

# socialist newsletter

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## The Labour Leaders Must Call For A Million on the Streets in May TO REMOVE THE TORIES

Unemployment is rapidly approaching 3 million. It is being made impossible for young people to get a council house. The right to picket will soon be effectively removed. Public sector pay rises are to be held in single figures for two years. The police are being licensed to freely harass young working class people, especially if they are black. Nationalised industry is to be sold off. Vast amounts are being spent on arms.

### What is to be done about all this?

Only fools and liars now say that Thatcher's economic policies can do anything but harm to the economy. Britain is on the edge of collapse. Reagan recently announced that the massive US economy is itself in deep trouble. The 'Miracle'

West German economy is in decline. These are Britain's main trading partners.

Thatcher's policies mean only one thing for working class people and their families - ruin.

It's not that the government is strong. The waterworkers just pushed through the arbitrary 6% in the public sector, even without a strike. Dockers and firemen have both driven Thatcher back. But if the Tories are to be defeated once and for all we can't do it section by section.

As things stand the stronger sections are winning and those workers unlucky enough to be in non-profitable or less key industries face enormous problems.

The united strength of the

unions and Labour Party, mobilised and organized in a national campaign to bring down the Tories would cut through divisions in the working class and soon take effect on the government.

Look at all those sections of industry which are confronting the Tories, trying to defend their conditions, their jobs and their democratic rights: railway workers, car workers, dockers, shipbuilders, aerospace workers, civil servants, teachers, immigrant workers and their families, young people and women. The Tories have savage attacks in the pipeline for all these.

What would be the effect of letting Thatcher pursue her policies? Massive layoffs. Deportations of thousands. Increased

police harassment. Pay cuts. A housing crisis. The threat of war.

The whole of the trade union and labour movement must be mobilised to turn the planned march against unemployment in May, going from the NorthWest to London, into a national campaign to bring down Thatcher.

The feeling is there. 150,000 in London, 150,000 in Liverpool, in Glasgow, 80,000 youth against militarism, thousands of blacks against racism and the nationality laws. Every time a demonstration is called the main chant is 'Maggie, Maggie - Out, Out, Out!'

It is time for the leaders of the unions and Labour Party to stop trying to evade the issue. Silence is support for the Tories. The only way to stop Thatcher is to bring the Tories down. The overwhelming majority of working people would support this.

100 trade unionists and Labour Party members lobbied the Labour Party Conference on January 24th to say, 'Enough is Enough' and called for a campaign, led by the Labour leaders, to throw Thatcher out. The lobby was addressed by David Bassett of the GMWU, with great reluctance, by Doug Hoyle, of ASTMS, Reg Race MP and Dennis Skinner MP, all of whom supported its aim of bringing down Thatcher and by Stuart Holland MP who hedged his bets. Councillor Steve Stannard from Lambeth and Councillor Don Billingsley from Haringey spoke of the devastation being caused by cuts. The lobbyists pledged themselves to open a campaign in the labour movement calling on the leaders to mobilise its full strength now, against Thatcher.

The trade union rank and file and the whole working class have shown their willingness to fight and their desire to remove Thatcher.

But in the absence of any clear call to action by the leaders, the problems pile up on their backs. In Lambeth council workers are turned against council tenants. In BL victimisations are answered with such treachery by the union leaders that workers are driven in desperation back into the arms of the 'Edward's Plan'. In the Labour Party, no lead is being given to all those thousands of councillors who want to fight the Heseltine cuts except, 'give in'.

'Enough is Enough' the Gardeners' workers said. 'Enough is Enough' the lobby said. *Enough of aiding the Tories' dirty work by keeping silent.*

Those such as Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill, who have called for the government to be brought down are a thousand times correct. Saying it was necessary was the first step. The second step is to unite, organise, mobilise, and *call the whole movement to do it!*

It is six weeks until May 1st, when the great march from the NorthWest to London is due to start. Militants must use that time to fight for the movement to turn from protest on the single issue of unemployment to a united fight on the issue - getting rid of the Tories. Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill, Dennis Skinner and those other who have the power must lead a demonstration to Parliament on the clear call '*Bring Down Thatcher!*'

It is necessary to make the May demonstration not simply one against unemployment but for the bringing down of the Tories. Militants must get calls from trade union branches, Labour Parties, tenants associations and Trades Councils for that aim.

We can and must put an immediate end to this government!

For a million on the streets in May to bring the Tories down!

### H BLOCKS & ARMAGH

Republican prisoners in Long Kesh and Armagh will mount a new Hunger Strike from March 1st. The single demand of this Strike will be Political Status. The prisoners' statement said, "The Hunger Strike ended seven weeks ago and in the absence of any movement from the British we have not seen or heard from these people . . . Where is the peace in the prisons which, like a

promise, was held before dying men's eyes? And who, but the British, are responsible for our state which is far worse today than it ever was?"

Atkins has said the government "will not concede". All democrats and socialists in Britain must now mount a tireless campaign demanding that the government honour its pledges to the prisoners on which it has reneged. For our part, the Socialist Labour Group calls for the prisoners to be given political status. We stand full square with all those fighting for Britain to get out of Ireland.



## DEPTFORD MASSACRE

# UNITY & SELF-DEFENCE AGAINST RACIST ATTACKS

by Winston Carr

January 18th turned into a nightmare for hundreds of blacks in New Cross, South London, when a birthday party for two girls was tragically ended by a premeditated act of mass murder. 12 young people have since died from burns and dozens more lie ill in hospital.

The police were quick to point out that there was no evidence to suggest a 'racial motive'. In fact, police and press reports have not ceased their barrage about the 'absolute necessity to interview a black man seen outside the party in a white car' or 'the gang of gate crashers who were turned away from the party'. Never mind the fact that Carl Wright - the person who saw the white car - angrily maintains that he made it clear to both police and media that he did not know whether the occupant was white or black.

After the Notting Hill carnivals, the Birmingham '12 day party' and other black peoples' activities, the media has deliberately begun to create hysteria over black self-activity. It's no surprise that some of the ruling class fast-mouthpieces such as Tory MP Jill Knight have declared that West Indian parties are a source of 'nuisance'.

In fact the references to a white man circling the house minutes before the fire are virtually absent in the press. The vicious attack is treated as non-racial or the product of rows amongst blacks. The reality, as any black person knows, is that there have been many physical attacks on the black community in the Lewisham area - involving guns, bricks through windows and at least one fire bombing in the recent past. Black people are told to wait for the police and the bourgeois state to solve this bloody crime. We will wait forever for that. Even if the police do arrest the murderers we have lost another 12 young brothers and sisters.

Some black families in the Camden area already live in boarded-up homes and dare not walk the streets unless in numbers. Asian families have to have bodyguards for their children to and from school in some parts of East London. Scores of shootings, fire-bombings and assaults have all occurred in the last period with little or no publicity. The police refuse to consider the motive as racial attacks on a systematic basis. Convictions have been next to nil.

What has been made painfully clear to the black community by the New Cross fire is that we cannot rely on the state to defend us. If we make no moves to defend ourselves no-one else will do it for us. Black organisations are faced by the racist attacks with the task of organising self-defence and the discussion on how to fight back against racism. As well as the

spectacular outbreaks of physical violence we will soon face the Nationality Bill opening the door to mass deportations, the effects of systematic police harassment of black youth on the dole and the effects of the housing crisis which will hit black people hard.

We ask so-called progressives like the 'Anti-Nazi League' whether they will turn their attentions away from publicity seeking but useless 'carnivals' and concerts and start to organise real local self-defence on the ground. Now, more than ever, it is necessary for black people to seek a united front with those in the trade union, Labour and student movements who want to build working class self-defence organisations in the areas capable of preventing fascist attacks and driving the fascists and racists off the streets.



**DEMONSTRATE!**  
Monday 2nd March  
10am, Pagnell Street, New Cross  
TO SCOTLAND YARD,  
PARLIAMENT AND HYDE PARK

## Seafarers' Strike

The seafarers have succeeded in causing the first breach in the ranks of the Employers' Federation with the break of the Canadian Pacific Line. A wage rise of 16% was reportedly agreed with them. Whilst

the shipowners insisted that this would not destroy their united opposition to the National Union of Seamen's demands the strike action is clearly bringing some lines to the brink in current re-

cession conditions. Already several other employers are engaged in independent negotiations.

The NUS Executive still refuses to start united and all-out strike action which could bring things to a head very quickly. They drew back even from the proposal of a national two-day strike. The Slater leadership clearly views the full claim as merely a 'negotiating position'. The only way forward for this crucial dispute, now at a turning point, is to call the seamen out and seek support from dockers and railwaymen to ensure the blacking of any cargoes landed.

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## Camden Backs Down

At a meeting of Camden Council, which continued until 3am in the morning, right wing Labour leader Roy Shaw won his battle for cuts to avoid the threat of surcharge. The Tory government, through an auditor, had threatened to surcharge 33 Labour councillors in Camden up to £60,000 each. This blackmail, based on a pay deal dating back to the low paid dispute of 1979, is Heseltine's way of driving Camden back, in the same way as the auditor threatened Lambeth with bankruptcy.

