

Socialist Challenge

CARIBBEAN NAVAL THREAT

STOP THATCHER STOP REAGAN

BRITAIN is supporting the increasingly hysterical campaign being waged by the United States government against the revolution in Central America. British ships are participating in a threatening naval exercise off the coast of Cuba called *Operation Safe Pass*.

This exercise will pass within a few miles of Havana, and involve a landing of marines at Guantanamo, America's naval base in Cuba. Britain is going ahead with sending two 'observers' to the fake elections being staged in El Salvador — most European countries have refused to do so.

The naval operation near the Cuban coast comes in the wake of the fantastic allegations about the war in El Salvador made by the head of the CIA, William Casey.

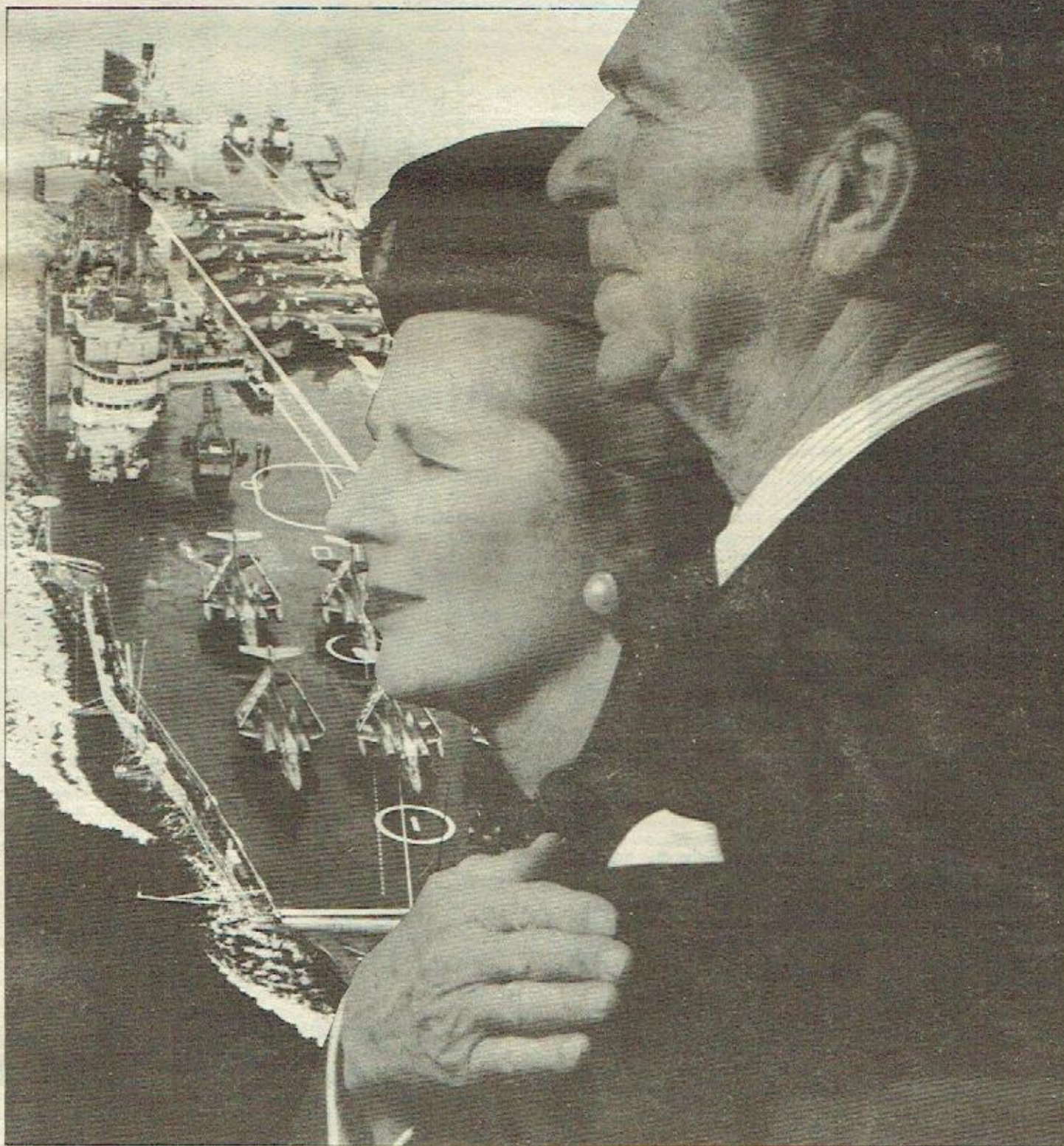
According to Casey's bizarre allegations the war in El Salvador is being run 'entirely from Managua', the capital of Nicaragua. Involved in running the war are supposedly Cubans, Russians, East Germans and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, as well as the Nicaraguans themselves. In fact the only 'outsiders' in El Salvador are the US officers who help run the army.

The reason for this hysteria is not difficult to find. As one top US official put it last week 'in El Salvador we are within inches of losing control over the situation entirely'.

The brutal Salvadorean dictatorship is getting militarily hammered by the left-wing FMLN forces. And in Guatemala the left-wing guerrillas are making increasing headway against the right-wing Garcia regime.

As Mexican president Lopez Portillo pointed out last week, the danger of US intervention in the region is very real.

It is an outrage that Britain, virtually alone among the United States' allies, is giving open support to the United States' policy of repression.



Cricketers caught out



THE TOUR of South Africa by twelve English cricketers to play a series of so-called 'test matches' is a massive propaganda coup for the apartheid regime.

In a sport-crazy country the isolation of South Africa from international sport has been an effective method of hitting the morale of the white rulers

and boosting the confidence of the black population.

It has contributed to the broader struggle against the apartheid regime. The carefully planned tour involves huge finances — some half a million pounds to pay the players alone.

The players have been lured by fat pay cheques to compensate for probably being banned from playing in international cricket in the future.

But their decision to go to South Africa does not depend on money alone. They all know full well that test cricket with South Africa was broken off by the white cricketing nations — England, Australia and New Zealand — only with extreme reluctance.

The governing bodies of the game were faced in the early 1970s with either banning South Africa from test cricket or facing the best cricket players — the West Indians — refusing to play the white teams. In addition it would have meant the Pakistanis and Indians adopting a similar attitude.

Expelling South Africa was therefore necessary to keep international cricket together. But it is an open secret in the cricketing world that the upper class reactionaries who run cricket would love to have South Africa back in the fold.

But there is more hypocrisy involved here. The tour has been loudly condemned by the Tory government. But, as former England cricket captain Tony Greig, a supporter of South Africa, points out, 'the cricketers are only doing what politicians and the establishment do every day — dealing with South Africa'. Exactly.

What really boosts South Africa, and enables the apartheid system to survive, is not sporting links but much more importantly the billions of pounds of investment poured in by the Western capitalist countries, above all Britain, together with the trade and defence links which the Western powers have.

Thatcher will not condemn the English cricketers; neither will she condemn the English bankers and the multinationals who are keeping South Africa afloat.

Sanctions will undoubtedly be taken against the cricketers by the cricket authorities — probably they will be banned from international cricket. This of course is something which we support.

But with the rugby tours by Irish and 'British Lions' teams, and now the cricketers, South Africa has been gradually breaking down the sporting boycott.

So long as business and governments deal with South Africa, it is difficult to persuade athletes to do otherwise. Geoff Boycott, Graham Gooch and company are just doing what British capitalism has been doing for decades — making money out of apartheid.

EL SALVADOR SOLIDARITY DEMONSTRATION SUNDAY 28 MARCH HYDE PARK LONDON

International Women's Day

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 8 March is a tribute to our history and a celebration of our future.

On that day in 1908, in New York, 15,000 women garment workers marched through the streets. These women worked in dirty, suffocating factories ten or twelve hours a day. There were no toilets or teabreaks and talking was forbidden. Many became blind by the age of 25 from sewing tiny beads on to the finery of the wealthy. They marched for equal pay, nurseries for working mothers and the right to organise in trade unions. Two years later Clara Zetkin, revolutionary leader of the German women's movement called on all socialists to celebrate that day as International Women's Day.

How much has changed for women in the last 74 years? In the current economic situation and with the war mongering policies of Thatcher and Reagan, women are suffering disproportionately. The gap between men's and women's pay is as wide as ever — 25 per cent on average (except in Sweden and surprisingly Italy). In Britain women's pay is 60 per cent of men's — a net decrease since the passing of the Equal Pay Act.

Unemployment is increasing twice as fast for women as it is for men, and the Tory government is considering the introduction of measures to stop married women signing on altogether. Capitalism needs women as a reserve army of labour, prepared to take poor conditions and low pay when they're at work and flexible enough to be thrown out of work when there's unemployment.

But will the Tories' plan succeed? A lot has happened and many women have struggled since the heroic example of our sisters in 1908. Women are stronger and they expect more from life. Moreover, increasingly the labour movement has taken up the fight for women's rights.

Only last week the Tories were forced to retreat from prosecuting doctors for giving abortions. Women at Lee Jeans, Plesseys, Hoovers and the Liverpool typists have carried on the fine tradition of women fighting back. They will no longer accept that a woman's place should be in the home — but should be at work and in her union.

Raising demands now which challenge the role of women as a reserve army of labour begins to threaten the Tories' whole policy on unemployment. The Labour Party and the trade unions have to support positive action in favour of women at all levels of employment: recruitment, training and promotion.

Building a massive event on 5 June, the day the Labour Party is organising a women's right to work festival, is in the interests of the whole labour movement. As in 1908, so today, women are often the standard bearers for the working class fightback.

Throughout history women have organised to fight for their rights. International Women's Day is a symbol of that fight. It is a beacon burning for our future.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

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

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

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

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

No truce! No witch hunt!

By Tessa van Gelderen

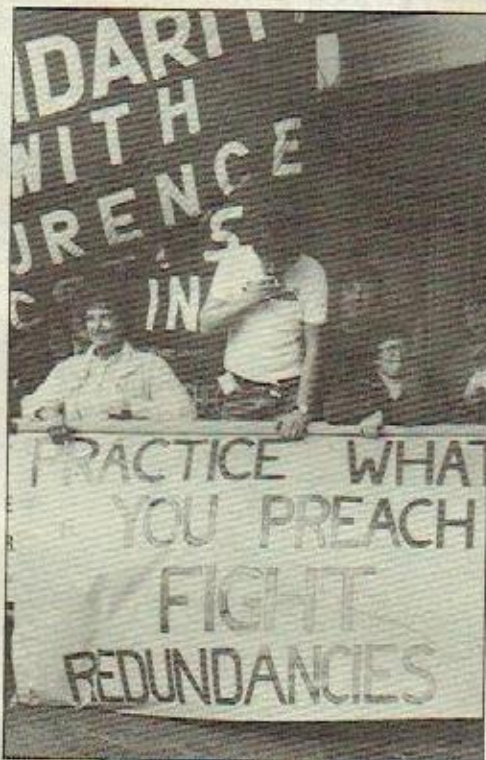
TWO EVENTS happened last Wednesday which at first glance seem unconnected: Militant supporter, Pat Wall, was not endorsed as prospective Labour candidate for Bradford North, and Bruce Page was sacked as editor of the New Statesman.

Now Bruce Page knows a thing or two about parliamentary re-selection. In his own constituency of Islington South, he and others, such as chairperson Ann Page, played a central role in drumming up support for sitting MP George Cunningham. It was no secret that there were plans to replace Cunningham with a candidate more in tune with local party politics. Page went as far as backing Cunningham in the reselection vote despite the MP's refusal to promise to stay in the Labour Party.

One month later Cunningham returned the favour by leaving the party. It was also his way of thanking Michael Foot who had just offered him a place in the shadow cabinet. Michael Foot, of course, has never felt it necessary to condemn such reselections. Instead he has concentrated his fire on the left.

Peter Tatchell from Bermondsey was not endorsed, because of his support for extra-parliamentary activity. And Pat Wall was not endorsed this week because of 'modest irregularities' in the selection process rumoured to be the sounds of a disco penetrating the proceedings. Refusal to pledge to stay in the party does not appear to be an 'irregularity'.

All this only goes to show that the Bishop's Startford truce never existed. The right want to continue the witch hunting that has gone on



No truce for Laurence Scott workers who are fighting union leaders Boyd and Duffy

against the left — against Militant, against Peter Tatchell and Tariq Ali. While the working class is under attack, talk of a truce is both dangerous and futile. We have to openly take

on the turncoats within our movement.

For strikers at Laurence Scott there can be no talk of a truce while union leaders Boyd and Duffy stab them in the back. The same goes for rail workers who have to confront Sid Weighell as well as British Rail and the Tories. For them it is one and the same struggle and no amount of talk of unity can make it otherwise.

What policies Labour fights on and how it achieves those policies are crucial to the fight to get rid of the Tories. That is why the statement issued by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee on behalf of 33 prospective Labour parliamentary candidates which stated that 'extra-parliamentary activity must form an essential part of Labour Party strategy', was welcome. But statements are not enough and these comrades should be building labour movement support for extra-parliamentary activities like the picket line at Laurence Scott.

As the Tories' attacks increase with Tebbit and Heseltine, Labour leaders have to respond. It is not enough, unfortunately, to say as Norman Atkinson does in his article on this page that there is 'a need for the broad left representing both the industrial and political left to meet, go over the ground and acquaint each other with current trends.'

The left knows what the 'current trend' is. It is the attack from the Tories and from the Labour right led by Michael Foot. Unless and until it comes to terms with that question it can issue all the statements and hold all the meetings it likes. The right will walk all over us. There is no truce in the Labour Party; last week's NEC showed that. That is why fighting the witch hunt and supporting workers in struggle cannot be separated.

Labour Liaison '82 is under way

Steering committee to set up simple forum

By Norman Atkinson MP

'LABOUR LIAISON '82' is really a misnomer. Its title suggests yet another organisation of the left. It is nothing of the kind. Perhaps a better name — if names are necessary — would have been something like 'Left Forum'. For that's what it is. A forum of the left for the purpose of authenticating the opinion of the broad left — particularly the industrial left — at any given moment.

The surprising thing is that the necessity for collating the thoughts of like-minded organisations has never occurred to us before. In the past whenever left groups came together they wanted to formalise everything by putting it to a vote. Splits became inevitable — indeed they seem to have been the order of the day — hence the jokes I suppose about the left being the biggest growth industry.

Votes

But in regard to 'Labour Liaison '82' (LL'82 for short) it is not appropriate that votes should be taken. Those attending are not delegates nor do they represent equal numbers, so there is no authoritative basis upon which a vote can be taken. Nor would LL'82 know what to do with such a decision if it made one.

The socialists who attend LL'82 are selected to do so by their own organisations because they represent similar views and experiences to

organisations. The result was very satisfying. Those present became familiar with progressive developments from as far away as Wales and Scotland.

Of course Fleet Street projects the whole thing as

debates reflects the out-of-touch view of the 'Solidarity' leaders. In consequence parliamentary party debates regularly degenerate into over-ambitious personalised contests.

