of the "Left Alliance" NUS leadership to put up a serious fightback on any major question.

Three issues show this clearly:

1. Student Union Financing. Boyson's attempt to cut finances and control the activity of student unions has been met by weak pleas from NUS to put the scheme on ice for a year. Instead of militant opposition, NUS has whined about the need for Unions to accept "the principle of public accountability" ie the right of the state to dictate and control the affairs of the student movement. NUS President and CP member David Aaronovitch prefers to cut a figure as a concerned and responsible citizen, rather than to lead a movement in a fight against the Tories. No wonder the campaign on this issue has remained a total dead letter since the national demonstrations last November.

2. Boyson is preparing to attack the limited rights to higher education that the working class has gained, by attacking the grants system. His tentative plans for a loans system to replace grants have been encouraged by the Left Alliance. In the four months since the last NUS Conference (when a wordy resolution calling for a national campaign was carried), nothing has been done by the Executive except issuing one circular to student unions, which argues that a loans system would be unfair and "impracticable". Time has been lost. No mobilisation has been organised. The Tories have been allowed to prepare by this inaction.

3. Overseas students. The Tories have announced 25% increases in the "full cost" overseas student for next year. Already some London

Colleges are in occupation. But there has been no call from the NUS Executive to spread the actions into a national fight. Instead the proposal has been made to lobby the government to ask them to stop the full cost fees since they are "unecomonic" in the government's own terms.

Behind all this lies the notion that the NUS should engage in a "dialogue" with the government, presumably with the intention of convincing them to change their policies. Hundreds of thousands of workers have learned that this government can only be dealt with one way - by using organised strength against it. The "posture" of dialogue from the NUS Executive is just laughable. The boldness with which the Tories are pursuing their attack shows just how little they tremble in fear at the prospect of facing the reasoned argument of citizen Aaronovitch.

Unfortunately none of the above items appear on the agenda of the April Conference and therefore it will be difficult to call the Executive's record into question. However, one thing is clear - the Left Alliance is responsible for the demoralised and disorganised state of the movement. Delegates must take the chance to vote out the Left Alliance leadership in April. As we said in our last issue, neither Aaronovitch or Connors (the fake NOLS candidate) offer any way forward.

They stand condemned by their own record of betrayal.

The only alternative is to vote for the SSA candidate. Socialist Newsletter is highly critical of the way the SSA has diverted militants away from the battle inside NOLS to smash up the Left Alliance. In this situation the only principled position is to vote for Anne Henderson from Manchester Poly, who in words at least stands for an NUS committed to mass campaigning against the Tories.

LSO IN CRISIS

by Michael Keene

The Conference of the London Student Organisation (the London Area of NUS) took place on March 7th. Attendance was poor, only 18 delegates being present. This reflects the state of disarray in LSO, with only 25 unions having paid affiliation fees compared with 55 last year out of a total of 180 colleges. Two Tories were elected unopposed to the executive, whilst the Socialist Students Alliance maintained its control.

This state of disarray is not only a part of the confusion caused by the NUS leadership policies nationally, but is linked with the political confusion of the left, the SSA in particular, which was apparent in the debates.

Firstly a resolution from Middlesex Polytechnic on unemployment was carried overwhelmingly. Strident calls to fight the Tories were followed by nothing more bold or immediate than the proposal for a

demonstration next October! Never mind the fact that the working class is already battling Thatcher and will demonstrate massively in May in London. LSO could have, and still could, take the opportunity to galvanize students into action on this demonstration.

On Overseas students, three colleges - LSE, UCL and Queen Mary College are in occupation against next year's fee increases. This is a national problem which requires national action by NUS. Yet the resolution posed calls for a campaign based on the initiatives of individual colleges and totally ignored the problem of fighting for a unified campaign with a nationally coordinated leadership.

The SSA resolution on student union financing which called for opposition to any governmental restraints on the way unions spend their funds was carried. This defeated the bizarre resolution

no place if you're young



Erroll Madden, an 18 year old black youth from South London was walking home at night. Two white policemen arrested him for stealing two toy cars. He was an art student and had bought the cars to draw them. Erroll says the cops told him, "You fucking black cunt, you're not going anywhere". In the police station he was intimidated into a confession. His innocence was proven because he had documentary evidence of buying the toys. Erroll has great artistic talent. As a result of the arrest he broke down and has been asked to leave art college.