# nols

## Connors' NUS Candidacy A Trick

Recent issues of *Socialist Newsletter* have reported the fight by left-wing Labour Students to force the leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS), to hold their annual conference before the Easter conference of the National Union of Students (NUS).

This important battle centres on the attempt of the NOLS rank and file to break from the utterly discredited 'Left Alliance', which is a bloc between the Liberals, Communist students and the National Committee of NOLS. The December 1979 NOLS Conference voted to break all links with the 'Left Alliance'. However since that date the NOLS National Committee have persistently broken that Conference mandate. At the two NUS Conferences since then the NOLS National Committee has backed 'Left Alliance' resolutions and candidates in elections to the NUS National Executive. The most outrageous example of this is the case of Helen Connors.

She was chosen by the 1979 NOLS Conference to stand on an independent NOLS slate for the Easter 1980 NUS elections. She accepted the nomination and then promptly stood under the 'Left Alliance' banner in complete contradiction to NOLS Conference decision. Since then the criminal policy of the 'Left Alliance' has been clearly seen by thousands of students. The demobilisation of the Grants Campaign, the betrayal of the overseas students and the capitulation to Rhodes Boyson's attempts to paralyse student unions by completely integrating their finances into the budgets of college institutions.

The NOLS leaders knew full well there would be an even bigger revolt against the 'Left Alliance' and their support for it at the annual NOLS Conference in December 1980. To avoid this confrontation with the NOLS rank and file over the 1979 Conference mandate, the NOLS National Committee simply cancelled the annual conference! In its place they convened an advisory 'Students Council'. Combined with its continued support for the discredited and unpopular 'Left Alliance', this cynical junking of a delegate based democratic conference has led to demoralisation and confusion in the ranks of NOLS.

This erroneous 'Students Council' has assembled twice this academic year. On the second occasion a mere nine Labour Clubs were represented out of a possible 100 plus.

At this second 'Students Council' the National Committee had the audacity to propose none other than Helen Connors as the NOLS candidate for NUS President! She will now stand against 'Left Alliance' candidate and current President, Dave Aaronovitch. However this is clearly a manoeuvre to provide the 'Left Alliance' with a fall-back option because there is wide-spread hostility to Aaronovitch in the student movement. Connors and Aaronovitch do not differ one iota in their policies. The bankruptcy of the present alternatives to the 'Left Alliance' is further demonstrated by the manoeuvres of the SWP student organisation SWSO, which is playing with the idea of backing Connors. At the same time *Socialist Worker* "hopes for the triumph of NOLS politics within NUS". This crass opportunism is all part of SWSO's recent turn to so-called "united-front" work with NOLS. Of course this is not a united-front to advance the interests of students but a left-cover for the discredited Connors and the NOLS National Committee. This unprincipled manoeuvre is directly counter-posed to the struggle of rank and file NOLS members against their rotten leadership. This is the opposite of a united front in action.

The issue facing socialist students and NOLS members in particular is not Connors OR Aaronovitch. A struggle must be taken up on the following lines:

1. For the convening of a full NOLS Conference before Easter.
2. Reaffirmation of the NOLS break from the 'Left Alliance'.
3. NOLS National Committee members who won't break to be kicked-out.
4. Election of an independent slate.
5. No support for Connors or Aaronovitch.

This struggle forms the basis for a new positive political regroupment which can fight for mobilisations of students on the political line of bringing down the Government in unity with the workers' movement.

The Council meeting was continually interrupted by the lobbyists. As a result of the decision by the right wing to cut, 600 direct labour jobs are to go by April 1982 and NUPE workers will not get the 7½% pay rise agreed at national level recently. The Council will cut expenditure by £13 million.

Camden local government workers plan to launch a joint campaign of workers and tenants on February 17th to fight cuts, rent and rate rises. Camden is an area which has a long tradition of strong tenants' associations and has seen rent strikes. It is imperative that the fight in Camden be linked with that in other London boroughs and that the united front between council workers and tenants be aimed at bringing down the Tory government.

# CPSA

## BROAD LEFT RETREAT ON PAY

The CPSA Special Pay Conference of January 29th saw yet another example of how the right wing controlled executive and the domesticated 'Broad Left' official 'opposition' complement each other in practice.

Moving a motion on the 1981 Pay Campaign against Thatcher's 6%, a Militant Tendency supporter from Customs and Excise, Liverpool, summed up why he wouldn't be calling for an all-out action against Thatcher. He said, "The membership still has illusions in selective strike action. It may be necessary one day to take all-out action, but that's a question for the future."

So the members get the blame again. The right and the majority of the left at the Conference agreed on one thing: take no action and then say it was the hesitancy of the rank and file. Not even the SWP oriented 'Redder Tape' faction could bring itself to disagree — indeed, one of their supporters seconded the same motion.

As the Militant Tendency becomes a bigger force in the CPSA 'Broad Left' now providing the Presidential nominee, Kevin Roddy, it is important to see just what their policy is. In an article written before the Pay Conference, Roddy asserted, "The 'Moderates' have ensured that we are too late to enter the 1981 pay round with a consistent programme for mass membership action."

In this way Roddy prepared the ground for running away at the Conference himself. The fact is that Militant supporters and others in the Broad Left campaigned against national strike action to break the 6%. At the Conference they placed a large block of votes behind the Executive's document, which outlaws any real action against the 6%. The entire 'official left' from CP to SWP, backed the right wing plans and ditched those motions which openly called for 'major industrial action within every department' and a public sector alliance against



the 6%, tabled by supporters of the 'Campaign for Civil Service Unity'.

When the two largest civil service unions, CPSA and SPCS, called Special Pay Conferences, everyone knew it was in response to the tearing up by Thatcher of the Civil Service Pay Agreement and its replacement by a 6% pay freeze. Yet a strategy to fight the Tories, bearing in mind the linked attack on jobs and pay, which has caused so much damage in the car industry, and the need for unity amongst all

those facing the 6%, got perhaps *fifteen minutes* time in the whole day!

So tame was the left at the Conference that it was leading right winger Marion Chambers who warned that if civil service action "brings down the government, then so be it". That received a round of applause. But Thatcher can rest assured of one thing: if the civil servants bring her down it will be the rank and file who do it, not the current initiatives of the leaders, right or left.

Although the Special Conferences asked for rises of between 15% and 20%, the union leaders clearly hope that they can squeeze about 10% from the Tories, by a process of withdrawing selected workers to affect certain government functions and cash flow. Other civil servants wanting action are to be kept quiet with a show-piece one day national strike.

But 1981 is not 1979 and Thatcher is not Callaghan. With the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement expected to reach £14 billions (almost twice Thatcher's target) drastic action has to be taken and the Tories intend to take it at the expense of civil servants, town hall workers, health and education workers and other public sector workers.

The two million public sector workers must respond to the Tory attack by welding themselves together in a public sector alliance prepared to bring the Tories down to defend wages and jobs. In 1979 Callaghan was prepared to lock out those civil servants who refused to scab on their comrades. Thatcher will go much further. The room to manoeuvre for civil servants is now much less because of this government's desperate drive to push down living standards.

The crisis which exists within the left of the CPSA highlights the need for a regroupment of activists to fight within the Broad Left for the leadership to defend the union and call the members to action.



## End the PTA Now!

Coming up for renewal by a vote in Parliament soon is the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1976). This Act replaced and extended the original 1974 PTA, introduced in the wake of the Birmingham pub bombings.

The real purpose of the PTA is to intimidate and harass the Irish community in Britain and to create a climate of fear and hesitancy in which any open discussion or activity questioning the British presence or repressive role in Ireland can be labelled as "criminal" or "pro-terrorist" and a vagrancy on political activists.

The PTA gives the police sweeping powers of arrest and search without warrant. It allows detention incommunicado and without legal access for up to a week. It provides for exclusion from Britain for Irish people on the say-so of the Home Secretary. It creates new "offences" such as "withholding information" and effectively abolishes the principle of the right to remain silent.

Since 1974, thousands of searches have been conducted under the Act, thousands of Irish people have been detained and harassed without any rights and scores have been deported permanently.

The opposition to this repressive law in the Labour movement has been extremely muted in Britain. Two years ago, after a campaign and lobby of Parliament organised by the International Campaign Against Repression, thirty three MP's voted against its renewal. Last year this number was reduced to only a handful.

The issue needs to be raised in the Labour Party and trade union branches now and the campaign re-motivated in preparation for the renewal debate. All Labour MP's must be called upon to vote to throw out this law, which represents at one and the same time defence of British oppression of Ireland and a blow at the democratic rights of workers in Britain.