In the words of Tony Benn, the TUC and Annual Conference have now majoritised left opinion. The left, therefore, must never again subconsciously or otherwise minoritise its own work. That is why there is a continuous need for the broad-left representing both the industrial and political left to meet, go over the ground and acquaint each other with current trends.

Science

The Labour Party machinery is complicated and to be effective it has to be synchronised. Familiarity with every aspect of radical opinion is essential. The art of the possible — these days — is nothing less than advanced science.



Norman Atkinson: annual conference only place for policy to be decided

those selecting them and are able to pass on such views to the rest of us.

At County Hall recently 70-odd extremely articulate socialists came together to make known the views of their own

Machiavellian and asks — if it isn't would I recommend the right-wing to do the same?

Of course I would. The lack of reality which so often permeates PLP

Watch

The point is — both the Labour Party itself and the left within it must watch carefully how and where decisions are taken. It must not allow adhoc votes to pre-empt its one main conference. Although the block-vote system is sometimes unfair and weighted against the left, the Annual Conference of the Labour Party is now the only legitimate place for policy and leadership questions to be decided.

Birmingham Labour Party Rally Stop the witch hunt! For a Labour victory!

Wednesday 24 March 8pm
Speakers include Peter Tatchell, Tariq Ali and Albert Bore (prospective Labour candidate for Ladywood)
Digbeth Civil Hall

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist challenge)

International Women's Day

A festival of past and future struggles



South West Lancashire pit head woman 1886, from *Victorian Working Women: Portraits from Life*

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE salutes International Women's Day 1982. As our contribution to the struggle of women for justice and liberation we have organised a series of public meetings across Britain for Mary Zinns, a woman miner in the United States.

It is women like Mary who, with our support, are breaking out of the ghettos, charting new paths and destroying the myth of female inferiority. In so doing they lead the way for all of us.

International Women's Day is born from struggle:

born among the poorest, most deprived and suffering of women in a 1908 strike about 129 women who were burned to death in a fire in New York's garment district.

Since that day 8 March has been used by women to unite on those issues we consider important — war, food, suffrage, abortion, childcare, equal pay, prostitution.

Its history has been marked by mass demonstrations, rallies, meetings and heroic struggles. Unfortunately, it has also been marked by the efforts of official labour and communist parties to trivialise and undermine its significance.

In Britain this year there will be no major event to celebrate women's day, but we can not permit this in 1983. This will be the 75th anniversary of International Women's Day.

We should organise now to call on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, for the TUC and the Labour Party to call a mass international demonstration on 8 March 1983.

Women should take the lead in the fight for

- Jobs not bombs
- A woman's right to work
- A woman's right to choose

Women miners — our history

By Rose Brooks

'MARGARET Pallett was a stout hearty woman of 45, with a very black face. She worked below ground in the pit thrutching corves, from ten years old to eighteen, when the women were turned out.

When I said, 'Did you like it?' She gave me the usual answer: 'like it? Aye! an I'd gaw dahn again, if tha'd let me!'

From *'Victorian Working Women: Portraits from Life'*

Margaret Pallett was one of many women in the 1860s who said they liked working in the mines. Women continued to work secretly, often disguised as men, many years after they were forbidden to work underground in 1842.

Their daughters and granddaughters worked on the surface, at the pithead into the 20th century.

The last two pithead women retired from No 10 Lowca Pit, Harrington in Cumberland on 1 July 1972, 130 years after women were forbidden underground and three years before the Sex Discrimination Act.

Far from allowing women to be miners, the SDA said that, 'No female shall be employed in a job the duties of which ordinarily require the employee to spend a significant proportion of time below ground at a mine which is being worked.'

This was lightly modified in practice in 1978 when the National Coal Board appointed a woman as deputy medical officer for South Wales who goes underground as her work demands.

The Equal Opportunities Commission in 1979 confirmed its support for the ruling of the SDA.

Today, neither the Coal Board nor the National Union of Miners think that women should be allowed to work in the mines.

In the 50s the Coal Board and the NUM agreed that disabled miners should be given preference for pithead jobs and as the women retired they were replaced by men.

In some cases the women were made redundant, given alternative work in canteens, on switchboards or cleaning jobs.

The arguments about whether women should work in the mines began in the 1840s when the appalling conditions were first exposed.

But moral outrage was more prominent than concern for their welfare. Pit women were called 'coarse, licentious wretches.'

The Wigan pithead women who wore trousers under their wide aprons were considered to be outrageous, even though women miners elsewhere continued to wear dresses.

At the same time dresses were attacked because they caused accidents.

Deaths of women were sensa-

tionalised, missing the point that safety conditions for all miners didn't exist.

A favourite argument was that women made jobs dangerous because they were not strong enough to save themselves in an emergency.

The pithead women scorned these criticisms and were proud of their strength.

They knew what women doing manual work always find out, that many jobs do not require Amazonian strength so much as learning a knack — how to lift and carry with the minimum of effort.

Pithead women were needed as a source of cheap labour for the coal owners. For a long time the women had the support of their fathers and families because it was quite usual in mining areas to have a daughter at the pithead whose wage was an important part of the family income.

However official union policy supported their exclusion.

As a Wigan miner put it: 'Strip the women of their clogs and flannel trousers and let the unemployed men of Wigan step into them and take their places at the pitheads and instead of women receiving 1/6d let men have 2/8 or 3/- for the same labour and see if Wigan does not improve.'

Pithead women earned one third of men's wages, being excluded from the mining unions until WWI.

The unions knew the owners were using women to divide the community but they came to the wrong conclusions by excluding women from all mining work.

Constant attempts were made to amend mining legislation to stop women working in the mines. When an attempt was made in 1911, the Wigan pithead women called a meeting of 2000 supporters.

Eliza Neal, a pithead worker, moved a resolution against any interference and asked local MPs for support.

Their cause was taken up by the suffragettes in Wigan and the pithead women began to join a union, the National Federation of Women Workers, which intervened in several local wage disputes.

All attempts until 1975 to exclude women from the mines were defeated. It is ironic that moves which women fought successfully for over 100 years should slide in as part of legislation which was claimed to be in the interests of women.

Recommended reading: *By the Sweat of Their Brow, Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines*, by Angela V John: Croom Helm London.

Victorian Working Women: Portraits from Life, Michael Hiley; Gordon Fraser.



Woman miner from US tours Britain

Meet Mary Zinns of the United Mineworkers of America and the Socialist Workers Party, USA

THIS TOUR, sponsored by Revolution Youth and Socialist Challenge is building up support as preparations for International Women's Day and the 5 June Labour Party event on women's rights draw near.

Mary Zinns will be meeting Shadow Minister for Women's Affairs, Joan Lester, and other MPs at the House of Commons.

Miners' leaders in Yorkshire will be discussing with Mary in spite of official NUM policy which is against women going down the mines.

Make sure you meet up with Mary at the following meetings throughout Britain.

CARDIFF — Saturday 6 March at 2.30, under auspices of the Wales Women's Rights Committee, Friends Meeting House.

MANCHESTER — Monday 8 March, Lesser Free Trade Hall, Peters Street, 8pm. Organised by the National Abortion Campaign and the Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work.

BIRMINGHAM — Tuesday 9 March, see ad this page.

GLASGOW — Wednesday 10 March — Partick Burgh Hall, Burgh Hall Street.

EDINBURGH — Thursday 11 March, Chaplaincy Centre, Edinburgh University, Bristol St at 7.30pm.

LONDON — Friday 12 March, Camden Centre off Euston Rd, ad this page.

MANSFIELD — Sunday 14 March, Civic Theatre Lounge at 3.30pm.

SHEFFIELD, BOLSOVER, NOTTINGHAM, LEEDS — 14-17 March.

SOUTHAMPTON — Thursday 18 March, Conference Room, Civic Centre at 7.45.

BOURNEMOUTH — Friday 19 March, fringe meeting at Women's TUC.

For further details phone Judith Arkwright at 01-359 8371.

RALLY FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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



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

Birmingham International Women's Day Public meeting

Tuesday 9 March at 7.30 The Fighting Cocks pub Mosely, Birmingham

Speakers

Mary Zinns, United Mineworkers of America
Mary Crawford, on women in Ireland
Letitia on women in Latin America
Virginia on women in El Salvador
Mags Lamplough, Revolution Youth
Banner Theatre Group with their play Women at Work
£1.50 unwaged, £1 unwaged

Socialist Challenge/Revolution Youth weekend school Women's oppression and the fight to build a women's movement 13/14 March, County Hall, Waterloo, SE1, Creche provided Open to all Socialist Challenge supporters: Tickets: £3 for IWD rally and school from J Arkwright, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

NHS CHARGES TO OVERSEAS VISITORS

Racist attack on free health service

By Janet Maguire, secretary South East London Medical Branch ASTMS in her personal capacity

THE PROPOSAL by the government to charge overseas visitors for health care is another attack — this time wrapped in a racist package — on the principle of a national health service that provides free health care for all those who need it.

Tory propaganda paints a lurid picture of foreigners descending on Britain to abuse our health service, insinuating that wealthy oil sheiks get treated on the NHS.

This is nonsense! In my ten years as a health worker I have yet to see any wealthy sheik, or for that matter any wealthy foreigner, being treated on the NHS.

Private

The wealthy overseas visitor, like our 'own' rich, prefer the seclusion and pampering that private treatment dishes out to its well-off clients, than to mixing with the 'plebs'

having treatment on the NHS.

The proposals will victimise black people. How do you decide if someone is British or not? People with black or brown faces are the ones who will be interrogated about their nationality, and whose passports will be demanded.

This will mean that until they can prove their nationality their treatment will be deferred, which could have serious or even fatal consequences.

This is another step in the direction towards establishing the 'principle' that health care is just a commodity like anything else and should be paid for as such.

Thatcher has sent her advisors to the United States to cast their eyes over their method of health care. American capitalism has a simple way of dealing with running its medical system.

If you are unlucky enough, or poor enough, not to have insurance, tough luck, you do not get any treatment, even if it might mean that you die!

Such a scheme must warm the hearts of the Thatcher monetarists.

Ever since the last Labour government started cutting the health service, private insurance schemes have been booming in Britain.

Now with a Tory government in office the private sector is having a field day.

By the end of 1980, the number of private health insurance subscribers totalled 1,647,000, which

if you include their dependents represents a privately insured population of around 3.5 million. This represents an increase in one year of 29 per cent.

A delighted BUPA is predicting that by 1985 ten million people will be in private health schemes.

Private beds already account for seven per cent of all available beds in British hospitals.

Buy

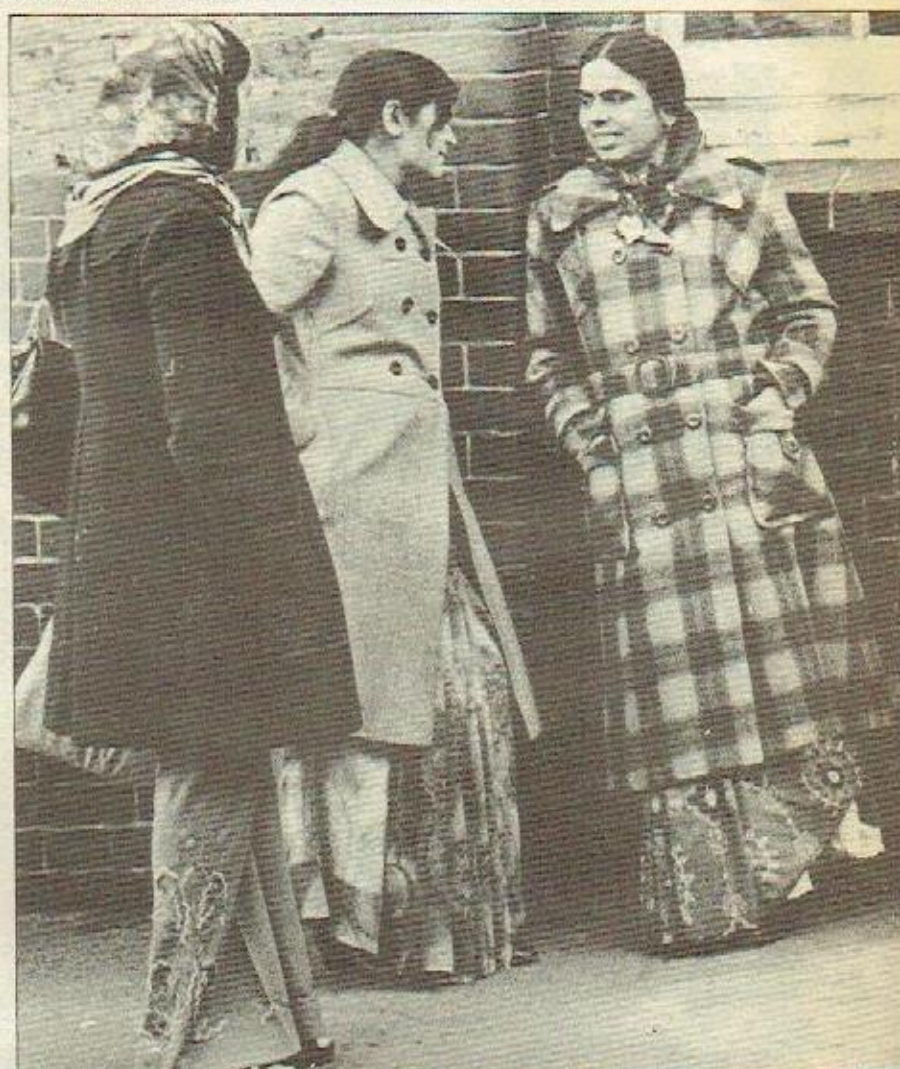
If this attack on the NHS is to be fought, we have to start from the vital principle that the NHS must provide a completely free health service to all those who need it — whether they are British citizens or not.

Furthermore we must be against all private schemes which enable the rich to buy their way to the top of the queue at the expense of the working people.

These laws have to be challenged.

The need for a general political campaign based on national unity of the various defence campaigns was stressed.

While Labour Parties and trade unions were denounced as racist by some participants, a delegate from Leicester emphasised their



New proposals will subject black people to interrogation

Private medicine also leeches off the NHS, taking away trained personnel.

The trade unions and the Labour Party must

experience on winning local Labour Party and trade union support. This had drawn in the black community, particularly winning the consistent involvement of the Indian Workers Association in the committee.

A spokesperson from the Bradford 12 National Mobilising Committee stated that the struggle for democratic rights

resist these measures, unlike the electrical union, the EETPU which has negotiated a private scheme for its members.

The Labour Party must

of victimised black people and youth was a common struggle with all working class organisations against the Tory government.

No matter how slow the labour movement has been about taking up defence of black people it has to be won to their side.

The immediate focus of the campaign is to build sup-

be committed to nationalising all private hospitals and clinics and rescinding any legislation that compels visitors to pay for health care.

port now and to oppose the use of conspiracy laws as a political attack on the black community.

Petitions, statements of support, background material, affiliation forms, model resolutions are available from Free the Bradford 12, National Mobilising Committee, Box JK, 59 Cookridge St, Leeds 2.

Bradford 12 national conference

Unity needed to defend victims of Tory police

By Kumer Sen and Chris Guthrie

A CALL went out from a conference of black and anti-racist activists at the weekend to build the national demonstration in Leeds on 3 April to free the Bradford 12.