A 17 year old boy from Preston jumped off a railway bridge to his death recently. After leaving school he had a job only 6 months before being made redundant. His father, a sheet-metal worker, said, "I can

only see things like this happening again. I really wonder what is going to happen to young people in this country and where it is all going to end."

Mairead Nugent was arrested at the age of 16. After torture and a trial with no jury she was sentenced to 12 years for 'an attempted bombing'. She has been on protest in Armagh prison for 3 years and 6 months. At the end of last year she was one of the women Hunger Strikers.

British capitalism has nothing to offer young people. It forces them into suicide. It jails them. Its police and army oppress them in Northern Ireland. It is taking away any chance of a good job for most of them. It drives them off the streets if they're black. These cases are typical of thousands.

from the Left Alliance whose speakers said unions should be as accountable as the police and armed forces! However the SSA advanced no real plan for a unified London wide campaign of mobilisation against government interference.

Most of the business of the Conference fell off the agenda, including the question of Ireland (which is a disgrace considering the current hunger strike and the treacherous attitude of NUS) due to procedural wrangling.

The LSO Conference shows that building a fighting leadership for London students is going to be an uphill battle. It requires above all a break from bureaucratic routine and myopic local politics.

Thames Poly Labour Victory

The principled struggles of the Labour Club in Thames Polytechnic Students' Union have born fruit in the recent Executive elections. Labour Club candidates have won the three main positions on the Executive.

Throughout the year Labour Club activists at Thames have agitated for a break from the 'Left Alliance' bloc of Liberals, Communist Party students and the National Committee of the National Organisation of Labour Students.

More recently the Labour Club in unity with the Afro-Caribbean

LOYALIST INTIMIDATION IN GLASGOW

by Allan McCullum

Sectarian feeling in Glasgow was recently aroused by the visit of the 'Reverend' Ian Paisley. The Glasgow working class, many of whom have historical links with Ireland, were confronted with the New National Front and Scottish Loyalists.

Saturday February 14th saw a march in support of the H-Block prisoners, demanding that the Tory Government honour the promises given to the Hunger Strikers, follow a familiar pattern. The H-Block demonstrators were attacked by over 1,000 Loyalists attempting to disrupt the march. Fighting broke out and more than 150 people were arrested. In the past Strathclyde Police took little action to prevent Loyalists attacking Troops Out marches and other pro-Republican demonstrators.

After Paisley's visit to the West of Scotland both the Scottish Loyalists and the New National Front planned separate provocative marches past Celtic Park on Saturday 21st February, where Celtic were to play Rangers. These marches went ahead although Strathclyde Chief Constable Patrick Hamill used the Public Order Act (1936) to divert the marches away from the football stadium.

On the day, the Loyalists and New National Front paraded together through the east end of the city whilst 70,000 demonstrators against unemployment marched through the city centre. More demonstrations are expected from the Scottish Loyalists. The Loyalists, backed by New National Front supporters, took to the street on three successive weeks in February.

With the recent determined physical attacks on pro-Republican demonstrations and isolated groups of Loyalist Rangers football supporters hurling abuse at the marchers against unemployment, there is evidence of increased activity among reactionaries in Glasgow. Already future marches planned by the Glasgow H-Block Armagh Action Committee, following the rally at Glasgow Civic Halls which attracted more than 1,500 people, have been threatened by Loyalist groups.

There is a growing need for working class people in Glasgow to organise to defend themselves particularly when organising demonstrations connected with Ireland.

students mobilised large numbers of Thames students for the New Cross Massacre march. Once again thrusting back a counter-offensive by Tory and Christian Union students who sought to block this solidarity. Indeed the Christian candidate for President said at the hustings "It was only 13 Blacks that died."

On the basis of these struggles Labour candidates Stratford and Wareham took the positions of President and Vice-President and Purcell is now General Secretary elect.

socialist newsletter

Trotskyist Rally
N.U.T.
Civil Service

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Readers will have noticed the last two issues have been special 10 and 12 page editions to cover the important development of the FI(IC). Next month's issue will be back to the normal 8 pages and will carry a special pull-out on the Liverpool to London demonstration in May.

The second H-Block hunger strike began on March 2nd. The necessity for this second strike flows directly out of the courageous battle put up by the 7 H-Block men and the 3 Armagh women in the 7 week hunger strike last year. That strike offered major concessions on the main demands of the prisoners. However it soon became clear that the Tories had no intention of honouring their promises. They allowed these brave hunger strikers to reach the point of death before pulling off a cynical con-trick.