## Waterworkers: Strike for full claim needed

The battle over wages in the water industry is continuing, after the rejection of a 10% offer by the employers, no doubt after consultation with the Tory government. This offer was itself 2.1% up on the previous offer. The union negotiating team are not making any recommendation — these days it is becoming perfectly usual for union leaders to abdicate all responsibility in such matters. Thus the waterworkers must now ballot again to decide action. Already they have smashed through the government's 6% limit on pay rises in the public sector. This shows that nationally co-ordinated action in the public sector, backed up with a threat of all-out strike action, can push the Tories back. As in BSC and BL the employers are now talking about holding their own 'ballot' on the offer. This combines with the

passive, 'no recommendation' position of the union leaders to put enormous pressure on the rank and file to vote against further action. The waterworkers' dispute is crucial not just for them, but for workers in gas and electricity. It will equally set a standard for all public sector employees. It is not enough to drive 6% up to 10% under conditions where inflation is above 16% and massive rent and rate rises are being imposed.

Waterworkers must reject the spurious ballot being proposed by the employers. There is only one answer to such con-tricks — *boycott!* Questions about the claim can and must be decided *inside* the unions. Equally, waterworkers have a right to demand that the union leaders get off the fence. A clear call for national strike action, for the full claim and fully prepared, is needed.





# Knight Acts To Derail Lambeth Movement

## stop the retreat!

The Re-Call Lambeth Conference took place on January 17th at Central Hall, Westminster. It was a very different affair to the November 1st Conference. The original Conference was attended by over 800 delegates. But the Re-Call assembly had 350 delegates with far less representation from trade union branches, CLPs and Labour Groups.

Fundamental to this decline is the policy of Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight. The original Conference voted against rate and rent rises and the sale of council houses. But Knight has retreated from all these positions with the implementation of massive rate rises. This has led to widespread demoralisation and division in the ranks of the movement represented on November 1st.

An air of broken promises and retreat pervaded the January 17th Conference. The main lines of demarcation inside the Conference were between those who wanted to stop the retreat and organise a national offensive to confront the Government, and those like Ted Knight and the WRP who justified soaking council-tenants with huge rate-rises to temporarily maintain jobs and services.

The role of the WRP was to provide cover for Knight's policy with talk of building Community Councils as a substitute for carrying the fight to the leaders of the Labour movement. WRP speakers argued that the working-class needs an alliance with small-businessmen and shopkeepers in the battle against Thatcher.

Speakers opposing this line argued that the working class needs a call from its national leaders to bring down the Tories. These speakers went on to say they were not opposed to an alliance with petty-bourgeois elements led by the labour movement, but no such broad movement could be built on the basis of massive rate-increases which hit the living standards of the working class and small businessmen and shopkeepers.

The reactionary content of the WRP's intervention was best expressed by one of their speakers who argued that no worker would oppose a 'speed-up' if it meant bankruptcy for his employer! This was intended to be a justification for Ted Knight's refusal to bankrupt Lambeth Council if necessary and confront the Government who are causing the bankruptcy.

The WRP intervention, four-square behind Knight's retreat, revealed a new stage in the evolution of that organisation. In the 1976-79 period they made the

ultra-left call for the bringing down of the Labour Government. Today they argue support for huge rate-increases, in other words cuts in workers' living standards, to preserve Ted Knight's position. After their extreme isolation in recent years they obviously intend to make their way back into the mass movement hanging onto Knight's coat tails.

The opposition to Knight's strategy and the WRP's Community Councils came from supporters of *Socialist Newsletter*, *Socialist Press*, *Socialist Organiser* and *Socialist Challenge*. The speeches made by supporters of these four papers made the point that the fight must begin now to stop the retreat. They argued that a national offensive against Heseltine must begin on the basis of no cuts, no rate and rent rises and no council house sales.

*Socialist Newsletter* supporters also argued for the fight to be carried to the NEC and TUC demanding that they begin the campaign to bring down the Tories with specific actions in defence of Lambeth. The theme of 'stop the retreat' was best articulated by Alan Thornett (TGWU), Steve Corbishley (CPSA), a leader of the *Socialist Teachers Alliance* and Ray Howell (AUEW). Their speeches marked the turning point in the Conference which led to the defeat of Knight's rate-increase strategy and the WRP's Community Councils proposal. The resolution from CPSA DE Central London calling for a lobby of the Special Labour Party Conference was carried and with it a commitment to campaign to make the Labour leaders begin the fight to bring down Thatcher.

The common thread of the speeches made by supporters of *Socialist Newsletter*, *Socialist Press*, *Socialist Organiser* and *Socialist Challenge* should not be passed off as coincidence. No-one would deny that these papers have important differences. But at this juncture in the struggle all four papers are agreed on the need to stop the retreat. It is imperative that a united front of these forces is formed to fight the divisive rate and rent rises. This struggle directly corresponds to the most immediate needs of the working class.

Ted Knight ignored the decisions of November 1st and no doubt he will ignore the results of January 17th too. In this situation all those forces committed to fighting the retreat must begin organising to unite in struggle the council employees and council tenants currently being divided by Knight's policy.

# Mobilise To Defend The Wembley Decisions Against Foot

George White



Describing the outcome of the Special Labour Party Conference last January 24th, Tony Benn said, "This result has been a turning point in British Labour history". He was correct. The Wembley events come at the end of an extraordinary eighteen month period in the life of the Labour Party. This period was opened up by the defeat of Callaghan by the low paid workers at the start of 1979, conditioned by the defeat of Labour in the General election of May 1979 and determined in form by the attempt of the Labour leaders after that to hold back the movement from all-out conflict with the Tories.

On paper, the long battle over party structures which opened at the 1979 Brighton Conference is about abstract democracy. In reality it is organically linked to the need of working people to deal with the ominous effects of Britain's decline, economic and political. The feelings which generated the dispute over party structures have their roots in a need to get fighting leaders, to control those leaders and to control policy.

The vast apparatus of the Labour Party and affiliated unions, for decades impenetrable to the rank and file, has been breached, not by the pressure of any secret ginger group but under the pressure of the changing conditions of political life in Britain.

There is no turning back now, either for the right or the left. The old status quo, where decisions were taken behind closed doors in Parliament and union headquarters,

has gone. The attempts by Foot and Duffy to find a new line of defence will only lead to new crises. Certainly, the parliamentary right wing and the union bosses have in no sense suffered a final defeat. They are still in control of a powerful apparatus. The leader of the Labour Party, Michael Foot, stands four square in defence of that apparatus. He revealed himself at Wembley to be its champion. But he does not lead a party under the same conditions as did Harold Wilson, or even Callaghan.

The 40%-30%-30% electoral college under current conditions could provide a roughly even left-right split. In any case the right cannot easily use it to smash the left. Does this allow Foot to play a balancing role? Certainly not. In order to play a Bonapartist role he would have to be above reselection. And he is not. In short, the new system is not a basis for the left and right wing leaders to 'heal the breach' and end the dispute over the structure of the party. On the contrary, it deepens the crisis, creating instability at the level of leadership, both in the party and the affiliated unions.

The argument over structures is rapidly spreading to become a thoroughgoing questioning of the nature of the Labour Party. At the Rank and File Mobilising Committee fringe meeting the night before Conference, Eric Heffer called for a Labour Party which could contain both men of the Aneurin Bevan type and the Tony Crosland type (Crosland was one of

the political precursors of the Gang of Three). Arthur Scargill took this up. He said, "The Labour Party is a broad church, but a broad church only for socialists". These differences will not be resolved simply through 'structural reform'. The extreme right wing, Rodgers, Williams and Owen, know this. They know that reselection leads to political pressure. They see that the old alliance between right wing union bosses and right wing parliamentarians which was at the heart of the Labour Party apparatus, is crumbling around them.

Indeed, the discussion opening up around the use of 'extra-parliamentary action' to force an early election, centred on the group around Tony Benn, aims a dagger at the heart of British electoral politics. It poses questions which can only be resolved by very fundamental changes in the broader mass movement. In short, it leads to the call for the Labour Party to bring down an elected government. This discussion is not about 'democracy' in the abstract; it is the same question, in reverse, which Edward Heath asked when he called the first of the two General Elections of 1974 as the result of the miners' strike; Who rules? The government or the unions? And this is but another form of the question: Must the working class accept everything that Parliament does?

The working class is going to have to answer that question in the negative if it is to defend its own vital interests.





# Resolving the crisis of the Fourth International

A REPORT OF THE PARITY COMMITTEE WORLD CONFERENCE



The World Conference convened by the Parity Committee of the Fourth International and which took place between December 19th and 27th 1980 in Paris, was without doubt the most important international conference of Trotskyists since the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. 150 delegates were present representing revolutionary organisations from 40 different countries comprising 20,000 militants.

The Conference resolved to fuse its forces - hitherto organised in three tendencies, the Bolshevik Faction, the Lenin-Trotsky Tendency and the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International - into one unified international body, the Fourth International (International Committee).