The 12 Asian youths who were arrested during the July uprisings last year for 'conspiring to make explosives' are due for trial on 26 April at Leeds Crown Court.

All will plead not guilty, but if convicted can be sentenced to ten to fifteen years' imprisonment.

Their national network of defence committees brought together 150 people to discuss broader questions facing the black community since the rebellions and specifically how to build the campaign.

with the rebellions in the mainly black inner city areas, with the mobilisations against the Nationality Bill and the New Cross Massacre, with the Anwar Ditta victory and successful campaigns against deportation.

Defence lawyers for the Bradford 12 stated that police were deliberately intimidating the black communities and youth.

Robert Spicer, who had defended the St Paul's Bristol cases, pointed out that conspiracy laws had previously been used against activists in the Irish republican movement and trade unions.



One of many local marches to free the Bradford 12

Bill

There was a general consensus that the Thatcher government is attacking the democratic rights of the black communities through the Nationality Bill, through continued harassment by the police using trumped up charges, under the guise of seeking 'illegal immigrants' and by the increased arming of the police under the pretence of preserving law and order.

But as the opening chairperson said, '1981 was a year of black political action'

Free the Bradford 12 National demonstration

Saturday 3 April
Assemble 1pm in Savile Mount Park
opposite the Trades Club
off Chapeltown Road,
Leeds 7.

Rally and cultural event in Leeds on 25 April
Mass picket of Leeds Crown Court on 26 April

UPDATES

● A BLACK civil rights movement, *Black Rights (UK)* has been launched by the *Caribbean Times* newspaper and the majority of Britain's ethnic minority organisations.

One of its first projects, starting on 1 April is a 24-hour Help-on-Arrest Scheme. Barrister Rudy Narayan is to be convener and first director.

Its aims include: implementation of a British Bill of Rights; assisting black people to fight successfully at all levels of the legal system.

Black Rights (UK) will be sponsoring a delegated conference on the 20/21 June 1982 in conjunction with various leaders of the American civil rights movement.

Black Rights (UK) can be contacted c/o Rudy Narayan, Tower House, 139-149 Fonthill Road, London N4.

● THE ONLY black firefighter in Lancashire who was sacked for allegedly failing to salute an officer and appealed to Home Secretary on the grounds of unfair dismissal has won Whitelaw's support.

Whitelaw has now reduced Roland Steven's dismissal to a reprimand.

● PRESSURE is building for dropping of charges against Newton Rose, the East London black youth sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of a white National Front supporter.

It seems that the judge — who retired two weeks after the trial — completely contravened legal rules by giving the jury an ultimatum to give their verdict in 15 minutes or be dismissed.

The Newton Rose Defence Committee can be contacted c/o 76 Stroud Green Rd, London N4, phone 01-272 4889.

Picket outside the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, London WC2 on Monday/Tuesday 8/9 March from 9.45am when Newton Rose and his three friends will have their appeal heard.

● The Home Office is threatening to deport Mrs Santosh and her two children of Hounslow West London because it claims that she was not 'head of household' when she came to this country two years ago and that she practised 'material deception'.

Their 'proof' is Mrs Santosh's involuntary residence with her brother-in-law by whom she had two children after the death of her own husband and from whom, she says, she received only violence and abuse.

The local Law Centre has now taken up Mrs Santosh's case and she has been granted extra time to challenge the deportation threat.

Protests against the racist and sexist immigration laws should be made from black, anti-racist, women's, trade union and Labour Party organisations.

Write protests to: Timothy Raison, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.

● Mohinder Singh came to Britain in the early seventies, is married with two children who were both born here.

In early November 1981, while coming back from London he was stopped by police on the motorway. He continued his journey but half an hour later was stopped again and arrested as an alleged 'illegal' entrant.

The Home Office is now trying to deport Mohinder to India — away from his family.

This flagrant use of police computer files must be stopped.

Public meeting Birmingham: Saturday 6 March at 4pm, The Ark, Cavendish Road Community Centre, Cavendish Road, Rotten Park.

Contact the defence committee at 346 Soho Rd, Birmingham 20 or phone 551 4679.

● SOME of the circumstances surrounding the killing of Terence May in South London are emerging at the trial at the Old Bailey of 15 black youth.

The defence is claiming that the pub which was attacked prior to Terry May's death was an organising centre of National Front forays into the local black community.

Tories leave young people to 'rot'

By Toni Gorton

IN A FURIOUS exchange last week Tory Employment Secretary, Norman Tebbit accused Tony Benn of creating a 'time bomb of dissent and encouraging wild expectations' among youth.

In reply Benn came back: 'What are these wild expectations? We are a rich country ... is it a wild expectation that people should have the right to work?'

In a further statement Tony Benn declared that 'the real crime is that three million people are out of work and that while the Cabinet is spending £10bn on Trident, it leaves young people to rot on the streets.'

This confrontation between the policies of the Tory government and the Labour left arose from the 3000 strong youth lobby of parliament on 25 February organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists and the YOP Trainees Rights Campaign.

The lobby and rally highlighted the dangers faced by young people under this Tory government.

They showed that young people face:

- unemployment rising to 50 per cent in some areas
- government subsidy to the bosses which encourages them to pay their young workers less than £40 a week, in some cases as little as £10.
- risk of physical harm because trainees aren't covered by the Health and Safety at Work Act.



At the YOPs lobby on 25 February

- militarisation through army-run holiday camps for the young unemployed.
 - economic compulsion by withdrawal of social security unless youth go on training schemes.
- In the declaration presented to Employment Secretary Norman Tebbit on behalf of the lobby, the

possibility of more inner city unrest was pointed out: 'You seem to be wanting to guarantee social upheaval and a sharp rise in strikes on the one hand,

and despite the efforts of socialists to channel the anger of youth into positive political channels, the real danger of a repetition of last summer's urban unrest on the other.'

Four main demands were made of the government: trade union rates of pay for trainees; guaranteed jobs at the end of the scheme; free travel to work for YOPs; and five weeks paid holiday a year. Youth don't have to be 'trained' to sweep floors and wash dishes which is what many of them do under the YOPs.

They need genuine skill training on socially useful projects — building the schools, hospitals, homes and railways.

The trade unions have to recognise the threat to the working class as a whole if the union-busting tactics of the Tories are

unchallenged.

If the bosses are paid to hire non-unionised young workers in place of unionised workers, then the affects will be enormous, both for the super-exploited youth and the organised strength of the working class.

Already government wage cutting over the last two years threaten to reduce real income to 40 per cent of 1980 levels.

Immediate tasks for the forthcoming LPYS conference to defend the rights of youth and the trade unions include:

- a massive campaign to recruit young unemployed into the unions;
- the right of trainees to elect their own representatives;
- the LPYS to lead the labour movement campaign for unionisation of YOPs.

What's the truth about St Saviour's

GIRL, 10, LED SCHOOL TERROR GANGS
MAGGIE CANE led school wreckers
PARENTS

ST SAVIOUR'S Junior School in Toxteth reopened on 1 March amid a welter of publicity. As pupils and their parents walked the gauntlet of security guards, the new headmaster, Arnold Cowman, was sworn in as a 'disciplinarian with a will of iron'.

What's the truth about St Saviour's? Is Sharon Walker really the 'big, black and really nasty' 11-year old, the 'Miss Big who ran a reign of terror' as described by the Daily Star? Or has the gutter press embarked on a campaign of racist, anti-working class lies designed to prepare the way for more police repression?

MARK TURNBULL, a teacher, and PAUL ADAMS, a parent — both from the Toxteth area — give their views.

OVER the past fortnight, the local and national media have unleashed another witch-hunt against the Toxteth district of Liverpool. The immediate targets are the pupils of St Saviour's Junior School and their parents. But it was an excuse for a more general orgy of slander and abuse against the area.

Last summer's rebellion was a clear warning to the government and local authority that the people of Toxteth, especially the youth, were not prepared to accept the burden of the present economic crisis.

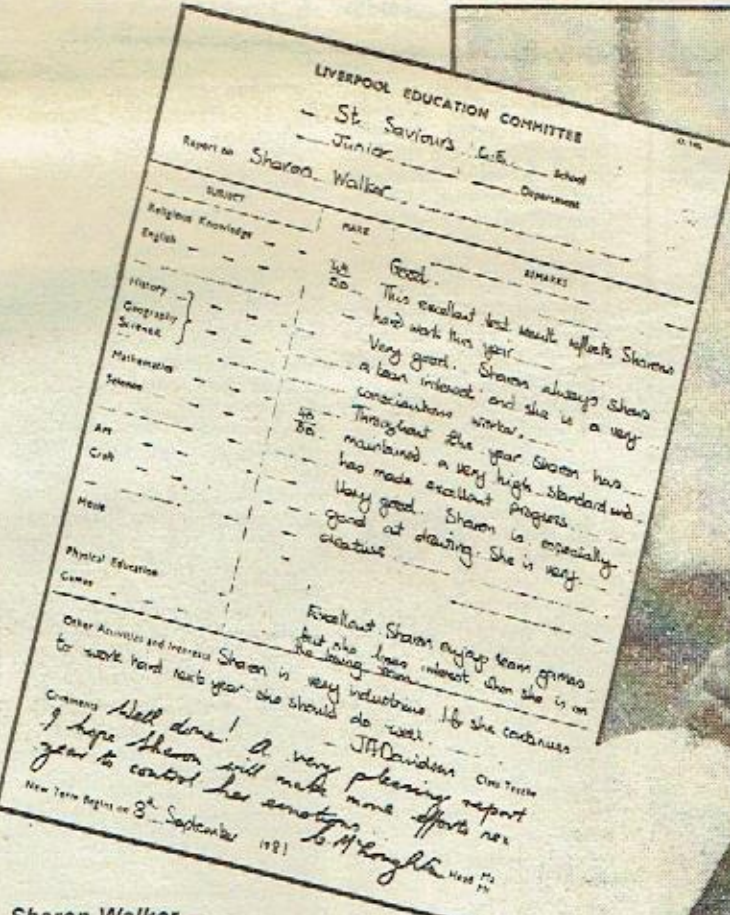
Incidents that are commonplace in any school — fighting and bullying — have been distorted out of all proportion.

Stories about 'minimafias' and protection rackets are the work of the lurid imagination of the gutter press.

A more credible picture emerged from the 28 February *Sunday Times* which explained that blaming the children or parents was pointless.

The *Sunday Times* pointed out that in the immediate period leading up to the disturbances there was a severe crisis in staffing which was not dealt with by the local authority.

Last summer six experienced teachers left the school and were not replaced by permanent staff. In December the school secretary — a person vital to the running of the school — was severely injured and the new depu-



Sharon Walker — victim of racist gutter press

ty head also went on sick leave.

This left the head — a person already suffering from high blood pressure — taking on full-time teaching, supervision of school lunches and the headmaster's responsibilities as well.

Again, the *Sunday Times* debunked another myth when it described Sharon Walker as a 'bright, highly imaginative 11 year old who is good at games'.

Sharon's mother, who is unemployed and trying to bring up four children by herself, finds it incredible that if the charges made by the *Daily Star* were true that she has never been contacted by the school.

Claims that school violence follows under-use of the cane can't be pursued in this case. St Saviour's hit the headlines in 1977 for being a school that used the cane. Rather it is clear that caning caused violence in the school.

Tom Scott, of the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment, told us: 'In the incident that sparked off the riot in the school seven children had been subjected to a mass caning.'

'We have information that this is not the first time groups of children have been caned.'

Both teachers and council officials knew that trouble had been building up in the weeks leading up to the half term but many

parents only got to know about it on the television news. This was due to the lack of communication between the school and parents.

Some parents had begun to organise the parents' association but had received little enthusiasm from the headmaster.

As well as the smears against St Saviour's, the local paper has waged a consistent campaign of character assassination against members of the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee.

The fear in the community is that there is a deliberate campaign to justify any action that the police and the authority might take in the coming



months.

In an attempt to deflect blame from the Tory government and the Liberal Council, the media have yet again used the accusation that left wing groups have stirred up trouble.

Nothing is said about the trouble caused by Thatcher's policies. Since she made Michael Heseltine the Minister of Merseyside, he has stood by his pledge that the problems will not be solved by spending money.

Indeed he has cut back on Liverpool as much as anywhere else. £25m in grants are to be cut, two thirds of which are to come from education.

Liverpool branch secretary of the National

Union of Teachers, Jim Ferguson, said: 'We thought after the riots the council would see that we need extra help in these areas, but just the reverse. They are taking teachers out.'

Not surprisingly, the branch recently voted to take industrial action against the Liberal-controlled council's policy on relief teachers.

A meeting has been arranged between the parents and council officials on the first day back after the holidays, but it is already clear that Tory and Liberal proposals of more cuts, more discipline and more police, offer no answer to the problems facing the working people and youth of Toxteth.

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US Prepares Central American intervention

By Paul Lawson

THE UNITED STATES is re-doubling its preparations for possible military action in Central America and the Caribbean. When the new Nicaraguan ambassador to the United States presented his credentials to President Reagan last week, Reagan took the unheard-of step of launching into a tirade against him, threatening all kinds of possible consequences if Nicaragua didn't 'shape up'.

In particular, Reagan stated that the United States was 'Dissatisfied' with the 'human rights' performance of Nicaragua, in particular in relation to the 'private sector of the economy' and the Miskito indians.

As Megan Martin reports on page seven, the issue of the Miskito indians is being used by reactionary forces both inside and outside Nicaragua to whip up hysteria against the Sandinista government.

Fate

The US's concern with the fate of the 'private sector' — ie, the increasingly disloyal remnants of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie — requires no great explanation. The US is always concerned for the 'human rights' of capitalists!

Reagan's direct warning to Nicaragua is part and parcel of the propaganda offensive being waged against the revolu-

tionary forces in the region, and has to be seen in the light of the extensive military preparations being made by exile forces in co-operation with the American, Honduran, Guatemalan and Argentinian governments for a possible invasion of the country.

In addition to the preparations being made for possible military action against Nicaragua, the

United States has revealed in the past week that warships have been sent to the waters off El Salvador.

An electronic surveillance ship has been sent to monitor developments in the war. Obviously the intercepted radio messages from the guerrillas won't be kept for the consumption of the CIA, but passed on to the American advisors who currently provide ten per cent of the Salvadorean officer corps for use in the war.

Force

The US is also sending a naval task force, the first ship of which is the destroyer USS Deyo, to the Gulf of Fonseca between Nicaragua and El Salvador. The task of this force will be to interrupt arms supplies going to the Salvadorean guerrilla movement.

In his speech to this week's meeting of the Organisation of American States Reagan revealed that a third of the total aid going to the Caribbean basin from the US this year will go to El Salvador.

Reagan's speech was described in advance as putting forward a multi-million aid-scheme for the area. It turned out to be the announcement of Reagan's war-chest to keep communism at bay. For the United States



and the reactionary forces in El Salvador the March elections provide a last desperate attempt to provide the regime with some legitimacy. Britain is to send two observers to follow the elections, while many other countries have refused — a clear indication of the support which the Thatcher government gives to Reagan's central American policy.