The Tories' intention was of course to deflate and demobilise the tremendous mass movement throughout Ireland which would have reached revolutionary proportions if one of the H-Block men had died. However the Tories' offer of concessions and their immediate withdrawal has caused a degree of confusion. The big question since December has been: was the hunger strike victorious or defeated?

Insofar as the Tories' were able to trick the prisoners and insofar as the 5 demands were not, in whole conceded, the fight remains unfinished. But what was a great victory in the H-Block campaign was the direct intervention of the Irish masses. Huge mobilisations occurred in Belfast and Dublin. Strike action was taken in towns throughout the country as far south as Tralee which reached General Strike proportions in Derry. These demonstrated to the British government, the Haughey regime in the 26 countries and to the Irish trade union leadership who opposed the strike action all down the line, that the Irish people are quite prepared to rise as one against British imperialism. This tremendous mass mobilisation has already smashed through the British government's policy of criminalisation.

It is precisely this willingness to take on the British state and its army which is fundamental to the deepening crisis of the British state and the Thatcher government. Let us remember that the British ruling class regards Northern Ireland as part of Britain. Yet in the 6 counties wide layers of the population and particularly the youth are engaged in armed defiance of the British army. During the hunger strike there was a virtual dual-power situation in Derry. The Republican Irish workers were making a direct and armed challenge to the right of the British bourgeoisie to continue its oppression in 'a part of Britain'. The significance of this must not be under-estimated. The breach created by last year's hunger strike was broadened by the hasty retreat Thatcher made before the threat of an all-out national miner's strike in February.

In the face of the most militant bastion of the working class Thatcher did exactly the opposite of what she said she would. She didn't take them on, she retreated for all to see. The gates are now open for the workers' movement to unite into one great push to bring the Tories down.

Support the Hunger Strikers

POLITICAL STATUS NOW!

The Irish question is crucial to this struggle. Ireland is one of the hot-spots in the international situation. The Reagan administration in America has set itself the task of turning-back the tremendous world-wide upsurge of the working class most sharply

expressed in Iran, Nicaragua, Poland and Ireland. Thatcher is very much under Reagan's tutelage in his resolve to push back the struggles of the oppressed masses. It is vital for world imperialism to defeat the Republican masses in Ireland to stabilise the British state. The

offensive Reagan and Thatcher hope to undertake places new responsibilities on the working class in Britain. British workers cannot allow the Irish people to suffer at the hands of British imperialism, which strengthens Thatcher against the British working class.



During the first hunger strike the wide mobilisations of the Irish working class against the Thatcher government showed the way. Now that the H-Block men have been forced to resume the hunger strike to make Thatcher concede her promises in practice, the British workers' movement at all levels must take a position in solidarity with the stand of the Irish Republicans against the British government. In the last hunger strike the hunger strikers made a direct appeal to the British working class to support their struggle against Thatcher. This appeal must be taken up on this second occasion to force the British government to concede and to prevent a situation where the prisoners have to go to the brink of death for a second time.

The British government put these Republicans in jail to stop them fighting. These same prisoners have been criminalised in a failed attempt to discredit the Republican struggle. Now these men have turned the H-Blocks jail into an issue itself, a component of the anti-imperialist battle.

Militants must immediately take up the stand of Bobby Sands, the hunger striker, in every Labour Party and trade union branch. Resolutions must be moved calling on the government to concede, immediately and in practice, the 5 demands, in particular the right of the prisoners to wear their own clothes and not to do prison work. We must also demand of Labour MPs that they put down an Early Day Motion in Parliament which insists that the government concede to the prisoners' demands.

There is a great responsibility on the Labour Party NEC to mobilise the party in support of the prisoners. Also the TUC must be forced to break from its policy of harassing those active on the Irish question such as Tameside trades council and begin organising activity designed to make Thatcher concede. The government must be forced to honour their promises. They must be forced to concede the 5 demands. The battle must go on until these political prisoners have won political status.

The LWR Irish section of the FI(IC) which played a crucial role in organising strike action in Ireland during the last hunger strike has now restarted its campaign. The SLG will be fighting for the broadest solidarity action in Britain to support the prisoners' 5 demands and to call for political status. As the British section of the FI(IC) we recognise the international significance of the hunger strike and its importance in the battle to oust Thatcher. We salute the courage of the prisoners and call on every labour movement body in Britain to stand by those oppressed by the British ruling class.

- * Political status now!
- * British troops out of Ireland now!
- * Self-determination for the Irish people!
- * British labour movement support the Irish people against Thatcher!