## 30 Years of Dislocation

The Fourth International was founded in a period of defeat for the working class on an international scale, at a time when it was vitally necessary to keep alive and defend the historical continuity of revolutionary Marxism in the face of Stalinist betrayals of the working class. It emerged from the Second World War severely weakened as a direct consequence of the decimation of its cadres by Nazism and Stalinism internationally.

As a result its immature political leadership was ill equipped to analyse and to respond to new and unexpected post-war developments: the apparent regeneration of the productive forces and the 'economic boom' in the imperialist countries; the overturn of capitalist property relations in the Eastern European 'buffer states'; the Stalinist led Chinese revolution, to name but a few. These events formed the bases of the crisis of the Fourth International in the early 1950's when, against the background of the Cold War, Michel Pablo and his supporters in the FI leadership, assigned to the Stalinist bureaucracy a historically progressive role and thereby ditched the corner stone of Marxism: that the socialist revolution is the task not of the Kremlin but of the working class. The consequent liquidation of its cadres into the Stalinist parties split the FI and the International Commt Committee was set up to defend the principles of Trotskyism against the

revisionists. But the failure of the American SWP - to provide the necessary leadership - which only its continuity and experience could offer - and the subsequent return of that Party to the revisionists in 1963, after a cursory discussion that touched on none of the problems relating to the original split, only perpetuated the crisis and fragmentation of Trotskyism on a world scale. The International Committee under Healy's leadership degenerated into national sects, until the French OCI stood virtually alone in defence of the Trotskyist programme. Meanwhile, in the revisionist USec, Mandel followed in the footsteps of Pablo by substituting guerilla units and the intelligentsia for the working class as the vanguard of the revolutionary process, whilst the SWP went a step further and prostrated itself before the Kremlin's Caribbean mouthpiece Fidel Castro, whose leadership was apparently "Superior to that of Lenin and Trotsky in the Russian Revolution".

## The United Secretariat Explodes

As OCI leader - Lambert explained at the Conference, "the Fourth International's crisis is not an ideological process, it is a material process based on the class struggle". Thus, it was not accidental that

the upsurge of the Nicaraguan revolution and the taking of power by the FSLN was the central development which exploded the contradictions in the USec. All the political capitulations now became concrete betrayals in the Nicaraguan revolution. This was highlighted above all by the events surrounding the Simon Bolivar Brigade, an international brigade initiated by Latin American sections adhering to the Bolshevik Faction, which fought in the civil war against Somoza. This magnificent example of concrete international solidarity was roundly denounced by the SWP as 'provocative' when the SBB began organising trade unions in Nicaragua following the military victory. This persisted even after leaders of the SBB were detained and beaten up by the new Sandinista government, as Carlos Petroni explained at the Conference:

"When we were prisoners in Nicaragua, repressed by the bourgeois government, in prison, they interrogated me on the Fourth International to which I said I belonged... and of which certain USec leaders denied I was a member! going so far as to say that it was possible that I might be a provocateur in the service of the CIA. That's a fundamental question: defence of our militants imprisoned by the bourgeoisie - a question of principle. Its impossible to belong to an organisation which accuses its militants of being provocateurs".

It was against this background of the USec's wholehearted support for the bourgeois government in Nicaragua even to the extent of colluding in the repression of Trotskyist militants that the Bolshevik Faction and LTT organised with the OCRFI the Parity Committee of the Fourth International to uphold the banner of Trotskyism from the gutter in which the USec had dragged it. The Parity Committee made its central objective the principled reunification of Trotskyist forces and the elimination of liquidationist revisionism from the ranks of the FI.

## The Theses

The 40 Theses elaborated by the leadership of the Parity Committee constituted the principled basis on which such a reunification could take place. As Nahuel Moreno explained when he introduced the Theses at the world conference "The Theses have two objectives: in the first place, they give us a clear programme and a general framework in which we can structure a solid organisation; in the second place, they allow us to separate ourselves in the sharpest way possible from other currents of the working class movement and particularly from revisionism".

In fact the Theses restate the principles of our movement and apply them to analyse the problematic developments of the last thirty years that have derailed the revolutionary movement: the growth of the destructive forces; the crisis of stalinism; the lack of new "October Revolutions". One major theoretical development among many is the analysis of the Cuban revolution and the overturn of capitalist property relations as an example of a workers and peasants government being constrained by a dynamic of internal and external factors to break with the bourgeoisie and to establish a workers state - albeit a deformed workers state - a possibility briefly envisaged in the Transitional Programme.

The Theses further emphasise the need to build Trotskyist parties with mass influence and rooted in the working class and discuss in some depth the strategic considerations involved in this perspective. The centrality of the Workers United Front is stressed, the question of the anti-imperialist united front is considerably developed and there is some detailed discussion of the Right of Nations to Self-Determination applied to Spain and of the unity of the social and political revolution in Germany. Above all, the Theses affirm the historic necessity of the Fourth International and its leadership of the proletarian masses, against those who have sought not only to liquidate the Party and its programme at every opportunity but to deny those masses their historic revolutionary task.

## Resolutions of the Conference

A very full and serious discussion on the Theses took place at the Conference which it would be impossible to reproduce in this article. Above all the method of the Theses was applied to the living developments of the class struggle on the basis of which a number of resolutions were adopted outlining key tasks: in France, the battle for the United Front of the Socialist and Communist Parties; in Argentina, centering on the struggle against the dictatorship; in Nicaragua, re-affirming the proletarian character of the revolution in spite of the petty bourgeois leadership of the FSLN, and focussing on the need to expel the bourgeois ministers from the government. Perhaps most important was the resolution on Poland:

"For the FI(IC), the unconditional defence of the political revolution in Poland is entirely bound up with the defence of the socialist conquests, of state property and of the planned economy, which is seriously threatened by the bureaucratic caste. Agitation against the danger of military intervention by the Kremlin bureaucracy must be undertaken in all countries. It must include the systematic denunciation of imperialist campaigns which aim to encourage such an intervention and which seek to use such a situation to step up economic, diplomatic and military pressure against the Soviet Union and the socialist gains of Eastern Europe."

Central to our work in Poland, the resolution goes on, is the construction of a revolutionary party. Polish militants of the FI are for this very reason active in the Provisional Committee for the Construction of a Polish Socialist Workers Party, currently working in clandestinity.

## The USec at The Conference

At the same time as being concrete and practical much of the discussion at the conference was very clearly oriented to the USec, whose delegation was present throughout. In a discussion of democratic centralism and party organisation, on which the USec prides itself in terms of its freedom for tendencies galore, Lambert pointed out that this had encouraged a federal from of organisation, where different sections could make public attacks on one another, and how this had compromised the USec internally and paralysed it in practise.

He said:

"There is a revolution going on in Poland against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Castro has just supported a possible invasion by the Soviet Union. And in the USec, the SWP affirms that Castro's is a more thoroughgoing revolutionary leadership than Lenin's ... Are these simply tactical differences internal to the USec? There may well be differences among us in our diverse sections, it is true, and we discuss them through in order to advance. We dont hide or avoid them. That's our method. It is a method opposed to that of the USec who say 'We have differences with the SWP; for that reason let us change the subject and talk of something else!'

But, perhaps the most intriguing moment of the Conference was the one occasion when Danial Ben Said representing the USec rose to speak. He addressed the Conference for two hours, and whilst being forced to acknowledge its importance 'as a pole of the FI', he nevertheless glossed over the differences of political principle involved and attacked the Theses and their characterisation of revisionism as meaningless.

Moreno took this up very sharply in reply. He pointed out that the desire to dodge the discussion on principles in favour of immediate tasks was a Menshevik method, scorned by Lenin time and again. Only the assimilation of principles allows the development of new analyses and the ability to predict the dynamic of given events. The method of Ben Said runs counter to this: "He says in effect that it is necessary to await events to know if the FSLN is going to betray or not. Trotsky called this method the method of 'no thanks, I dont smoke'. In order to act on reality, it is necessary to make a prognosis. Without a Trotskyist prognosis, there is no Trotskyist policy". In the case of the USec, Moreno added, whilst keeping up a formal 'wait and see' attitude, it was at the same time liquidating into the FSLN.

## FI(IC) IS FORMED

The unanimous decision to set up the FI(IC) represents a recognition of the urgent need for the construction of Trotskyist parties with mass influence across the globe. At the same time, the FI(IC) will take up the unfinished business of the first International Committee of the 1950's and early '60's: the elimination of revisionism and the regroupment of all Trotskyists within a common World Party. In this sense, the FI(IC) does not claim to be the Fourth International already wholly reconstructed; but it does represent the majority of Trotskyists in the world to-day working on that perspective.