One of the central demands of the El

Salvador demonstration on 28 March will be that Britain dissociate itself from US policy and follow

the example of France and Mexico in recognising the FDR/FMLN forces as legitimate political forces.



EL SALVADOR SOLIDARITY DEMONSTRATION

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

Pay your money and take your choice

By Bob Pennington

YOU CAN stop moaning about the exorbitant cost of nukes. The Reagan administration has offered the British government a real bargain. We can now buy the US Trident D5 missiles at knock-down prices which start at around £200-£300m in 1983-84 and will reach the modest sum of £800m by 1987-88, cutting our missile bill to a mere £8000m.

In order to take advantage of this super-sales bargain we might have to give up a few luxuries. As Mrs Thatcher — that prudent housekeeper for Britain's purse — never tires of telling us, there is only so much money and it must be spent wisely and well.

Cost

So with guided missiles coming in at £85m apiece — a little more than the cost of three hospitals with 1000 beds each — clearly we can't waste the

money on extras like these.

When a Tornado aircraft costs £10m you can hardly expect the government to lash that amount out on 833 houses.

Next time you have to fork out Christ knows how much for a train trip console yourself with the knowledge that instead of 56 advanced passenger trains at £140m, the government has wisely opted to invest the £140m on a nuclear hunter killer submarine.

Mr Murdoch's *Sunday Times* is very excited at Mr Reagan's February sales offer and even thinks Mrs Thatcher could present it as 'securing or even creating jobs in Britain.' With the redundancies Mr Murdoch is planning among his staff he probably thinks a few new jobs would not go amiss.

Mind you, if D5 starts doing what it was made for, the last thing we need worry about is whether or not some British company is getting a piece of the ac-

tion from Reagan's nuclear weapons.

Anyhow the benefits do not lie in job creation. Surely Mrs Thatcher has explained often that the last thing she wants is overstuffed industries. That is why nutty schemes to build more hospitals, schools, trains, buses and other such social luxuries are out. They not only pamper people but because they are labour intensive they create more jobs.

What is the use of working for nearly three years to get all those people on the dole, only to spoil it by setting them back to work again?

Cash

Money into attachments — that's different. The cash goes into capital intensive industry where profits are high and sophisticated technology replaces labour. Britain is finally getting its priorities right — more and more money for nuclear weapons, bigger profits for the arm's manufacturers, and no fancy luxuries like welfare and

↑ JOBS NOT BOMBS ↓


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Nicaragua: the threat of counter-revolution

By Megan Martin

IN RECENT weeks the international press has carried reports of alleged massacres of Miskito Indians by Sandinista troops in the north-eastern part of Nicaragua.

The bourgeois press has scarcely reported the denials of these claims by the Nicaraguan and Honduran authorities, and the UN Commission on refugees. Instead there have been further stories of an offensive begun by the Sandinistas to foil a plan by the Miskitos to secede.

What is really happening on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast? What is going on round the border with Honduras?

Part of the answer is simple. Bands of ex-Somocista National Guards — trained in Florida — are operating from camps in Honduras. They have carried out a string of murders, rapes, robberies and kidnappings. No one denies the existence of these bands.

The North American connection is also clear. A new training camp for Nicaraguan and Cuban exiles seeking to overthrow those governments was opened with a public celebration in Florida on 27 December.

Some sections of the Honduran army have been operating with the counter-revolutionaries. On 29 December a Honduran army plane crashed at Puerto Lempira, just outside Nicaragua on Honduras' Atlantic coast. Among those on the plane was Steadman Fagoth, a

former leader of Nicaragua's Miskito population and now in exile.

The Miskitos are the largest of three Indian groups — the other two are the Sumos and the Ramas — which, along with black, English-speaking descendants of slaves, make up the majority of the population of Nicaragua's Atlantic coast.

This 'coast' comprises the entire eastern 56 per cent of the country but has only nine per cent of the population. It is a totally separate reality culturally, linguistically, politically and historically.

The Atlantic coast was never affected by the Spanish Conquest which took place in the rest of the region in the 16th century. The first visitors of any number or frequency were English buccaneers.

Later, the English established sugar plantations and lumber camps in the area and, after their capture of Jamaica, brought in thousands of black slaves to work. The coastal area, known as Mosquitia, became a British protectorate.

On the Pacific side, Nicaragua gained its independence from Spain in 1821, and, after a short time as part of the United Province of Central America, it became an independent nation in 1828. In 1860, England withdrew the status of 'protectorate' for the Mosquitia and the area became a 'reserve' under Nicaragua with the right of self-government.

But, in the last years of the 19th century, as US mining, timber and banana interests grew in the area, a declaration of the 'Reincorporation of the Mosquitia' was made by the pro-US President of Nicaragua, Zelaya.

The indigenous people have never since really recognised the artificial territorial boundaries created by the Europeans and 'The Mosquitia' extended well into what is now Honduras. People freely crossed the Rio Coco and families lived and farmed on both sides.

All during the Somocista years the Atlantic coast was more or



less ignored by the Managua government. Even the presence of the National Guard was limited. Somoza's interest in the area was concentrated on a propaganda campaign, encouraged by the US, to convince the coastal people that their greatest enemy was Cuba. 'War Games' were held in the area, supposedly in preparation for a Cuban attack. The culmination of all this was the launching of the Bay of Pigs operation from Puerto Cabezas in 1961.

Victory

Immediately after the victory, the few American companies still operating on the coast either pulled out or were nationalised. The new government was faced with factories and machinery in disrepair, unavailability of spare parts, and a lack of trained management and technical personnel. And the population's low

political consciousness meant they were unwilling to undergo the wait or the sacrifices necessary to turn things around.

This, combined with some serious mistakes on the part of the Sandinistas, has created considerable problems on the coast. Probably the biggest mistake, now readily admitted by the Sandinistas, was in naming to the Council of State, Steadman Fagoth, a young Miskito leader.

Fagoth was representing the indigenous organisation, MISURASATA (Miskito, Rama, Sumo and Sandinista together) which has been formed with the encouragement of the FSLN after the victory. Through this action the Sandinistas helped to make Fagoth a hero to the Miskito people.

Then in February 1981 Fagoth and other leaders of MISURASATA were arrested. Fagoth was accused of fostering counter-revolutionary plans and

was also identified as having been an informer for Somoza's security force. But as far as the local people were concerned he was their leader and they protested his arrest.

Finally, the government freed him and within a few days he had crossed over into Honduras. He continued to influence the coastal people — mostly through the radio station, Radio 15 de septiembre, operated by the Somocista counter-revolutionaries in Honduras.

Combat

Its broadcasts are received all along the coast and there is no effective combat to this propaganda. Communications media is almost non-existent. Bluefields is the only place on the Atlantic coast with telephone and television (which is received principally from Costa Rica).

There are no local newspapers and, in the

north, only the bourgeois opposition paper, *La Prensa*, arrives.

Yet the achievements of the Sandinistas in two years, given the tremendously limited resources, are considerable. Villages are receiving medical provision for the first time. Over 12,000 adults learned to read and write in the recent literacy campaign in the local languages of Miskito, Sumo, English and Spanish. The Sandinistas are completing the first road to link the country's two coasts. Many municipalities are receiving electricity for the first time.

The revolution is struggling to meet the needs of the indigenous people but the need for a military presence against the counter-revolutionary activity heightens the very real dangers for the people there. The Nicaraguans have called for international observers to go into the area and tell the world the real situation.



Miskito Indians: used as a pawn by counter-revolutionaries in Nicaragua

Stop Reagan!

ON 7 JUNE Ronald Reagan comes to Britain.

This is the man who is trying to 'save' El Salvador from communism — by propping up the most barbarous and corrupt military regime in Central America and, as he made clear in his speech last Wednesday to the Organisation of American states, by flattening its people with American military might.

This is the man who has launched a new arms race on the world by boosting American military spending by seven per cent each year, to the point where by 1984 his administration will have spent one and a half trillion dollars on arms — 34 per cent of its entire budget.

This is the man who is demanding that American Cruise missiles should be used to turn Britain into the biggest aircraft carrier in history, and who wants to make Europe the cockpit of a horrifying nuclear conflagration.

This is the man who has launched monetarism on American working people, imposing cuts as vicious as Thatcher's and boosting unemployment to seven million.

Reagan, like Thatcher, is a rich per-

son's ruler. 86 per cent of the tax benefits he enacted through Congress will benefit families earning more than \$20,000 and two thirds of his cuts in social benefits will be taken from families poorer than this, according to the *New York Herald Tribune*.

Thatcher and Reagan are the terrible twins of imperialism. Thatcher has thrown Britain four square behind Reagan's proposals for a Rapid Deployment Force to put down world revolution. Hers is the only European government to lend support to the phony elections being sponsored by Reagan in El Salvador on 28 March.

Reagan's visit will be used to consolidate the 'special relationship' between the British and American governments — a relationship which means Bombs not Jobs for hundreds of millions of working people the world over.

Give the man a warm welcome. The Greater London Council of Trades Councils has called for a demonstration against him on 7 June in London.

Let's make it the biggest demonstration a visiting head of state has ever seen.

Riot Budget—we name the culprit

A BUDGET

By Alan Freeman
(All quotations taken from Fleet Street coverage of the Toxteth school riot)

The world is today in uproar over revelations that rebellion in riot-torn Britain is being fomented by an anonymous 50 year old schoolgirl. Fleet Street has refused to speak out for fear of reprisals. But this week, in an exclusive exposé, we name the tiny tot behind the terror: HER NAME IS MARGARET THATCHER

This hooligan in blue chiffon and her crew of infant muggers plan to hold the entire country to ransom.

'My children tell me it is one particular group who are causing all the trouble, led by a very tough girl,' said a terrified mum. 'She beats up other kids, thumps them until they do what she says,' said another too scared to be named.

From her Downing Street hideout 'Iron Maggie' is plotting her latest coup, code-named 'Budget'.

Classmate 'Tiny' Rowland and his squad of bankers, bribed to the gills on the proceeds of property looted from the ill-fated Amersham school, plan to bankrupt the nation's parents with insatiable demands for cash for their bloated lockers.

Bootboy Tebbit will then kick off a new wave of vandalism as hordes of blue-helmeted six-year olds, egged on by ringleader 'Judge Dread' Denning, descend on Britain's factories in helicopters and lorries, armed to the teeth with iron bars and wearing balaclavas, tear the machinery to bits and drive off with their loot to destinations unknown.

Despair reigns. 'The whole class

lives in terror,' explained a teacher. 'My ten-year old son stole £10 from his father to pay off the protection,' said one distraught mother.

Schoolchildren who do not fall in line are to be herded into military-style 'holiday camps' as slave labour, or rounded up by mini-mafioso Jim 'mad monk' Prior and sent to Ireland to starve and beat their friends to death.

Law-abiding citizens are outraged. 'Violence must be met with violence,' said Anthony Steen, Tory MP for Wavertree next to riot-hit Toxteth.

But teachers and parents alike are living in the icy grip of fear. The diminutive despot's leading henchman — 'Environment' Minister Heseltine, who prides himself on his ape-man image — is already ransacking classrooms, burning books, and knocking down buildings.

Drunk with power, he plans to double his demands on the entire travelling folk of London. Classmate 'Spiderman' Parker has been narrowly prevented from closing down the entire railway network of the country.

But the mini-hoodlums' plans have a sinister background. We can now reveal that they are manipulated by shadowy outside forces seeking world domination.

Defence Minister 'Nott of the Fourth', Maggie's chief protectioneer, has swung a daring secret deal with cowboy adventurer Ronald Reagan, self-styled President of America. In a breathtakingly ambitious scheme — code-named 'Trident' — the duo plan to sell off all Britain's houses, schools and hospitals at knock down prices in return for the most gigantic arsenal of fireworks ever assembled in one place.

Come November Iron Maggie and her chums will board a Freddie Laker Jumbo, fly off to a Caribbean tax haven, and blow the country to kingdom come.

We say 'Stop them now!'



The press is rife with speculation about the budget. Will Howe cut taxes? Will he reflate? One thing is sure: working people will get nothing from him.

The Tories came to office claiming they would cut taxes. But their own Tax and Price Index shows what has happened: taxes have gone up for all but the very rich from a quarter to a third of gross earnings, so that living standards have dropped dramatically. Howe wants to repeat this 'achievement'. Brian Grogan looks at the background.

Last year production fell by 15 per cent — the biggest drop in history. With the economy inching out of recession, it is obvious that Tory regret is sheer hypocrisy. In 1981 profits, productivity and unemployment all went up while real wages and public sector spending went down.

The secret was not Howe's budget but mass unemployment. The Manpower Services Commission has confirmed the TUC's estimate of four million out of work.

The fact is that unemployment is the only way the Tories know to get productivity up. Last year this rose by nearly ten per cent in manufacturing. Labour costs per unit of output, which were rising by 25 per cent a year in 1980, are now rising by only 2 per cent per year. Both these figures are better than any of Britain's rivals including Japan.

But this wasn't done by improving Britain's machinery. Manufacturing investment is twenty per cent down on 1980 and still falling. It was done on the backs of the working class.

Hours worked per week have risen by eight per cent and if overtime was eliminated 880,000 jobs would be created. Wage rises were less than six per cent in private industry.

In short, you worked harder — if you had a job — and got less.

This is why last year saw the beginning of a turn around in profits which collapsed in 1980, with a £3bn deficit. In the first six months of 1981 British companies got a £1bn surplus.

These are real gains — but they are incredibly modest. In the last quarter of 1981 the rate of return on capital — which decides whether capitalists invest or not — was a mere 2.25 per cent, compared with 5.4 per cent in 1978 and 8.8 per cent in 1971. And Thatcher's burning problem is that she must reverse a long-term

The extortionists

Britain's managers — the right to rob

Three per cent rises are extortionate, says British Rail chief Parker. He knows all about extortion, with a £60,000 salary. Manpower Services chief David Young only manages a meagre £16.50 per hour — more than his YOPs trainees get each week.

But top prize goes to British Oxygen's David Giordano, whose private company brings him ten times as much as his poverty-stricken nationalised industry pals. His recent 76 per cent pay rise will gross him £477,100 per year.

The Tory Party is a caring party, and a glaring injustice will be corrected when the nationalised industries are sold off. This measure won't do much to introduce free competition — Giordano's company sells 97 per cent of all industrial gases marketed in the UK. But we can rest safe in our beds, confident that every single one of Britain's ten thousand top managers will soon be free to rip us off by a cool half million every year.



The banks

Top of the pile are Britain's banks. They have really done well out of Thatcher's government, with £5bn in profits during 1980 — a rise of sixty per cent over a year and double 1978 profits. Barclay's bank, with extensive dealings in South Africa, is now the biggest in the world.

One third of all industry is now controlled by the four clearing banks, seven insurance companies and nine merchant banks. Nationalisation of the banks is ferociously opposed by the Tories.



Britain's investors — the right to shirk

The seventy-five thousand richest people in Britain get a total of £1,000 million each year — enough to build forty hospitals — and they don't have to lift a finger for it. It comes from 'investments' — that is, from your labour.

The top ten thousand take a third of this total. They are the ones who made the Amersham International killing — aided by their Tory friends. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. When the pickings from the sale of nationalised industries are up for grabs these parasites stand to make up to £3,000 million in a few days' dealings.

Millionaire's cabinet

Britain is run by millionaires.

A tightly-interlocking pyramid of wealth and power is headed up by the Tory government itself. No less than ten Cabinet ministers have personal fortunes worth over a million pounds, and three others are not far off.

Their cash comes from two main sources: inherited wealth, such as Baron Carrington's family fortunes — or money conned through investment and share dealing, like Peter Walker's.

But the end result is the same — they live off the fruits of your labour, and they will do anything they can to keep the money coming in for them and their friends,

by holding you down and shaking you till you rattle.

These are the real wreckers. Remember their names: Margaret Thatcher, Lord Carrington, Keith Joseph, Michael Heseltine, William Whitelaw, Francis Pym, Peter Walker, Ian Gilmour, Lord Soames, George Younger.

Poor Margaret Thatcher is not yet a millionaire. But never mind — her husband Dennis is worth a cool £3 million and a director of three companies in the Castrol group.

GET FOR THE RICH



decline in productivity compared with Britain's rivals, that has been going on since the war.

The obvious way to deal with this would be through planned investment to raise productivity without destroying jobs. But this is unacceptable to Thatcher's cronies. The only way they know to solve their problems is to bash the working class. But will workers take further punishment? This is what the Tory 'debate' is about.

As the economy moves into upturn, however modest, the Tories are haunted by the question: will workers grab back everything they lost, as they did after 1978?

The signs are not good for Thatcher. She has won major confrontations, as in Fords and Leyland, only because the union leaders scabbed.

When they couldn't get away with a betrayal — as with the traindrivers — she had to retreat. And this is the root of the problem.

Thatcher wants Howe to pump a modest £3bn into the economy as proposed by the CBI. She specially wants the money to go into capital expenditure projects that will put new windfalls in the way of her cronies in the construction industry.

She is terrified that even a mild reflation will encourage wage demands. Yet if the economy isn't boosted enough, British industry won't be able to take advantage of any expansion in world trade and reverse postwar economic trends. This is why the CBI is worried.

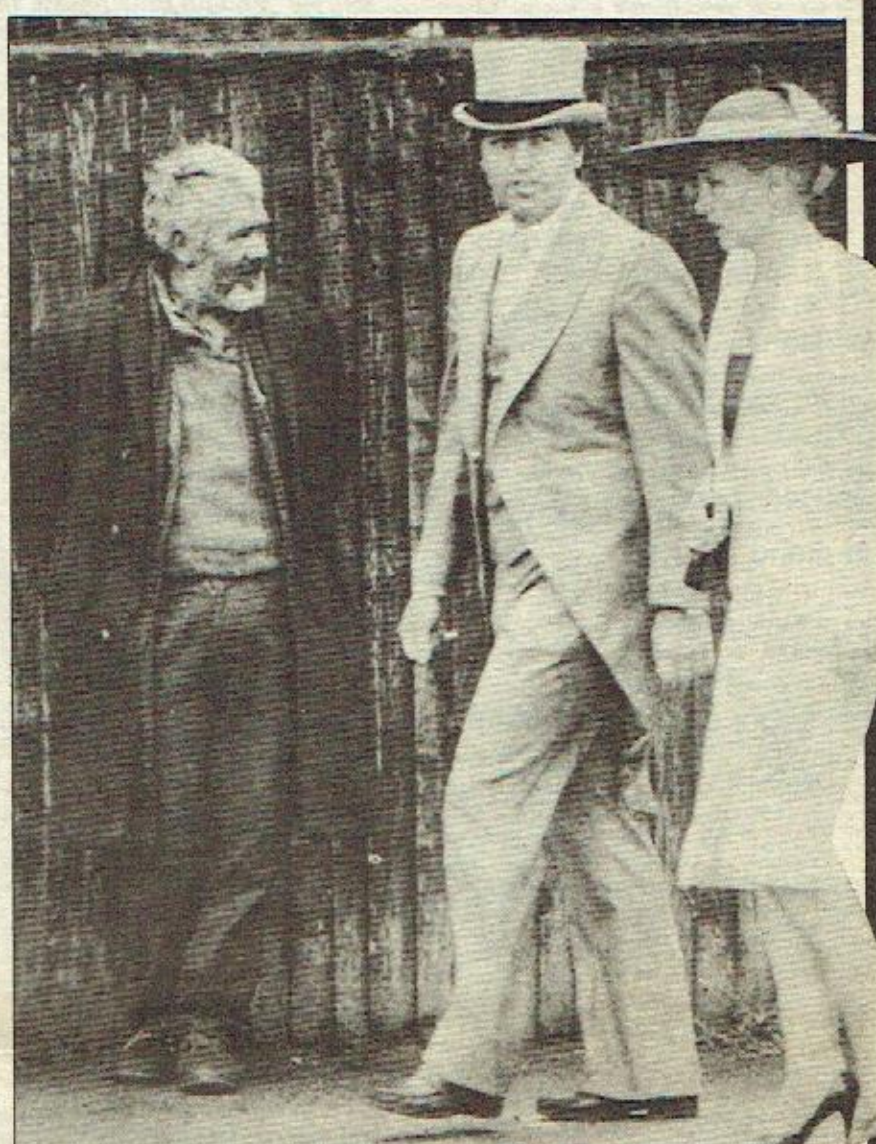
But the 'wets' propose something of a different order. They want up to £6bn to go into the economy, dit-

ting everything Thatcher has fought for. They are worried that the four million unemployment figures have not broken the working class's fighting strength, and fear that further punishment will lead to confrontation. They see last summer's youth rebellions as just a hint of what is to come.

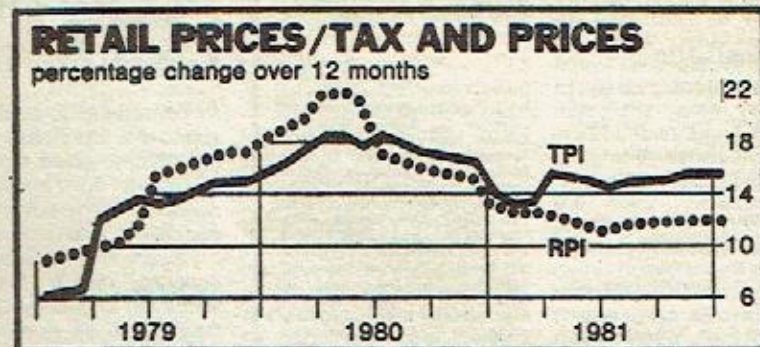
Does this mean Ted Heath is the workers' friend? Not at all. He wants to back off today to come back tomorrow. He thinks it's safer than risking the whole system.

But his answer is unacceptable at this stage to the bosses. A retreat would lose valuable time and waste the opportunities created by the recession.

In other words, whatever the outcome of the budget, *Thatcher's thuggery will go on until she is booted out.*



Index rises 15.6pc



The Government's tax and price index (TPI) has risen 15.6 per cent over the last year. This is the amount by which wages would have to increase to maintain the purchasing power. The TPI measures not only movements in prices (the retail price index rose 12 per cent in the last year) but changes in direct taxes as well. It reflects the fact that the Chancellor did not increase personal allowances in line with inflation in his last Budget, as well as the increase in employees' national insurance contributions.



Sir Keith Joseph
An arch-defender of private enterprise against the unions. So he should be — with 500,000 shares in the building firm Bovis.



William Whitelaw
Inherited a family fortune from steel and coal, owns 5,000 acres of industrial land in Scotland, and a farm near Penrith.



Lord Carrington
When he told Zimbabwe's landless poor that he too 'used to be a farmer' he modestly forgot to tell them how big his farm was. It's worth £2 million. He is also a former director of Barclay's Bank, Rio Tinto Zinc and many others — whose massive African investments were well-protected by his foreign policies.



Michael Heseltine
His keenness for council house sales falls into perspective when we look at his source of income — shares now estimated to be worth over £1 million in the Haymarket trust, made from property and publishing.



Peter Walker
Remember the Slater-Walker scandal? Guess who Walker was.

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

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

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Wales

BANGOR: Sat 10-12 town centre.

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

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

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BRADFORD: SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

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

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

CHESTERFIELD: SC sold outside Boots, Market Place, Sat 11.30am-12.30pm.

COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: SC sales in Time Square, Sat 10.30-1.30pm.

HUDDERSFIELD: SC sold Sat 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.

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

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

MANSFIELD: Stockwell Gate, Sats 10.30-12 and 2.30-5. West Gate, Sats 10.30-12. Four Seasons shopping centre, Sats 10.30-12. Phone 05216 for further details.

Bookshops

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

BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.

BRIGHTON: The Public House, Little Bepton St.

BRISTOL: Fulham, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier.

BIRMINGHAM: Other Bookshop, 137 Dubeth, Birmingham.

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

ILFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.

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

OXFORD: FOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.

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

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

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

SOUTHAMPTON: October Books, Onslow Road.

YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

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RATES for What's Left: 5p per word or 14p per col inch. Deadline: noon Sat prior to publication. Payment in advance. Phone 01-228 8180.

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

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

BADGES MADE: Glasgow SC supporters have a badge making machine, will make badges quickly and cheaply for your campaign/union/Labour Party - and all the money goes back into the struggle for socialism! Write for details/quotes to: SC (Glasgow), PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

SC Events

SCHOOL on women's oppression and the fight to build a women's movement. Sponsored by Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth, 13/14 March, County Hall, Waverham, SE1. Creche provided. Open to all Socialist Challenge supporters. Tickets: £1 for rally and school. Write to: J Arkwright, PO Box 50, London N1.

LEICESTER Socialist Challenge Revolution meetings, Thur 4 March, 7.30pm; El Salvador and Thur 18 March, 7.30pm. Crisis in British trade unions. 8pm meetings at Socialist Centre, High St.

NATIONAL sales day for Socialist Challenge on Saturday 3 April. AUEW fraction on Rule 14 campaign, on Sun 7 March at 12 o'clock at Manchester centre.

Blackening - where do you stand?

THE IDEA that all economic disruption in Poland only harms the ordinary people is contradicted by Jaruzelski trying to enforce a six day week, while Solidarnosc is attempting to disrupt production and call strikes.

True, the bureaucrats deliberately create shortages, but these are only in particular areas, designed to fill the time that Polish people would otherwise spend building Solidarnosc. Thus, shortages effect every-day essentials.

Other kinds of economic disruption make the bureaucrats' problems worse, both politically by increasing the extent to which it is necessary to hit living standards, and economically through its negative effect on the Polish currency, magnifying interest rates.

All this makes questions about when and where to call strikes the crucial ones for the Polish workers. They have to weigh-up the effects of an action on the economy, against the likely effects on their own morale and organisation.

This is why Solidarnosc, at the same time as calling for workers' blackening of certain goods, also asks for food aid. These decisions are not always as cut-and-dry as in the case of food aid - still Solidarnosc is probably in the best position to make them.

No way has this led Solidarnosc to appeal to Western governments for boycotts - these would probably be indiscriminate, or reflect the preferences of Western capital. Most important in

I WRITE to correct a misleading impression given by last week's coverage on Poland (Socialist Challenge, 18 February). Several pictures of Solidarnosc members Piotr Kozlowski and Marek Garztecki were featured - including one of them speaking at a Socialist Challenge educational school. Yet while one of the accompanying articles called for opposition to a trade boycott, no mention was made anywhere of Piotr and Marek's appeal for trade unionists to consider blackening exports to and imports from Poland.

I think Socialist Challenge is right to oppose any suggestion of a trade boycott by the imperialist governments. Its only purpose would be to further distort the economic development of Poland (though the bureaucracy has already done a pretty good job on this in collaboration with the Western banks). The nationalised property relations, which socialists (like Solidarnosc) defend as the

basis for real workers' planning, would be further threatened. At the same time all talk of a trade boycott by the imperialists has the purpose of whipping up Cold War hysteria to hide their own murderous attacks on working people - as in El Salvador.

But trade union blackening is a very different thing. It is a political tactic used by one group of workers as a focus and a lever to advance the demands of workers elsewhere. Provided it is posed in this way, as part of a campaign by workers in Britain to aid their class in Poland - and this is how Piotr and Marek have always presented it in their tours of Scotland - we should have no reservations about endorsing blackening as one tactic in the fight against the Jaruzelski regime.

MARTIN METEYARD
Glasgow

Ed note: Socialist Challenge supports workers' blackening ac-

tions in support of the Polish workers insofar as it is part of a broader campaign of solidarity actions, such as adopting prisoners, twinning workplaces, raising aid for Solidarnosc, organising a political campaign of support in the labour movement and so on.

We are against it being elevated to the central demand of solidarity as it is not a demand which is practically relevant to most British workers, and can become a substitute for taking the other solidarity actions outlined above, particularly if it is in any way confused with support for the imperialists' boycott campaign.

We are totally opposed to any appeals to the imperialist governments to boycott Polish goods. The Western governments are as much the enemy of the Polish workers as Jaruzelski and Brezhnev.



Write to SC letters, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Poland and Central America

IN continuing to build our campaign of support to the Polish workers it's essential that we place this in the context of the overall fight against imperialism and support for the advance made by working people internationally.

Such is the scope of our Polish coverage that it tends to overshadow and even challenge that anti-imperialist framework. A number of issues have fallen as casualties of this error. Our coverage on the war drive generally and on CND in particular has virtually disappeared.

At the time of the 3rd anniversary of the Iranian revolution and when imperialism is intensifying its opposition to the liberation movements in the Middle East, Socialist Challenge has done little to counter the increasing wave of anti-Arab propaganda.

I think it's very important for the heroic resistance by the Polish workers that we see it as part of a single process of worldwide social upheaval. The highest point of that is the advancing social revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean. Reagan's astronomical military budget for 1982 confirms the imminence of direct US intervention into the region, thereby threatening the biggest gains made by the international

working class in over 60 years.

Any criticism we may have of Cuba and Nicaragua, including on the issue of Poland, is subordinate to our common fight against imperialism. The article by Phil Harse (SC 11 Feb) represented a radical departure from that basic framework.

Rather than hailing the exemplary struggles of the Cuban and Nicaraguan people, Harse's article was jaundiced completely by the issue of Poland - as if that was the determining factor in the overall policies and objective position occupied by these revolutions. It gave the strong impression that SC is retreating from support to these embattled revolutions at a time when they are most under fire from our common enemy - Thatcher & Reagan.

The main theme of the Pentagon's onslaught against Cuba and Nicaragua is that they act as a surrogate force for the Soviet bureaucracy. Our overall coverage has done little to counter that charge. Harse's article simply helped to echo it.

Rather than firing both barrels at Nicaragua and Cuba because of their line on Poland we should be devoting more space to publicise their overwhelming progressive policies. That too, alongside Solidarnosc, is the best advertisement for socialism in over twenty years.

BRIAN LYONS, Sheffield.

Let's have some history

It's good to see the return of Arguments for Socialism as a regular series. Hopefully the Our History series will also be brought back.