For the first time since its foundation, a split in the Trotskyist movement has led to a principled fusion of forces. Thus, Lambert could point out in his concluding remarks: "The FI(IC) is an immense gain for our movement. If Comrade Trotsky was here to-day, he would say 'Well done'".

by Paul Glazier

In the Conference itself the right wing was always on the defensive, although victory for the left was far from guaranteed. The extreme right tried to introduce a postal ballot system. Terry Duffy moved the AUEW to support for 75% of the electoral college votes to go to MPs. By lunchtime the issue was shaping up between the proposals of two unions. USDAW, although formally a right wing union, wanted 40% for the unions, 30% for the CLPs and 30% for MPs. The GMWU wanted 25% for the unions, 25% for CLPs

and 50% for MPs. The left swung to support USDAW. The right was not able, in the same way and in time, to get in behind the GMWU. The '40-30-30' was agreed. Afterwards the leader of the USDAW delegation said he wished they had supported the GMWU position.

This result was, without doubt, the immediate outcome of some deft tactical manoeuvring during and just before the Conference. But it was by no means sure and the

right have nine months to rectify their own tactical stumbling. When Michael Foot spoke at the end of the Conference he was given a standing ovation. His speech was not an acceptance of the result but the beginning of a fightback by the apparatus. He appealed to the Gang of Three to stay. He said, "Conference is not infallible". This was not the old left rebel of the 1950s and early 1960s. This was the leader of a rearguard fight to defend the bastions of right wing reformism.

## Throw Out The Gang of Three and The CSD



In the first instance the 'Council for Social Democracy' should not be allowed to quietly regroup around it in the Constituency Parties. They claim to have received 8000 replies to their advertised manifesto. The Labour Party can do without 8000 people planning a split to join with the Liberals. Tony Benn was correct to demand at the level of the NEC that Shirley Williams declare her loyalty. Candidates for the upcoming local elections must be challenged in the same way by the Management Committees. All of the 100 signatories to the public statement of the CSD must be asked to withdraw by their CLPs. *The action of Wrexham CLP in demanding the withdrawal or the resignation of their rightist MP Tom Ellis is absolutely correct and necessary.*

The link between the political methods of the 'Council for Social Democracy' and the banned 'Social Democratic Alliance' which planned to stand candidates against Labour left wingers is clearly shown by the presence of two of the SDA leaders among the 'Gang of 100'. George Brown, virulently anti-socialist in ermin, holds joint membership. Williams, Rodgers, Owen and the others are now merely camping in

the Labour Party, waiting for the most damaging moment to break. The NEC and the CLPs must take action. *They must be driven out! The Labour Whip in the Commons must be withdrawn from the twelve!* This is not a game with numbers. It is a fight for the principles of working class political independence. For many years Rodgers took part in the witch-hunting of militants from the Labour Party. *Now he must go!* Michael Foot's appeal to them to stay is nothing but an appeal for allies against the democratic changes of the last three Conferences.

There is no place for a 'Lib-Lab' wing of the Labour Party. The Party was set up and fought for against the likes of the Gang of Three. Ramsey MacDonald would cheer them. *They belong to the side of the ruling class.*

Others, equally right wing in their political views, such as Dennis Healey, and Roy Mason, may decide to stay and serve the ruling class from within. *They must be re-selected! The Barnsley miners have shown the way!* It should be followed in every constituency with an MP who refuses to accept the policy of the Party and to fight the Tories to the finish.

## Michael Foot: Defender of The Apparatus

The Conference has been followed by a tremendous burst of activity in four areas: by the extreme right, by the core of the Parliamentary Party, in the Tribune Group and among the affiliated unions.

The media concentrated their attention on the moves towards a split from the Labour Party by the Gang of Three and eight other MPs. The 'Council for Social Democracy' which they formed has the open backing of big business. It is to act as an immediate pressure point for the ruling class within the workers' movement. Up and down the country secret contacts are being made among the right wing, to the end of establishing a breakaway 'centre party' for a new election. Combined with the redrawing of constituency boundaries, which may cost a dozen Labour seats, a right wing breakaway could threaten another half dozen seats and eat into the Labour vote in others, making a much bigger swing against the Tories necessary for Labour to win. This is the hope of the ruling class in backing the idea of a 'centre party'. There is no hope of the emergence of a strong 'centre coalition', able to form an alternative government to the two main class parties in the near future. That is an illusion deliberately sown by

the bourgeois media to drain support from Labour.

Michael Foot followed up his challenge to the 40-30-30 electoral college vote with attacks on the left at meetings of the shadow cabinet and Parliamentary Labour Party. As the *Financial Times* said, "His success last week in rallying Labour MPs and some union leaders behind a campaign to overturn the Wembley decision and restore to MPs the major vote enables him to argue more convincingly that the party's swing to the left can be fought from within". Indeed, the burden of any defence of the apparatus falls not on the rightists, who can serve the ruling class better now by attempting a split, but on Foot, Healey and their supporters. It is possible to discern an increasing caution in MPs like Eric Heffer who want to stop short of a political split and are being drawn towards the Foot centre. On paper it is possible for Foot to regroup enough elements within the party and unions to overturn the Wembley decision next October.

This throws great emphasis onto events in the unions. Already the leaders of USDAW have stated that their '40-30-30' position was a mistake. Duffy is working to line up his executive for a less out on a limb position than 75% for MPs.

Frank Chapple may, in the light of this, not want to throw total support behind the Gang of Three. It will be the battle to realign union block votes over the next six months that will determine whether Foot can overturn the Wembley decision in October.

Lastly, there is the development of a firmer group around Tony Benn, which the press are calling the 'hard left'. Benn recently joined the 'Tribune Group' of MPs and almost at the same time Reg Race, now closely connected with the Benn camp and able to act as middleman to the 'Rank and File Mobilising Committee', presented a paper calling for radical action against the Tories inside and outside parliament. In trying to regroup the majority of MPs Foot has to attack Benn as well as the extreme right, because Benn's methods destabilize the parliamentary apparatus. Benn himself has stopped short of calling for the bringing down of Thatcher through industrial action or the expulsion of the right wing, but towards him are looking many party activists who would not hesitate to take these steps.

Labour Party activists and union levy payers anxious to defend the gains of the past eighteen months must not watch passively the process of regroupment by the right wing.

## Open Out The Fight To The Unions

Central to the outcome at the next Labour Party Conference in October will be the way the union block votes go. Labour militants in the trade unions must open campaigns for all union delegations to Labour Party Conference to vote on mandates flowing out of the Conference of the unions. Discussions on the problems of Labour Party structures and policies should be opened up in the branches and committees of affiliated unions. Above all, delegates to the Labour Party Conference in Brighton next autumn must be *freely elected*, whether at annual conference of the union or region by region. *No to union block votes being cast on the whim of officials!*

The Left must prepare for October. Not only by broadening the campaign on democracy in the

Party and unions, but by linking the problem of Party structures to the fight to bring down Thatcher. *We have to put the new powers to use.* The Rank and File Mobilising Committee and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy must be widened to include all rank and file activists who want to defend the 40-30-30 college against Foot and the right. A real national mobilisation of militants must be mounted. The 40-30-30 college is not a fully democratic and open method to elect the leader. It is a compromise solution. But it is a step forward for the active rank and file in the Labour Party and the unions and it must now be defended against attack from the right.

Defence of the 40-30-30 college is the battle line which has been drawn by events.



# SALVADOR

**DOWN WITH THE JUNTA!**

**MATERIAL AID TO THE REVOLUTION!**

The 'final offensive' of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) has so far not brought down the 'Civilian-Military Junta' in Salvador, after two weeks of all-out fighting. However, the right wing National Guard, backed up by an influx of US advisors and some Honduran and Guatemalan troops, has been unable to defeat the revolutionary forces. The government now rests solely on physical repression, held in place by massive US aid. As well as immediate aid to the junta in the form of arms, lorries and helicopters, US imperialism has stockpiled arms in Guatemala and elsewhere in Central America. This clearly indicates contingency plans for direct military intervention. Indeed a task force lies ready in Texas and Florida, as well as a fleet in the Caribbean. These plans were recently leaked by a 'dissident' group of advisors to the State Department. The Reagan administration has pressured Honduras and Guatemala into an agreement which includes joint military intervention in El Salvador.

The destabilisation of Central America started by the fall of Somoza in Nicaragua would reach epidemic proportions if Salvador fell. For this reason Reagan is being driven to pin everything on propping up the bloody junta. If the 'Civilian-Military Junta' falls, not only Central America but world imperialism would be further shaken. The stakes are high for a

US imperialism driven out of VietNam and humiliated in Iran. Socialists should not believe that the inability of the US ruling class to intervene directly in Nicaragua during the revolution there extends immunity to the revolution in Salvador.

At this moment the struggle against the junta in Salvador is one of the focal points of the world socialist revolution, of crucial interest to socialists in Britain. A defeat for the US client regime would strike at the position of British imperialism whose international interests are inextricably linked with those of US imperialism.

The bourgeois state in Salvador is far from stable. On the 10th of January an officer and 180 soldiers deserted to the FMLN in Santa Ana, the second city. The ruling class is well aware of the quick collapse of the National Guard in Nicaragua and the fact that the insurrection must be smashed quickly. This intensification of the armed struggle places great importance on the quick mobilisation of the resources of the British Labour Movement in support of the workers and peasants of Salvador. A campaign of political and material aid to the armed struggle and against imperialist intervention is vital. Aid to the junta must be cut off immediately. A number of leading Labour politicians have expressed general support for democratic rights in Central

America. This general support must be translated without delay into an open call in support of those fighting to bring down the junta. The Labour Party and the TUC must be called upon to give immediate material aid to the FMLN. The National Executive of the Labour Party must sponsor a demonstration to the US embassy demanding an end to imperialist intervention in Salvador.

As well as the immediate dangers of US intervention the revolution faces problems flowing from the political leadership of the FMLN, which is the military front. The Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), which acts as the political spokesman abroad for the insurgents, is a popular front type alliance, involving elements from the ruling class, Communist Party members and nationalists. It sees the aim of the armed struggle in terms of national independence and democracy. Both the CP and its front groups and the MNR (Revolutionary National Movement) which orients to the Socialist International, took part in the Civilian-Military Junta when it ousted Romero in late 1979. The FDR tries to hold back the revolution within democratic boundaries and stops short of demands for the complete smashing of the repressive state and the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government.

The Trotskyist organisation in Salvador, the PST, fights alongside the military front of the FMLN,



but does not for a moment accept the 'cross-class democratic government' position of the FDR. The Nicaraguan experience shows that the class interests of the oppressed masses cannot be held up or done away with in the name of a 'democratic alliance' with the ruling class. It is the socialist revolution, the overthrow and smashing of the bourgeois states, which has begun in Central America. This struggle includes democratic demands, such as freedom to organise parties and trade unions and free elections, as a central element, but it goes much further.

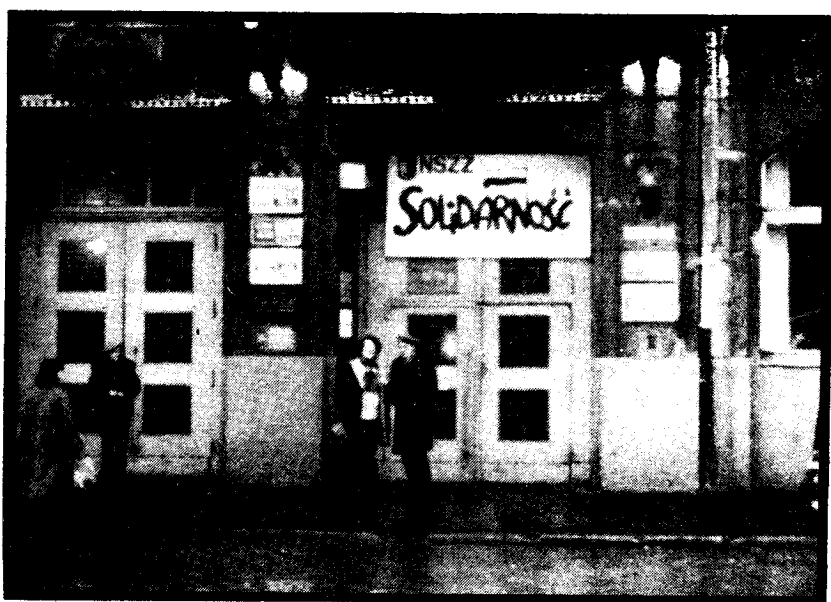
It is necessary to give unconditional support to the armed struggle of the Salvadorean masses organised in the FMLN, but this does not mean for one second that socialists should subordinate solidarity work to support for the

popular frontism of the FDR. Cross-class politics on the basis of the programme of the FDR are not the answer to the needs of the masses. The recognition by the Kremlin and the leaders of the Socialist International of the legitimacy of the FDR as a provisional government flows not out of support for the revolution in Salvador but from the hope that the FDR can stop that revolution short of the destruction of the capitalist state by the masses. Socialists in Britain must campaign in the mass organisations on the lines of:

**Down with the Civilian-Military Junta in Salvador!**

**No to imperialist intervention in Salvador!**

**Material aid to the FMLN and the armed struggle in Salvador!**



The civil war in El Salvador and the permanent mobilisation of the Polish working class against the Stalinist regime show once again the joint crisis of imperialism and Stalinism at a world level. In El Salvador US imperialism is backing a military regime which is fighting a genocidal war against the people in an attempt to hold back the revolutionary tide opened by the revolution in Nicaragua. In Poland, the Kania regime, backed by the Kremlin is faced by a powerful and confident free trade union movement which has thrown the bureaucracy into crisis. These powerful movements deepen the political and economic dislocation of imperialism and Stalinism caused by the overthrow of Somoza and the Shah and reveal the deepening unity of the oppressed masses in the capitalist nations and the bureaucratized workers' states.

In Poland the New Year has been marked by a rising wave of strike actions and occupations. In Rzeszow in the South East, farmers have staged an occupation since January

2nd in support of their demand for a free trade union. On January 16th transport workers in Warsaw went on strike for four hours as part of their struggle for a five day week. On January 22nd there was an all-out strike in Gdansk, the centre of the great strike wave last summer, in support of the demand for a five day week. The struggle for free Saturdays has involved strikes at the seven biggest factories in Poznan and in the town of Kulikov, where the headquarters of the Warsaw Pact are situated. In Nowy Sacz the Polish military police evicted militants of 'Solidarity' from the building they occupied. In response 800,000 workers went on strike for an hour. In the town of Mielec in the south east 22,000 aviation workers struck for an hour in support of the small farmers' demand for recognition of 'Rural Solidarity' and for free Saturdays.

On the 9th of January the official newspaper of the Kania regime, *Trybuna Ludu*, appealed for a responsible attitude from workers because of the dire eco-

# POLAND

**INDEPENDENT UNIONS**

**CHALLENGE KANIA**

nomie situation. Statements of this type reveal the bankruptcy of the Polish economy and the impossible pressure on the regime exerted by the millions organised in 'Solidarity' and its rural counterpart, as yet unrecognised by the regime. 'Solidarity' has already offered joint co-ordinating committees at national and local level with 'Rural Solidarity'.

This massive movement now threatens to topple Kania who replaced Gierek in September. Kania has been forced to make a series of retreats which have profound implications for the Stalinist system. The Kremlin and its agencies cannot back off forever before this all embracing movement, which threatens to smash the Stalinist regime. The Kremlin understands this well. It fears the spread of this movement to the other East European states and to the Soviet Union. That is why it must endeavour to open the road to the division and eventual crushing of 'Solidarity'.

Yet the retreats before the mass movement aggravate still further the grave state of the economy and necessitate greater dependence on economic support from the west. The two Soviet divisions in Poland have recently been brought up to full strength and the Kremlin

clearly remains on full alert. In response Reagan has threatened sanctions if the Russians move against the Poles. There is little room for manoeuvre. The Kremlin may well be forced by events to use troops if Kania cannot defuse the situation inside Poland. This threat must be answered by a campaign in the workers' movement internationally in support of the free trade unions and against a Stalinist intervention.

The Stalinist apparatus is trying to split the ranks of 'Solidarity' by putting immense pressure on the leaders, such as Walesa. The Stalinists are clearly aided by the Catholic church in trying to restrain the demands of the workers. The 'Free Saturdays' movement is a case in point. On returning from his visit to the Pope in Rome, Walesa intended to appear on television to make an appeal to call off the proposed strike action. However, under pressure from the militant rank and file he was forced to use his TV appearance to call for support for the strikes.

A more serious example of the conflict between the Walesa leadership and the local unions occurred in Bielsko Biala. After the government had conceded three Saturdays a month as days off, Walesa called for an immediate end to the strikes.

But the workers in Bielsko Biala defied this call and stayed out in support of their demand that the local Governor be sacked for corruption. This type of problem will be repeated if Walesa attempts to act as a 'mediator'. In a super-bureaucratized state like Poland there is simply no room for an extra apparatus at the head of 'Solidarity', between the workers and the Stalinist government.

'Solidarity' is being used by the workers to fight on traditional union questions such as the shorter working week and wages. But these tend under the Stalinist regime to pose the question of independent politics and the place of the CP. The struggle for the recognition of 'Rural Solidarity' is a case in point. If legalised it would quickly act as a focus for all the problems of Poland's impoverished small farmers. In the face of these problems Walesa's position that 'Solidarity' "is not in politics" is increasingly being challenged by events.

The Polish working class has taken the leading position in the struggle by the working class and small farmers in all the countries dominated by the Kremlin bureaucracy. It is driving the Stalinists in front of it under threat of an all-out General Strike. It is seeking to reverse all the injustices inflicted on it in previous battles. The campaign to win Edmund Baluka, leader of the strikes of 1970/1, the right to return from exile is a case in point. On December 21st 50,000 shipyard workers in Baluka's home town of Szczecin showed their support for his return.

Baluka lived for a time in Britain, and his case is well known to trade unionists here. British workers should express their solidarity with Baluka by moving resolutions through their trade union and Labour Party branches calling for his return to Poland to be granted.