It was very noticeable for instance that Socialist Challenge did not have an article celebrating the anniversary of the Russian Revolution and explaining its significance. That was surely an opportunity missed.

As well as having articles on the major events of world history we need to have articles on the history that is 'forgotten' or mystified by bourgeois history. For instance next Christmas why not junk the quiz and TV reviews and have an article on the Christmas truce of 1914 - a truce that was imposed by the rank and file soldiers and led to a vicious crackdown by the high commands of both sides.

Finally, and just as vital, we should have articles on the history of our movement. There are comrades in our movement who are a living link with the International of Lenin and Trotsky. They represent the experience of half a century of struggle by the Trotskyist movement. We have a lot to learn from that experience. Our sister paper in the United States, *The Militant*, has a column called *Our Revolutionary Heritage* - and that's exactly what it is.

JACK LAVIN, Mansfield.

A small point...

I read your newspaper last week with interest especially the article entitled 'Tony Benn shifts on Ireland'.

I think you should have left the 'f' out of shifts.

SEAN MCGUINNESS HAYES, MIDDLESEX.



The Trades Disputes and Trade Union Act of 1927

By George Barratt

In 1927, the Conservative government of Stanley Baldwin passed the Trades Disputes and Trade Union Act in order to restrict the powers of the trade union movement. The Act was the assertion of the authority of the Conservative government after the massive class confrontation of the General Strike of 1926.

The 1927 Act was the latest in a long series of battles that had been fought by the labour movement since the repeal of the anti-trade union Combination Act in 1824. During this period, the unions had increased enormously in strength, but had faced continued attempts to shackle that strength in the courts and in Parliament.

The Trades Disputes Act declared general strikes illegal, and workers taking part in such an illegal strike could be sentenced to up to two years in prison. Management could sue unions for damages in the law courts. Civil service unions were forbidden to affiliate to the Trade Union Congress, and restrictions were placed on picketing. Changes in the conditions for payment of the political levy threatened the financing of the Labour Party. A whole series of rights that had been won by the trade union and labour movement since the turn of the century were swept away.

Illegal

Although it was still possible to strike in solidarity with workers in the same industry, it was declared illegal 'to coerce the government either directly or by inflicting hardship on the community'. This measure completed the process which had started during the days of the General Strike, when the High Court Judge Mr Justice Astbury had ruled that 'the so-called general strike called by the Trade Union Congress Council is illegal, and persons inciting or taking part in it are not protected by the Trades Disputes Act 1906.' Such a ruling increased the pressure on the trade union bureaucracy, and reinforced their excuses for not fighting.

Picketing was severely restricted by giving wider powers to the police. The legal definition of 'intimidation' was widened, and the police could act against pickets if strike-breakers were exposed to 'hatred, ridicule, or contempt'.

At the turn of the century, the Taff Vale Railway Company had sued a railway union for damages resulting from a strike. The crippling damages awarded by the High Court had two effects on the trade union movement.

First it supported the parliamentary pressure group which subsequently became the Labour Party, and second it sought a change in the legal status of trade unions. The Trades Disputes Act of 1906 granted trade unions immunity from being sued in the law courts as a result

TEBBIT'S Bill is an attempt to shackle the unions and attack workers' rights. This is not the first such attempt: in the aftermath of the 1926 General Strike, vicious anti-union laws were brought in and stayed on the statute books until 1945. George Barrett explains what happened.

lected by the unions and paid to the Labour Party, the trade unionist had to sign special forms for contributions to be made to Labour Party funds.

The civil service unions had to be kept away from the 'pernicious' influence of the Trade Union Congress in order to maintain the loyalty of the state apparatus. There were still bitter memories of the police strikes of 1918 and 1919. Even in the present day, industrial action by the police, armed forces or postal workers is a criminal offence.

because it still feared the possibility of a strong reaction from the working class. So the 1927 Act was a compromise between the much harsher demands of the employers and what the Conservative government thought it could get away with.

The trade union bureaucracy chose this time to increase its collaboration with the bosses and the government. Discussions between senior officials of the TUC and major figures in British industry were opened up. Despite the onset of the world slump, the basic premise of these talks was that collaboration was preferable to confrontation and that the two sides should work together to increase productivity.

This betrayal by the trade union leadership was made all the easier by the new orientation adopted by the Communist Party. The CP had launched the Minority Movement. Just prior to the general strike it could obtain the allegiance of hundreds of thousands of the most militant trade unionists. But, the CP had been taken over by the Stalinist victory inside the Communist International. The increasingly 'stalinised' Comintern now dictated that the Communist parties take a hostile attitude to social democrats of all kinds. They denounced even elected rank and file officials. They turned their backs on the established union structures, split the minority movement and established their own 'red' trade unions which rapidly lost all influence with rank and file union members.

In 1929, a Labour government was elected. But it refused to repeal the '27 Act. It was not until 1945 that a new mood for renewal inside the class brought a landslide Labour victory and made it politically impossible to keep these trade union restrictions on the statute books. The repeal of the legislation was accompanied with the nationalisation of the mines. The attitude of the private mine owners had been a major cause of the legislation in the first place.



1919 police strike. The 1927 Act permanently outlawed such strikes.

of strike action. The employers disliked the 1906 act because they felt that it placed the unions above the law. The 1927 Trades Disputes Act was an attempt to turn the clock back to the good old days when trade unions could be intimidated by the threat of legal action.

The income of the Labour Party from affiliated trade unions was reduced by a third as a result of the 1927 Act. Instead of the political levy being automatically col-

Fear and anger were the emotions felt by the ruling class at the massive withdrawal of labour during the General Strike. Over 162 million working days were lost during 1926, and the local Councils of Action provided an alternative power for the organisation of society. After the defeat of the general strike the National Confederation of Employers Organisations insisted on strong anti-union legislation.

However, the Conservative Cabinet was wary



Demonstration against 1927 Act.

The United Front and building the revolutionary party

By Aileen O'Callaghan

THE reformist parties in Europe like the Labour Party are the main political instruments of the labour bureaucrats to keep control of the working class. The revolutions between 1917 and 1923 demonstrated the need for new mass revolutionary parties in each country of the type Lenin built in Russia as part of a new, world party of socialist revolution. The Third, Communist, International was built in the wake of the victorious Russian Revolution.



Leon Trotsky

The Third International was immediately forced to grapple with a problem which is still the central one for Marxists today. After the betrayals of the revolutions in Europe the advance of the working class had halted, illusions in the old parties were reinforced and the Communists found themselves a tiny minority almost everywhere. How could mass parties be built in this situation?

The Fourth World Congress of the Third International, guided by Lenin and Trotsky, adopted the tactic of the united workers front. This tactic is still a central policy of the Fourth International, the world party founded by Trotsky after the Third International had degenerated and been hopelessly bureaucratised by Stalin.



ARGUMENTS for SOCIALISM

The tactic of the united front is based on the understanding that as the workers' movement joins economic and political battle with the capitalist enemy it instinctively seeks to maximise its unity and strength. If differences on programme prevent fusion of the working class parties then the minimum demand of the workers is their joint action against the common class enemy.

The united front aims to show the workers through their own experience of struggle which programme, and therefore which party, genuinely expresses this need for working class unity. Marxists seek unity in action with the reformist leaders against the capitalists on the best possible terms. But even when the bureaucrats initiate such actions under their own reformist slogans the Marxists support the actions while simultaneously advancing the revolutionary answers to the workers' problems.

The indispensable condition for Marxists entering into a united front is their complete freedom to advance their own ideas, including the most ruthless criticism of their 'partners' in action whenever necessary. This is one reason why a revolutionary newspaper, like Socialist Challenge, is so important for building a revolutionary party.

The reformists are only exposed when tested out as leaders by the mass movement. The united front tactic is applied to the question of government with this in mind. Therefore in Britain Marxists fight for a Labour rather than Tory government. Elsewhere in Europe the slogan of a Communist Party and Socialist Party government is often raised by other sections of the Fourth International for the same reason.

The workers' council, or soviet, is the highest form of the united front as it organises the whole of the working class in the struggle for power. But historical experience shows that soviets are not enough by themselves.

The revolution succeeded in Russia because the party was built to a point where it could lead the united front embodied in the soviets. To be successfully applied the united front tactic needs the revolutionary party to be built openly at the same time.

● Correction. In the 18 February issue an unfortunate editing error occurred in 'The Labour Bureaucracy Today'. A key sentence in the article spoke of the labour aristocracy when it ought to have said bureaucracy. The whole point of the article was to show how the old labour aristocracy was replaced by the bureaucracy.

How to build labour movement support for Solidarnosc

by Martin Meteyard

It is now nearly three months since martial law was declared in Poland. In that time Solidarnosc has kept alive the spirit of resistance, reorganising underground to meet the fundamental challenge to workers' rights. It is sad to say it has received little help in this task from the leadership of the labour movement in Britain.

The Labour Party NEC used to do anything in the wake of martial law, but only now is it organising its first action — a rally in London on 16 March.

The TUC issued a strong condemnation of the military crackdown, and general secretary Len Murray pressed the authorities for a visa to visit Poland and inquire into the situation. But the

TUC too has done nothing to organise active support in the labour movement for Solidarnosc.

This task has largely been left to rank-and-file trade union and Labour Party activists, often organised in local solidarity committees. It is they who have begun to build up contacts between the ranks of the British labour movement and the

ternees and other suitable means.

Piotr and Marek have also urged workers to consider blacking imports from and exports to Poland where it is appropriate — as on the docks, for example.

But the most important thing is to build up such a head of steam in the labour movement on this issue that the TUC and Labour Party leaders are themselves forced to organise action in support of Solidarnosc.

So, for instance, a resolution to organise support for Solidarnosc was to be discussed this week by the Transport & General Workers Union leadership. The resolution was moved by the TGWU district committee on the east coast of Scotland after they were addressed by Piotr and Marek.

A Solidarnosc speaker is also likely to address the national conference of the National Union of Journalists as a result of a meeting with NUJ activists in Glasgow.

This is the way to build support in the labour movement for Solidarnosc. Move in every union to get a Solidarnosc speaker invited to address this year's national conference — and organise a fringe meeting on Poland as well. Build up the pressure for Solidarnosc speakers and a major debate at the TUC Congress and Labour Party conference.

rank-and-file activists to substitute themselves for this process risks harming rather than helping the cause of Solidarnosc in Britain.

Yet this is exactly what is being done by Socialist Organiser and London Labour Briefing, two small groups in the Labour Party who have organised what they call 'the first national labour movement march on Poland' on 13 March in London.

This 'national labour movement march' has been called at short notice by these two groups with no attempt to consult the local labour movement activists who have been organising practical support for Solidarnosc over the last two months, no attempt to take such a proposal through the official structures of the movement, and no discussion with other socialists active in organising support for Solidarnosc.

It is inconceivable, therefore, that this demonstration can in any way represent the real groundswell of support for Solidarnosc in the labour movement. In fact it could seriously set back the process of organising that support, because it will be used by supporters of martial law as an example of how little 'national labour movement' backing there is for Solidarnosc.

For these reasons Socialist Challenge will

Solidarnosc members temporarily exiled in Britain.

In Scotland, for instance, tours organised by the Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee have allowed Solidarnosc members Piotr Kozlowski and Marek Garzdecki to



Archbishop Glemp: doing his best to force Solidarnosc to compromise with the regime

speak to mass meetings of dockers and tanker drivers, shop stewards committees in shipbuilding and engineering, workers in occupation at BL and Plessey in Bathgate, local trades councils, and many other union meetings.

One purpose of this is to build local labour movement support for Solidarnosc now, through financial aid, adoption of in-

Nothing less will do than for the TUC and Labour leaders to organise a national demonstration in support of Solidarnosc, a national tour of the labour movement by Solidarnosc activists, and a national financial appeal to help Solidarnosc rebuild its shattered apparatus.

That requires a long and persistent struggle at every level of the movement. Any attempt by

not be supporting the demonstration on 13 March. We urge the organisers to call it off and instead commit themselves to working with other supporters of Solidarnosc in Britain to force the TUC and Labour Party leaders into action on this question. That is the best — the only — way to win real labour movement support for the Polish workers today.

Solidarity with Solidarnosc tour

JEAN-YVES POTEL, French Trotskyist and author of the new Pluto book, *The Summer Before the Frost*, and Zbigniew Kowalewski, a militant leader of Solidarnosc in the Lodz region, will be touring Britain later this month.

Potel and Kowalewski will speak at a number of meetings around the country between 22-26 March, organised by Pluto Press in conjunction with the local solidarity committees.

Potel is a member of the Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International. His book recounts the struggles and debates at the Lenin shipyards in August 1980 where he was an eye-witness, and analyses the different social and political forces in the Polish crisis — the Church, the KOR, the peasants, the bureaucrats and the working class.

Kowalewski is a member of the presidium of Lodz Solidarnosc, one of the most militant regional leaderships which was actively campaigning for the 'active strike' — putting the workplaces under workers' control. He was in Paris at the time of the military crackdown. He will also be speaking at the Labour Party rally on Poland at Central Hall in London on Tuesday 16 March.

Tour dates

Monday 22 March Oxford
Tuesday 23 March Birmingham
Wednesday 24 March Glasgow
Thursday 25 March Manchester

Next week Socialist Challenge will review the Jean-Yves Potel book and the new Penguin special *The Book of Lech Walesa*, as well as analysing the latest situation in Poland following General Jaruzelski's visit to the Kremlin.

Solidarity with Solidarnosc meetings

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

Southampton: Trades Council public meeting on Wed 10 March at St Matthews Hall, St Marys Rd at 7.30 pm. Speakers: Alan Whitehead, Labour parliamentary candidate for Southampton West and Oliver MacDonald.

Nottingham: meeting called by Labour Movement Solidarity with Solidarnosc on Thur 11 March at 7.30 pm in TGWU offices, 259 Mansfield Rd. Speakers: Piotr Kozlowski of Solidarnosc trade union working group and Oliver MacDonald.

Islington: Labour Party public meeting on Thur 11 March at 7.30 pm at Manor Gardens library, off Holloway Rd. Marek Garzdecki of Solidarnosc trade union working group plus speakers from El Salvador and South Africa campaigns.

Brent: Labour Party public meeting on Wed 17 March at 7.30 pm in Harlesden primary school, Acton Lane, NW10. Speakers: Eric Heffer MP, Solidarnosc member and Oliver MacDonald.

Solidarity Committees with Solidarnosc

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

Edinburgh Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Edinburgh & District Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

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

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

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

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

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

Oxford Labour Committee on Poland, 468 Babbury Rd, Oxford. Ring 0865 58233

Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, 10 Park Drive, London NW11. Ring 01 434 1501

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

Polish Solidarity Committee, 891 Tottenham Rd, London E13. Ring 01 422 2218 for London speakers, or 01 249 2665 for out of London

Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group in UK, 64 Pheasant Lane, London E15. Ring 01 473 3400

Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Co-operative Bookshop, 100 Tottenham St, London E1

Cleveland Trades Councils back Solidarnosc

THE following motion was passed at the Annual General Meeting of the Cleveland Association of Trades Councils to be forwarded to the TUC General Council. A copy was also sent to the Polish Embassy. The resolution is very similar to one passed by the Lancashire County Association of Trades Councils in January, published in Socialist Challenge on 28 January.