# OUT WITH GISCARD FOR A SINGLE SP-CP CANDIDATE



The working class in France is suffering similar attacks under the Giscard-Barre Government as those we face in Britain with Thatcher's Tory Government. Unemployment stands at nearly 1½ million. There have been massive closures in steel and 40,000 redundancies in the car industry alone in two years. Education is under attack, as is social security, and the democratic rights of immigrants and women. The defence of living standards and democratic rights by workers in France means first and foremost the removal of the Giscard-Barre Government. It means the replacement of this anti-working class government with a government of the workers' parties — a Socialist Party-Communist Party government with no capitalist ministers.

Yet, with the Presidential elections in April both the CP and the SP have indicated that they will each stand their own candidate.

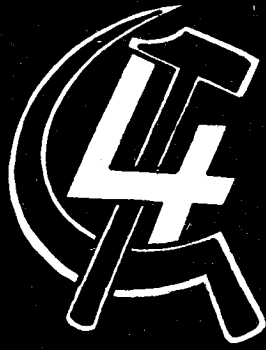
Against this policy of division, the Unified OCI, French Section of the Fourth International (International Committee), has conducted a vigorous campaign for a single candidate of the workers' parties in the Presidential elections.

This line expresses a deep felt desire among workers in France which was demonstrated in the bye-elections towards the end of last year, when the SP won four out of seven seats. This was a crushing defeat for the Government, when members of Giscard's party, who had sat in Parliament for 15 or more years, were displaced by SP deputies. The desire for unity was also shown in a 30,000 strong demonstration of government workers and teachers, in Paris, on December 3rd. Despite the refusal of

the CGT leadership (the CGT is the largest trade union federation and controlled by the Communist Party) to support the demonstration, many hundreds of CGT members defied their leaders and marched behind banners proclaiming "CGT for Unity", "Down with the Giscard-Barre Government".

The campaign for unity, conducted by the Unified OCI, has so far secured over 100,000 signatures to an open letter to Georges Marchais and Francois Mitterrand, leaders of the CP and SP respectively. This letter demands that Marchais and Mitterrand decide on a single CP-SP candidate for the Presidential elections. The campaign has won the support of members of the CP and SP, who have been organised in Committees for Unity, in factories, schools and offices, throughout the whole of France.

Following an appeal, signed by 108 militants — 36 from the CP, 36 from the SP and 36 from the Unified OCI, a National Convention was held in Paris on January 18th, which was attended by over 1,000 delegates. One after another, speakers expressed the view that the continuation of the anti-working class government of Giscard-Barre was only made possible by the refusal of the SP and CP leaderships to struggle in common to bring down the government and put a CP-SP government in its place. The delegates agreed to carry out a campaign for a single CP-SP candidate in the Presidential elections. As part of this campaign, the delegates agreed to work towards the organisation of meetings and demonstrations throughout France, around the demand for the unity of the CP and SP, for the immediate removal of Giscard.



RALLY-FORUM  
with NAHUEL MORENO and PADDY HEALY

2pm-6pm, Saturday February 28th  
Tudor Room, Caxton Hall, Victoria

# NAHUEL MORENO SPEAKS IN LONDON

On February 28th, Nahuel Moreno will be speaking in London. He will address a public rally launching in Britain the Fourth International (International Committee), which was established at the end of 1980 at an international conference in Paris attended by delegates from nearly fifty countries.

Moreno's activity as a Trotskyist militant in Latin America spans five decades. In 1953, he fought the attempts of the Pablo wing of the Fourth International to liquidate the world movement into the Stalinist parties, a policy which split the movement and dislocated its work. In the rushed reunification of 1963, the Argentinian leadership was highly critical of the method and diplomatic approach adopted by the other parties to reunification — namely the American SWP and the European leadership of Mandel.

Such wariness was shown to be justified by the fact that for most of the next fifteen years, the so-called 'Unified Secretariat' of the Fourth International was riven by faction fights over the most profound political questions. From 1968 and throughout the 1970s, Moreno led a fierce battle against the Mandel leadership's 'guerrilla turn' in Latin America, its search for 'vanguards' outside the working class, and its capitulation to petty-bourgeois and Stalinist leaderships.

Most recently, in 1979, as leader of the Bolshevik Faction, Moreno spearheaded the fight within the USec against its anti-Trotskyist policy in Nicaragua. Here, American leaders of the USec not only called on revolutionaries to 'identify' with the multi-class FSLN, which had put in power a bourgeois government opposed to the deepening

mobilisations of the masses; these same leaders actually colluded in the repression of genuine revolutionary militants by the Nicaraguan bourgeois state.

In this political context, and against a background of bureaucratic exclusions and vilification, the Parity Committee was organised as a defensive united front which grouped together the majority of Trotskyists to uphold the programme and principles of Trotsky.

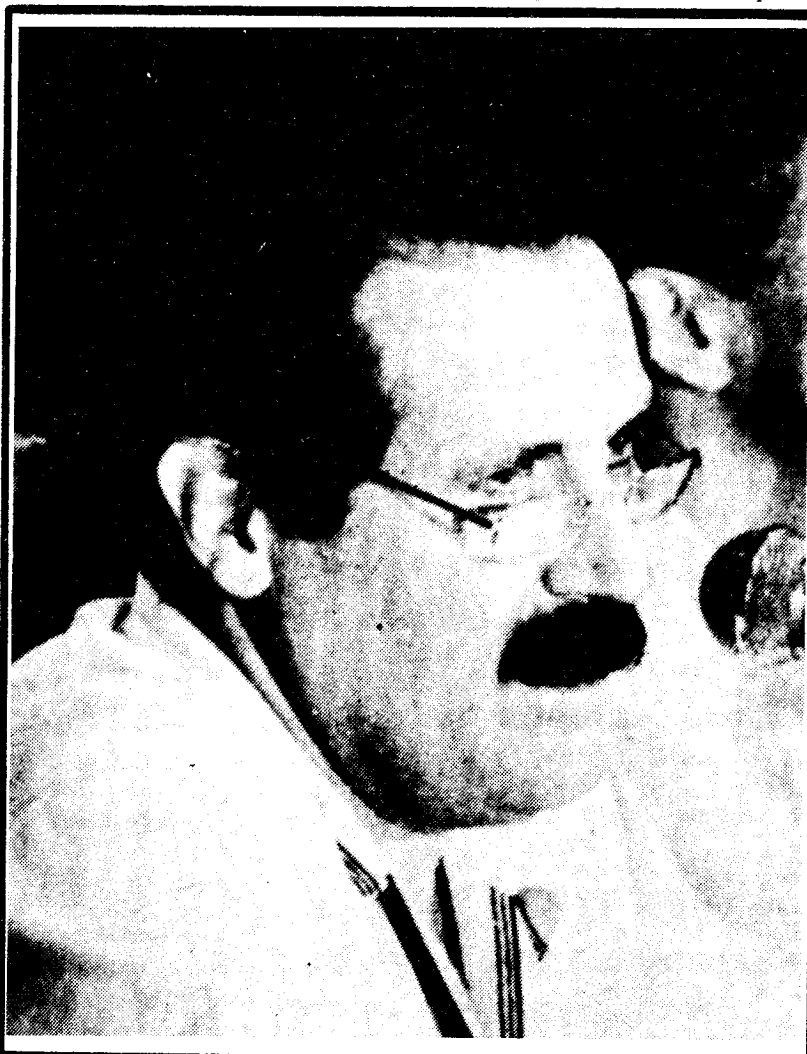
From this common starting-point, the Parity Committee was able to formulate a line on all the central questions raised by the developing class struggle in the ensuing year: on Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Iran, El Salvador and Eastern Europe.

This work culminated in the drafting and the adoption of 40 Theses at the December 1980 World Conference, which laid the basis for a principled fusion of the world's Trotskyists. Accordingly, the Fourth International (International Committee) was set up, specifically to complete the unfinished work of the original IC of 1953: that is, to continue the battle to eradicate liquidationist revisionism from our ranks and to hold high the banner of the Fourth International, to win all those claiming to be Trotskyists.

In Britain, where the IMG has been less involved in the discussion than its international counterparts, that fight is only beginning. The rally will seek to open the discussion with all those who can claim to stand on the basis of Trotskyism.

But the rally will be equally concerned with the living developments of the rising world revolution. Paddy Healy of the LWR, Irish section of the FI(IC), will report on the new mass movement mobilised by the prisoners' campaign for political status, which has brought the Irish revolution into sharper political focus. It is further intended, in line with the FI(IC)'s worldwide campaign, to raise a large sum of money to go to help the fight internationally.

This meeting presents a rare opportunity to hear one of the acknowledged leaders of the world Trotskyist movement. For all militants, it is an occasion not to be missed.





# who wants bernadette dead?

George White

The attempted murder of Bernadette McAliskey and her husband highlights the reality of the threat by the ultra-loyalist Ulster Defence Association to 'liquidate' the leaders of the mass movement which unfolded in support of the Hunger Strikers in Long Kesh and Armagh before Christmas.