That this Association of Trades Councils condemns the hypocrisy of those who claim to defend Solidarity while simultaneously:

- conspiring to prop up military dictatorships in El Salvador and elsewhere in Latin America and justifying the racist South African regime,
- attempting to escalate the number of nuclear warheads in Europe pointing at the heads of workers in Poland and other European countries,
- sabotaging the economies and preparing contingency plans for the military invasion of Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua,
- arresting and jailing strikers and pickets and legislating to restrict the activities of trade unionists in their own countries.

Recognising that only the labour and trade union movement internationally can successfully defend Polish workers, we therefore call on the TUC to campaign for:

- an end to repression and martial law,
- release of all political prisoners,
- no intervention in Poland by outside countries,
- food aid for Polish workers' families,
- delegations from the TUC to visit Poland,
- speakers from the TUC and Solidarity to be invited to Trades Councils, and speakers notes to be provided by the International Department to Trades Councils,
- a national labour movement conference to discuss the situation in Poland, and to organise solidarity with Solidarnosc.

Trade unionists meet to discuss Ireland

FOUR HUNDRED people, three quarters of them delegated from trade unions and Labour parties, met last weekend to discuss getting Britain out of Ireland. The conference, called jointly by the Labour Committee on Ireland and the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland, was a big step forward in organising opposition to British policy in Ireland and making a break from Tory policies. In the first of a series of articles on issues discussed at the conference MARTIN COLLINS looks at the tasks of socialists in this country fighting for British withdrawal.

Mick Martin from Hammersmith Trades Council opened the conference by stressing that while Ireland had been widely aired within the constituency Labour parties it needed the same to happen in the unions before there could be a change in Labour's Irish policy.

The first session heard two widely differing views of the situation from Irish trade unionists. Inez McCormack, a NUPE regional officer from the North of Ireland, said that British activists had a lot to learn about the conditions facing the unions in the North.

Corrupted

First there was the 'normal' situation — fighting the government

and the bosses against the cuts, unemployment and low wages (even if these problems were twice as severe in Ireland). Then there is the 'colonial situation'.

By dividing up Ireland, and splitting the Irish workers between Catholics and Protestants, the British rulers have paralysed and corrupted the workers' movement in the North. They have even divided the unions with separate Dublin-based and London-based unions organising workers of different religions.

Inez argued that the Bennite alternative economic strategy supports the status quo through its silence on Ireland. What is needed, she said, is a massive injection of money into the economy of the North, 'to make the Unionists an of-

fer they cannot refuse.' This meant telling the Unionist workers that the British Labour government was going to promote a united Ireland, and that they could either accept the money and the political solution, or decide to reject it, but get the political solution anyway.

Ignore

Speakers from the floor pointed out that if we already had a movement in Britain to withdraw from Ireland then it might make sense to start a discussion on how exactly that should be done, but for the moment it wasn't terribly useful. The other problem with Inez's view is that British governments have tried to deal with Ireland by buying off the Unionists many times before, that was how they got to be 'privileged' in the first place.

The views of Matt Merrigan from the ATGWU were different. He agreed that the so-called 'bread and butter' issues of wages and conditions do not lead to a breaking down of the divisions between workers. That, he said, is the view of the Communist Party in Britain and of the Sinn Fein Workers' Party in Ireland.

They think that if trade unionists ignore the issue of the division of Ireland as a country and concentrate on what problems Catholic and Protestant

workers have in common like wages, unemployment, cuts etc., then you can get unity in action. This in turn will create a long term atmosphere in which issues such as the future of Ireland as a socialist society can be discussed.

Matt pointed out that such a papering over the cracks doesn't work. You can't turn your back on the fact of a British army of occupation. The national question runs through and shapes the ways in which every other social or economic issue is looked at. Sectarianism, he said, will only disappear when its cause — the division of Ireland into two separate undemocratic statelets — is ended.

Assembly

In Matt's view, a commitment of the Labour party to withdraw from Ireland should be followed by a setting up of a Constitutional Assembly that would seek to involve people from all over Ireland to work out the way Ireland should be run. But, he says, that's not the job of socialists in Britain. There is a division of labour between militants in the two countries.

Socialists in Britain should concentrate their attention not on working out how Ireland is to be run — that is a job for the Irish. The British should concentrate on building a movement that will get a

government committed to withdrawing from Ireland.

Revolutionary socialists in Ireland tend to share this view. In the recent Irish elections, Bernadette McAliskey, the Peoples' Democracy candidate in Dublin, showed how the views of an Irish workers' party might be put forward. She made it clear that getting a united Ireland and a united working class would be achieved, not by the 'generosity' of a Labour government conceding a new status for Ireland, but by building a mass movement in

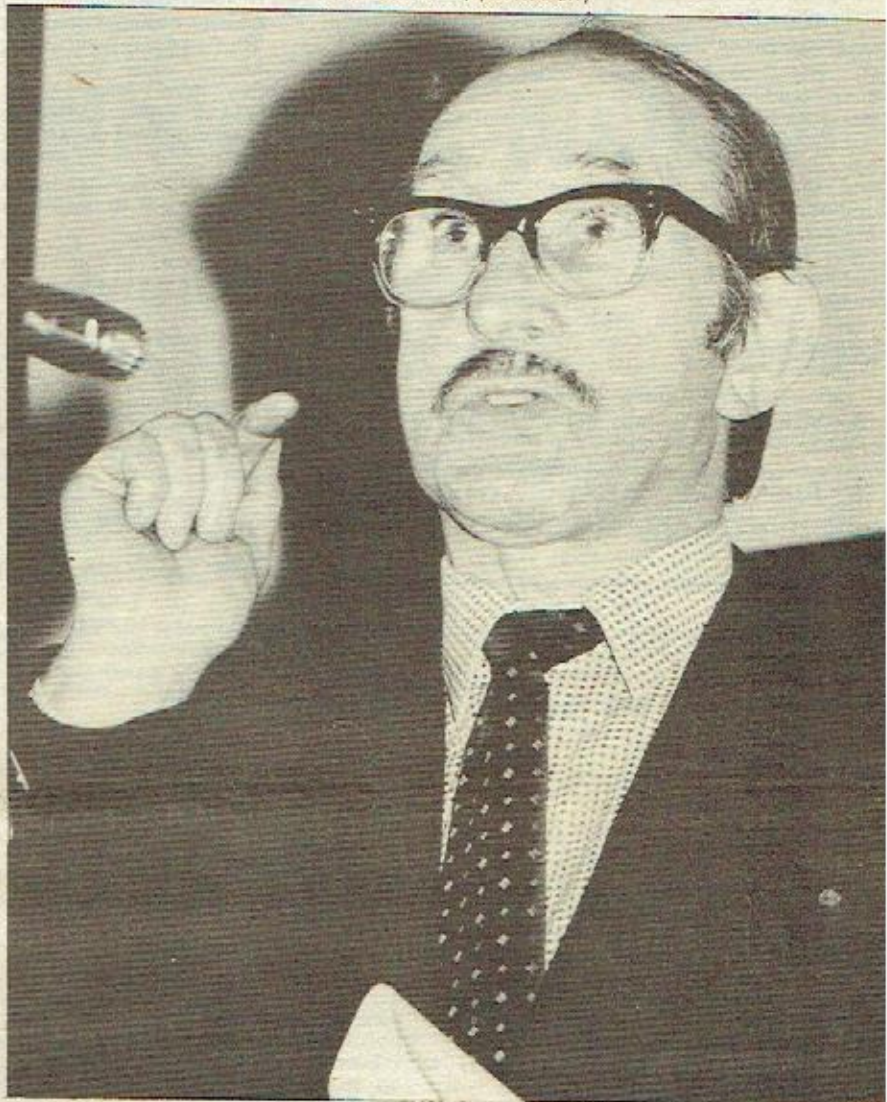
Ireland against imperialist intervention.

Troops

The presence of British troops in the north is the most pressing concern, because it is their guns and plastic bullets which prop up the rest. But no less important is seeing the way the imperialist intervention and division of Ireland makes it easier for workers to be trampled on. She argued for workers to take over factories, particularly

when faced with redundancies.

Only if the workers in Ireland begin to take control of industry, can some planning be introduced to the running of an economy which has been bled dry by the profit makers. To organise a movement against the division of Ireland which looks forward to a socialist republic holds out something positive for Protestant workers, not just the crumbs off the capitalist table which are labelled 'privileges' at the moment.



Matt Merrigan, district secretary of the ATGWU, speaks to the labour movement conference on Ireland

Union leaders on trial in Turkey

DOGAN TARKAN, exiled socialist editor and leader of the organisation Kurtulus (Liberation), recently won his battle for political asylum in Britain. Here he outlines the events around the trial of the trade union leaders in Turkey.

The first thing I'd like to do is thank all those supporters of Socialist Challenge who campaigned to prevent my deportation.

In times like these, the hypocrisy of our rulers in their efforts to preserve their system of exploitation takes my breath away. Having given the go-ahead to torturers and dictators the world over, President Reagan sponsored the horrendous 'Let Poland Be Poland' show. Then he invites General Kenan Evren, Turkish Head of State, to appear on it.

Boggles

This man Evren, it should be recalled, is head of a military junta with ten hangings, hundreds of deaths in custody and tens of thousands of political prisoners to its name — in short a track record which makes General Jaruzelski appear a paragon of liberalism. Truly, to quote

Alexander Haig, 'it boggles my mind'.

In Turkey, the entire leadership of the major trade union confederation DISK — organising over half a million workers — are on trial for their lives.

On 24 December 1981, fifteen months after their arrest, 52 executive members of DISK appeared on trial for the first time. The military prosecutor is demanding the death penalty for them. In his indictment he announced that preparations are underway for the trials of 200 more DISK members.

An atmosphere of terror pervades the trial. Thousands of soldiers surround the court and roadblocks have been set up throughout a radius of several miles.

On the second day of the trial the military prosecutor said:

'This is a very important trial. Both Turkish and world public opinion have a great interest in the trial. Everybody is watching us. We must finish it without any trouble.

'We are adopting the "war conditions" regulations (a series of exceptional measures severely limiting the right to defence, demanded by the prosecutor and accepted by the judges on the first day of the trial) to finish this trial quickly.

This trial will finish soon because there are not any witnesses, and the

number of accused is limited. Immediately after this trial we will open the trials for democratic organisations and the Republican People's Party MPs. The trials for DISK-affiliated trade unions will follow them.' There is little to add to that.

The DISK trial is important to the junta because



Defending the 'free world': NATO's junta in Turkey

DISK represents the first stage of political consciousness of the working class in Turkey. DISK was at the head of all the mass political mobilisations of the working people in Turkey.

Strikes

When the army took power in September 1980 54,000 workers were on strike, 48,000 of them members of DISK. In the nine months prior to the

coup there were seven times as many lost through strikes as in any other year in Turkish history. The junta's project was to break the back of this movement.

International working class solidarity can expose these trials for the farce that they are. There is an urgent need to get out the truth about Turkey, to fight for trade union and democratic rights, against torture, against executions.



It should be highlighted that Turkey is a member of NATO. The Turkey Solidarity Campaign in this country is organising a tour of speakers from DISK and other unions to take place at the end of March. It is already sponsored by the Bakers Union, the Fil Brigades Union, and the National Union of Journalists at a national level.

NUM

Now we are trying to win support for the tour at local and regional level. Already the Derbyshire area of the NUM has asked to organise a meeting. Readers who are able to get trade union or Labour Party sponsorship for the tour should do so at once. We are planning meetings in all the major industrial areas.

Details of the tour are available from TSC, Box BM 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

10 MARCH TRANSPORT STRIKE Bring London to a halt!

THE FULL EFFECTS of the Law Lords' decisions on cheap fares will hit the tubes later this year when hundreds of jobs are likely to be axed. London Transport has already frozen recruitment. JOHN GODFREY, branch secretary of Neasden ASLEF and chairperson of Brent South Labour Party, spoke to Socialist Challenge about the campaign against fares' increases and job losses.

IT WOULD be marvellous if we could have an all-out stoppage at this stage — but it's not going to happen. Last week was the first meeting of all the unions in London Transport. That was a big step forward, although I've never been to such a meeting before.

United

We in ASLEF went to the meeting with a proposal to have a three day stoppage, but no amendments could be put. In the interests of unity we decided it wasn't the time to raise our proposal. It's something that the unions, especially the NUR, have agreed to a one day stoppage.

If the campaign is going to grow, maybe it's not such a bad thing after all. It could be just a taster. We can always step the action up. We can't just have a big bang on the day of the strike, 10 March, or

'If we wait for the next Labour government there won't be a service left'

London in crisis: talk but no action

By Martin Eady, vice president London Transport district council NUR

MORE THAN 1,000 delegates from over 500 organisations attended the London Assembly last Saturday. Called by a number of organisations including the South East region TUC, the GLC and the London Tenants Organisation, its aim was to debate the crisis. There was general agreement that the crisis was reaching epidemic proportions at every level.

But unfortunately little came out of the conference in the way of action. The Assembly had not been built as a specific

'One day strikes aren't going to change the government's mind'

on 21 March when the fares go up, and that's all.

We have to have a consistent united campaign. That's what I think should happen over this Can't Pay, Won't Pay proposal. ASLEF isn't involved in the collection of fares so it's not for us to tell the other unions what to do. They've got to decide for themselves.

Scheme

But I do think the only way we're going to win, if there isn't an all-out industrial action, is for all the unions and the campaigns to come together under one umbrella. Otherwise all the collectors will be fed up with having different bits of paper to process, after all it can involve

labour movement event and so failed to give a political lead for a fightback. London Labour leader, Ken Livingstone did call for full mobilisation behind the policies of the GLC.

Proof that the potential support was there was shown by the hostile reception given to a representative of Enfield Residents Association. Although claiming to support the cheap fares policy he criticised the GLC for its 'extravagance' and the support it gave to gay organisations.

To involve so many people in criticising the Tories' and Law Lords' attack on local services while the Labour GLC's policies are reduced to chaos, seemed in the end rather futile. The assembly was an opportunity to draw community organisations behind the trade unions who are taking on the Tories, particularly the London Transport unions. That opportunity was sadly missed.

out of it. Nor is it enough for Albert Booth, shadow Transport Minister, to tell us to wait till a Labour government in 1984 which will reverse all this. If we wait till then, there won't be any service left at all.

Success

We need political action by the community raising Cain now to bring pressure to bear on Tory MPs and councillors. Consumers and operators have to get together in this campaign.

In the meantime we have to make 10 March a

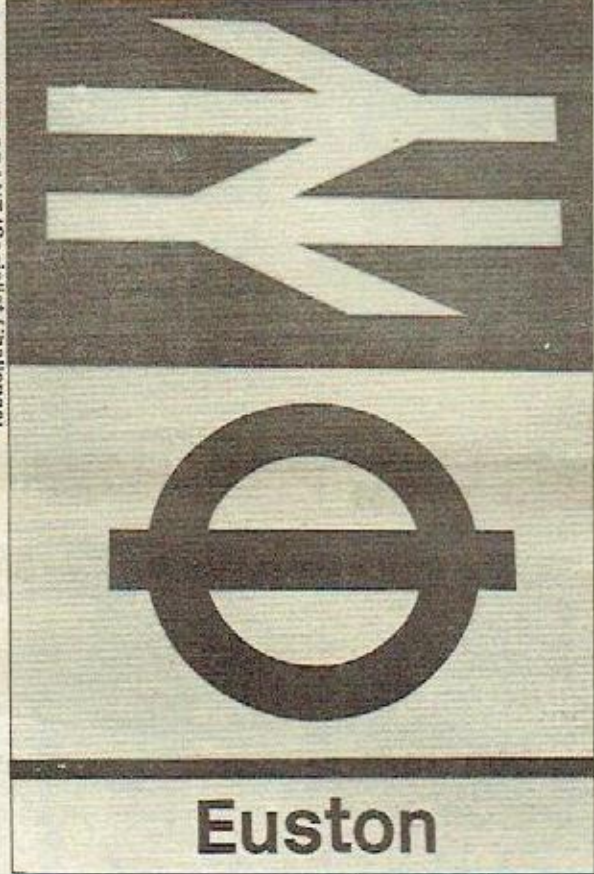


Photo: PETE GRANT (Socialist Challenge)

Fares Fightback Calendar

Wednesday 10 March
● One day strike of London Transport workforce!

Thursday 11 March
● GLC mass lobby of Parliament from 2pm. Meetings in Central Hall at 3pm and 6pm.

Saturday 13 March
● Keep Fares Fair: rally and entertainment from 2pm at County Hall

Sunday 21 March
● Fares up?

'We're not going to stop the cuts by industrial action alone'

big success. I think there will be a good response although we have to get to the members. Both the NUR and ASLEF are organising London-wide meetings for their members to explain the situation.

After 10 March we can build from there. But one day strikes aren't going to change the government's mind. We need an all-out stoppage to do that, and we should unite with all the campaigns that are fighting on the fares issue.



Queues will grow longer as the services are cut — and we'll pay for the privilege

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

After the ASLEF victory: Guards on the attack

By Hazel MacPherson, Paddington NUR No1

AT THE Labour Party national executive committee last week Russell Tuck, assistant general secretary of the railworkers' union, accused Denis Skinner MP of attacking the NUR during the ASLEF dispute. All that Skinner had done was to speak at a meeting in support of ASLEF and to campaign for a resolution of support from the NEC.

Russell Tuck and his like in the NUR leadership are attacking the NUR through their attempts to thrust flexible rostering down the throats of the membership.

The fight against flexible rostering which began with a day of action called by the London Local Departmental Committees (LDCs) has now embarked upon a national campaign which challenges the actions of the leadership. The campaign focuses upon the call for a special general meeting of the

The campaign against flexible rostering has brought together hundreds of NUR members. This co-ordination at rank and file level should continue if the campaign is to succeed. We have set ourselves a long term goal to fundamentally change the union by demanding accountability from its leaders. This will require a battle throughout the union.

Worry

In June this year the NUR's annual general meeting will convene with two important proposals to change the rules of the union on the agenda. The first aims to make the general secretary open to election every five years. The second aims to democratise the composition of the annual general meeting itself, with one delegate from each branch on a card vote basis.

Railworkers should not feel that they are alone in the battle to bring their union leadership to heel. The Laurence Scott workers are campaigning around Rule 14 of the

'If you hit them where it hurts, with their profits, they soon back down. If the McCarthy Tribunal report went back on the eight-hour day, ASLEF members wouldn't accept it.'

— Fred Orton-Jones, Birmingham ASLEF

AUEW rule book to gain support for the re-election of the union executive. There's not a trade union

'LONDON TRANSPORT workers are also facing the implementation of flexible rostering. At the moment there is some unity between our union, ASLEF, and the National Union of Railwaymen. The NUR is in the majority and ASLEF doesn't have the same weight in London Transport as it does in British Rail.'

But the victory of the train drivers will really help us. At the moment it's been agreed that there is to be no negotiations on these issues. But if Sidney Weighell loses his bottle, we could be in extreme difficulties.'

So what happens with the McCarthy Tribunal report on flexible rostering and the 39-hour week on British Rail will affect us. If the drivers lose on that question we in London Transport don't have much chance of winning.'

— John Godfrey, branch secretary, Neasden ASLEF

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'A resolution from Notts, backed by Derby and all of the East Midlands calls for a vote of no confidence in Sid Weighell and calls for his resignation. We backed this at New Street, Saltley and Bescott. All Sid Weighell's after is a knighthood at our expense.'

— John, Birmingham NUR

PLESSEY BATHGATE Round one to the workers

By Neil Cruikshank and Judith Arkwright

The Plessey occupation lives! Last Friday, Lord Kincaid lifted his previous order granted to Plessey management three weeks previously demanding the sit in should end.

The workforce had continued the occupation in defiance of the earlier court order and last Friday 141 of them were called to court to answer why they had done so. They could have been jailed for this act done in contemplation of the furtherance of a trade dispute should not be subject to court action on the grounds only that it interfered with the trade, business or employment of another person. The judge was undecided as to whether this section of the act legalised sit ins, but felt he could not rule.

created by the present government had encouraged employers to use the courts in order to fight a battle against the workers.

Plessey is one of 25 major companies who are urging Thatcher not to reflate the economy; it is also fully behind the Tebbit Bill. Much of the company's £100m profit comes from the war drive. Plessey makes telephones designed for use after a nuclear war but as George Wilson, Tass convenor at

the plant commented — they have not yet worked out how anyone is going to be alive to use them.

George also pointed out that the workers had won the court decision on a technicality and there was always the possibility that it could be overturned by another court ruling. It was essential therefore to build support among workers in order to have the strength to beat Plessey, the Tebbit Bill and the Tories.

Send donations and messages of support to Mary Murphy, 30 Main St, Fauldhouse, West Lothian



South Yorkshire bus workers lobbied parliament on Monday to protest the threatened rise of fares in their area

Success

Not surprisingly the march held the following day in Bathgate had an air of celebration following the court decision. Over 1500 trade unionists mainly from Scotland but also Plessey workers from Beeston marched through the town to a rally at the factory gate.

Ellen Monaghan from Lee Jeans said that they had danced when they heard of the Plessey workers' victory in the courts. Both workforces were determined to save their jobs and had begun their sit ins with this aim in mind, not knowing where their support would come from. But in the course of the struggle they found that the labour movement and fellow workers rallied to their fight.

Many of the speakers pointed out that the court decision was a historical one. AUEW fulltimer, Tom Dougan, pointed out that the industrial climate

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT to WORK



FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT to WORK Plessey women fight for jobs

THE OCCUPATION of Plessey in Bathgate, Scotland, has highlighted again the lead and determination that women workers are prepared to make in the fight for jobs. It has been the struggles of women like those at the successful Lee Jeans occupation last year that has awoken the Labour Party to the burning issue of women's rights. On 5 June, the Labour Party is organising a big event for a woman's right to work.

Judith Arkwright spoke to two of the women workers at Plessey Capacitors — ANN MOONEY and BETTY KIRKLAND — both members of the clerical union APEX, about their fight for jobs and their fight for women's rights.

JA: I see you're wearing a badge — 'I'm a Plessey suffragette' — how does your fight link up with the suffragettes?

AM: I don't know who produced the badge — but the link-up is with the courts. Like the suffragettes, we have to defy a law which is out of date and we have to draw attention to our plight like they did.

We're not militants though, we're ordinary people trying to keep our jobs — we don't feel we should end up in the courts.

JA: You mentioned that some of the more skilled men in the plant had left the occupation.

All the women here seem pretty solid — why do you think that is?

BK: Well, some of the men were highly skilled and maybe felt they could find jobs but the women realised that there's nothing else out there for us. There's still men involved in the sit in.

When we go out on the delegations, the more women that go out the more support we get.

We haven't had anyone saying that women shouldn't work anyway or that women should stay at home.

AM: Yes, a lot of people say to us that the women seem stronger. I think men are more reluctant sometimes because they feel they've got to keep a wage coming in — they can't afford to go on strike.

That doesn't mean our wages isn't important — when I first went out to work the money did used to be for luxuries — now it's for paying bills.

JA: Would you see yourself as fighting for women's rights as well?

AM: Well, we're fighting for everyone's rights here — men and women. But I certainly don't believe in the idea of the little woman sitting in the home.

I might not campaign for women's rights as much but I have my own ideas on where a woman's place should be.

East London teachers strike against the cuts

By Ken Glanfield NUT

TEACHERS in the London Borough of Barking have been on indefinite strike since last Thursday. The dispute, in defence of 160 jobs and against Heseltine's cuts, has the official support of the National Union of Teachers.

Even more significantly, the union has for the first time endorsed the call to picket schools, which is aimed at turning away supplies and shutting down schools. Wednesday 10 March will be a day of action in Barking and official delegations from the NUT will be going from London and the south east — although the union did not support the call for a half day London wide strike.

On that day the Labour controlled council will fix the new rates and the demonstration and lobby planned will call on the council to fight back against the cuts, instead of picking on its own employees. Demonstration leaves Barking Park 3 p.m. Wednesday 10 March. Lobby council in the evening.



Despite their recent defeat, Leyland workers took part in the demonstration against Tebbit and Edwards in Leyland, Lancashire last Saturday

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Rule 14 OK

By Pete Clifford

'WE'VE HAD to concede the fact that we've lost the fight to keep the factory open. Neither Snipe nor the police beat us, it was the union leaders.' This was how senior steward Billy Partlan summed up the feelings of the Laurence Scott strikers who have been battling ten long months to save their jobs.

Since the massive police operation two weeks ago to bust the picket line there has been a daily convoy of scab lorries in and out of the plant under enormous police protection. Laurence Scott workers are determined to carry through the rule 14 campaign to force a ballot for removal of the engineering union leaders. 'We won't let Boyd and Duffy forget they've committed an injustice,' explains Billy Partlan. 'We're calling on the AUEW membership to stop their union being abused by these people.'

With union leaders like these, who needs Tebbit? John Boyd calls for the banning of public sector strikes and he and Duffy want the Scott workers to pay the £6,000 bill they've received to cover the cost of the brutal eviction by bailiffs in August.

The whole labour movement has to respond to the rule 14 campaign. Getting rid of Boyd and Duffy would be a service to us all.

Support Rule 14 campaign

Laurence Scott Strike Committee

Protest resolution for AUEW branches

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

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

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

SDP union-bashers

By Davy Jones

MEMBERS of Islington NALGO, the largest union branch in the borough, have entered their second week of all-out strike against the local SDP council.

Since the SDP took control of their first council in the country through defections of Labour's 'machine-politicians' they have been hell-bent on taking on the local authority unions.

First, they refused to transfer Rob Webb from his temporary job to the permanent post to which he had been appointed. After fruitless negotiations Rob was suspended by the management when he moved to take up the job on 11 January on the

ecutive.

Finally, when a solution was put forward by the negotiators of both sides in conjunction with ACAS, the SDP councillors threw it out on Monday 1 March. A union mass meeting the following morning voted overwhelmingly to continue the strike.

If ever there was any doubt about the real union-bashing nature of the SDP, let the provocations of Islington Council be a lesson to us all. You can help expose them by supporting Islington NALGO with resolutions of support, donations and so on. Send to: Islington NALGO strike HQ, NLP students union, Ladbroke House, Highbury Barn, London N5.

When the disciplinary hearing against Rob found him not guilty, the Council deliberately provoked the continuation of the dispute by announcing the closure of a children's home. A union mass meeting the following day voted overwhelmingly to continue the all-out strike, which has now been made official by the NALGO national ex-

Socialist Challenge

Photo: PETE GRANT (Socialist Challenge)



NATIONAL SALES DAY 3 APRIL Get out the truth on Thatcher's Britain!

By the Editor
CONFRONTATION! That's the name of Thatcher's game over the next months.
 Confrontation with the rail workers, youth fighting for a living wage, women fighting for jobs and with the whole trade union movement around Tebbit's union-busting proposals.
 There can be no truce either between the labour movement and Thatcher, nor with the SDP.
 It's under these conditions that the independent press of the workers' movement is indispensable: sounding the alarm; informing militants of the necessary arguments and facts to win round the ranks; giving workers in action a voice.

We believe that's what Socialist Challenge has done.
 Internationally, we have been the only paper of the left to give such extensive coverage to the true voice of Poland — of Solidarnosc — and we are making sure that Reagan and Thatcher's war drive is exposed through building the largest possible demonstration for El Salvador on 28 March.
 At home we have been to the fore-front of the new wave of industrial disputes to hit the Tories: in the rail strike where we have carried the voice of militants from every area in the country; at Lawrence Scott where Socialist Challenge has been the most faithful ally

of the LSE workers; and at a strike in Bristol where 35 of them have become readers of Socialist Challenge. At McPherson's paint factory near Bury the shop stewards have taken out a bulk order because of the industrial coverage of the paper.
 In campaigning we have carried forward the mass movement to stop Cruise and Trident and now will launch the countdown from International Women's Day for the Women's Right to Work festival organised by the Labour Party.

The opportunities for the sales of our paper are not being fully grasped. We are not reaching the thousands of youth who are seeking political answers to the dole, to YOPs slave labour and to police repression. We are not reaching in particular, the new generation of black militants who refuse to 'turn the other cheek'. We are not reaching enough of the women who are now taking their vanguard role in battles like that at Plessey's in Bathgate. Socialist Challenge must reach these militants — Labour Party and non-Labour Party members alike — if we are to keep in step with the thinking of the most advanced sections of our class.

In the last year, we have had success in getting our paper into the plants and factories. The 3 April national sales day will be aimed at the housing estates as the most direct way of rapidly reaching new readers and giving a common enterprise to all our sellers. We need you to ring in and tell us at which estates you will be selling on that day, so that we can inform every supporter and encourage them to join in. Try distributing free, any back copies of Socialist Challenge you have lying around to prepare for your visit.

We are aiming for a thousand extra sales on that day — sales that we hope to be a permanent boost to our circulation. This will boost the campaign to get out the truth on Thatcher's Britain. And the truth is that we must unite the Labour Party and unions in action to kick out the Tories and fight for a Labour government committed to socialist policies!

National Sales Day Action Desk. Ring Alan 01-359 8371 Sundays 2-5pm.

YOUR PAPER is battling for survival. Boosting circulation is one way of ensuring its health but the bed-rock of our existence is the contributions from our supporters. We depend on these donations because we do not (and cannot) rely on the advertising which keeps the bosses' press thriving. We remind our readers that we literally **MUST** receive £1750 a week to fully meet our costs. Last week you topped it. This week is disastrously low.

We now have a very serious situation. We are £3000 behind our fund drive target!

We appeal to our readers and supporters to pull out every stop to get the maximum amount of money into the paper over the next fortnight if our battle is to be successful.

BOOSTING our circulation is important. But we remind readers that we have to also receive £1750 a week to fully meet our costs. Last week you topped it. This week was disastrously low. So keep it coming in!

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