As well as the attempt on Bernadette and her husband, four other prominent leaders of the nationalist community have been murdered. Three of them — Miriam Daly, Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little, were members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party. The fourth, John Turnley, was a supporter of the Irish Independence. Two of the four were of protestant extraction.

Why have the UDA embarked on this campaign of murder?

These are not random killings. The intention of the UDA is clearly to remove the possible leaders of a nationalist mass movement in the North of Ireland. Those wounded or murdered helped to mobilize tens of thousands at the end of last year. For the first time in years widespread industrial action for the national revolution occurred. A fresh generation of young people began to be drawn into the political arena. It was necessary for the UDA to behead that movement, on behalf of the British state. They chose their customary method to do it — murder.

There are ambiguities surrounding the killing of Bunting and Little and the attempt on the McAliskys. In the case of Bunting and Little an assassination team was supposedly able to penetrate deep into nationalist West Belfast and escape again after the alarm had been given. This despite the presence at frequent intervals of army forts, foot patrols with radios, road blocks every half mile or so and one of the largest police-military networks in the world.

The McAliskey case is even stranger. Soldiers were airlifted into the immediate area the day before and set up positions around the house. They were not members of the Scottish regiment which operates in that area but of the 'elite' Parachute Regiment. The area, known locally as 'The Moss', is a boggy area and has an immensely complex system of lanes. It would not be easy for outsiders to find their way quickly and unseen to Bernadette's cottage. Yet the three members of the UDA charged with the murder attempt are not locals. Only the army or the RUC would have been able to furnish them with the necessary information to find the McAliskey house easily.

On top of that, not one neighbour heard shots being fired, despite the proximity of several other houses. Yet the paras were on the spot in time to arrest the three gunmen before they could drive away. It is inconceivable that the soldiers were not extremely close to the house. At that distance it would be improbable that they didn't observe the three men drive up and start to sledgehammer the door in.

As *An Phoblacht* reported, "The most predominant local theory is that the Brits were given a 'tip-off'



about the impending attack on Bernadette's life . . . and that they staked out her house. However, instead of preventing the attack the Brits allowed it to take place (thus allowing the elimination of a nationalist leader), and then appeared on the scene to make a grand capture of the assassins which would exonerate them from criticism."

The nationalist community are used to collusion between the ultra-loyalist paramilitaries and the UDR/RUC in the Six Counties. Many of those charged with murders and attacks on Catholics in the name of one or other of the protestant paramilitary groupings, have been members or ex-members of what are curiously known as 'the security' forces. The terrorist legacy of the B-Special police, the old legalised militia of loyalism, was not destroyed when that body was disbanded. It has taken the form of a division of labour between 'official' RUC and UDR activity and 'unofficial' paramilitary murder and brutality. This method is not unique to Ireland. The Videla government uses it in Argentina. The Botha regime uses it in South Africa. What is unique is that the Six Counties are supposed to be part of the 'United Kingdom'.

Which raises further questions. What is the role of the British Army in all of this? Are we witnessing the textbook methods of Brigadier Kitson on dealing with the leaders of mass movements, being put 'unofficially' into action? Where is the SAS in the killing of Bunting and Little? What kind of outfit could get into and out of West Belfast, where even the RUC will not go without army escort?

The shooting of Bernadette McAliskey raises the problem of self-defence for the Catholic and nationalist community. There is no way the 'state' in the North of

Ireland, which is a bigoted state designed to repress the Catholics, will take any action. Bernadette has experienced the kind of action the state takes and she, unlike the loyal servant of the British cause in Ireland Gerry Fitt, has been refused the right to hold a legal firearm for self-defence. In any case, a few legally held guns will not suffice for the defence of a mass movement or a whole community. Armed self-defence is called for by circumstances. Only the nationalist community themselves, by whatever means appropriate can organise that. A state which will not defend that community and is based on its repression has no rights in refusing the nationalist the right to arm themselves and control their own areas.

At the height of the struggle in the early 1970s 'No Go' areas were declared and defended. The British state later smashed them open with tanks and bulldozers. The end result is that of the current murders. British socialists must support the right of the Catholic and nationalist community to arm themselves and to control the areas in which they live, in whatever manner they choose. We believe that it is the mass organisations of the working class, the unions and Sinn Fein, which should be at the centre of this, but our job in Britain is to contradict in the British labour movement, the right of the British state to be in Ireland and to make laws for its people.

In particular, we demand an independent labour movement enquiry into the shooting of Bernadette McAliskey and the role of the army in that shooting.

Socialist Newsletter wishes Bernadette and Michael well and promises our support in the coming battles to remove the British state from Ireland.

## a license to kill

The outcome of the inquest on the siege of the Iranian embassy is of importance for all socialists in Britain. In effect the SAS have been given the licence to kill. They have been placed above the law. The coroner, Dr. Paul Knapman, went to extraordinary lengths to ensure a verdict of 'justifiable homicide' was returned. What was really on trial was the shoot first, ask questions later methods of the SAS. The coroner told the jury, "you must consider the implications to the country if a verdict of unlawful killing is recorded if soldiers are

sent in to do a specific job." Clearly this can only mean that the SAS were sent in to kill. No questions, no trial, no time, just kill.

The Iranian Embassy siege saw the SAS confronted with armed opponents. But now the precedent has been set up for the use of the SAS in London who can say it will stop here. Already armed police shot a teenage Indian boy with a toy pistol. The state has added the SAS, apparently above the law, to the armed SPG, in its arsenal of repression.

## MASSIVE UNEMPLOYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

One person in six is now on the dole in the North of Ireland. In Strabane, Dungannon and Cookstown, over 30% are without jobs. In Catholic West Belfast over 50% are jobless. Business consultants Cooper and Lybrand have forecast that unemployment in the 6 counties will reach 21.5% before the end of 1981. Which means 125,000 out of 1.5 million will be on the dole. Even public service, once the secure bastion of the protestant literate, there is a plan to axe 2,000 jobs. In

shipbuilding, once employers of 30,000 in Belfast, jobs are down to 6,500.

These staggering figures reveal that British imperialism is not only engaged in political repression in the Six Counties, it is quite consciously allowing the North to go down the economic drain. Wide sections of the urban population, both Catholic and Protestant are being pauperised by Thatcher's economic policies while the area is terrorised and policed by troops.

## FREE UNIONS IN CHINA

The Chinese government has been forced to take repressive measures against workers and students following demonstrations in central China. Workers in some provinces have attempted to set up independent trade unions similar to those in Poland, breaking away from the authority of the Chinese Communist Party. The *Yangtze River Daily* acknowledged that the Party had made mistakes in the last 30 years and emphasised that the demonstrators were acting out of ignorance. It said that the Communist Party would continue to

control trade unions and other organisations.

These elements illustrate the problems now faced in countries ruled by Stalinist bureaucracies, following the setting up of free trade unions in Poland. The example set by the Polish workers leads to action across the continent of Asia. The events in Poland will continue to resound throughout the bureaucratic workers' states, including the Soviet Union itself. The way forward for the Chinese workers and peasants is to establish their own unions and parties separate from the state.

## strikeyave hits belgium

The class struggle in Belgium has erupted in recent weeks on a scale not seen since the General Strike of 1961.

Faced with a "National Recovery Plan" of austerity measures, pushed through Parliament by the coalition government of Wilfried Martens, the Belgian working class has mobilised a massive response.

The Martens government coalition includes the main bosses party, the Christian Democrats, of which Martens is the leader and the Socialist Party. The austerity plan attempts to impose a statutory two-year freeze on wages. It comes against a background of massive unemployment (12%) and a pattern of closures in Steel, Textiles, Engineering and Motors. The Belgian scene is a very familiar one for workers in Britain — the basic pattern of crisis and structure of industry is very similar in the two countries.

Starting in January, there has been a whole wave of factory occupations and strikes. Textile workers at Verviers and Tubize have gone so far as to block road and rail links

from the two towns and begun a hunger strike against plant closures in addition to occupying their plants.

The French-speaking south, which is the centre of industry, is the main focus of the strike movement. Important cities like Liege were brought to a standstill by a 24-hour national strike in Transport on the 5th February called by the FTGB (the Socialist Trade Union). One hundred thousand workers demonstrated in Brussels on 24th January at the call of the FTGB, against the austerity measures.

The scene is set for the mobilisation of the Belgian working class against the Martens government and for a government of the SP without collaboration with the bosses and their parties. The FTGB however, has refused to issue a call for General Strike action of for bringing down the coalition. It has confined mobilisations to one-day stoppages and calls for the government to change course just as Murray and the TUC leaders do here.

# Socialist newsletter

New Cross Massacre	page 2
CPSA	page 3
Labour Party	page 4
Poland, Salvador	page 7
Bernadette McAliskey	page 9

UNITED UNION and TENANT ACTION AGAINST CUTS and RISES TO

# DEFEND LAMBETH!

by Frank Irvine

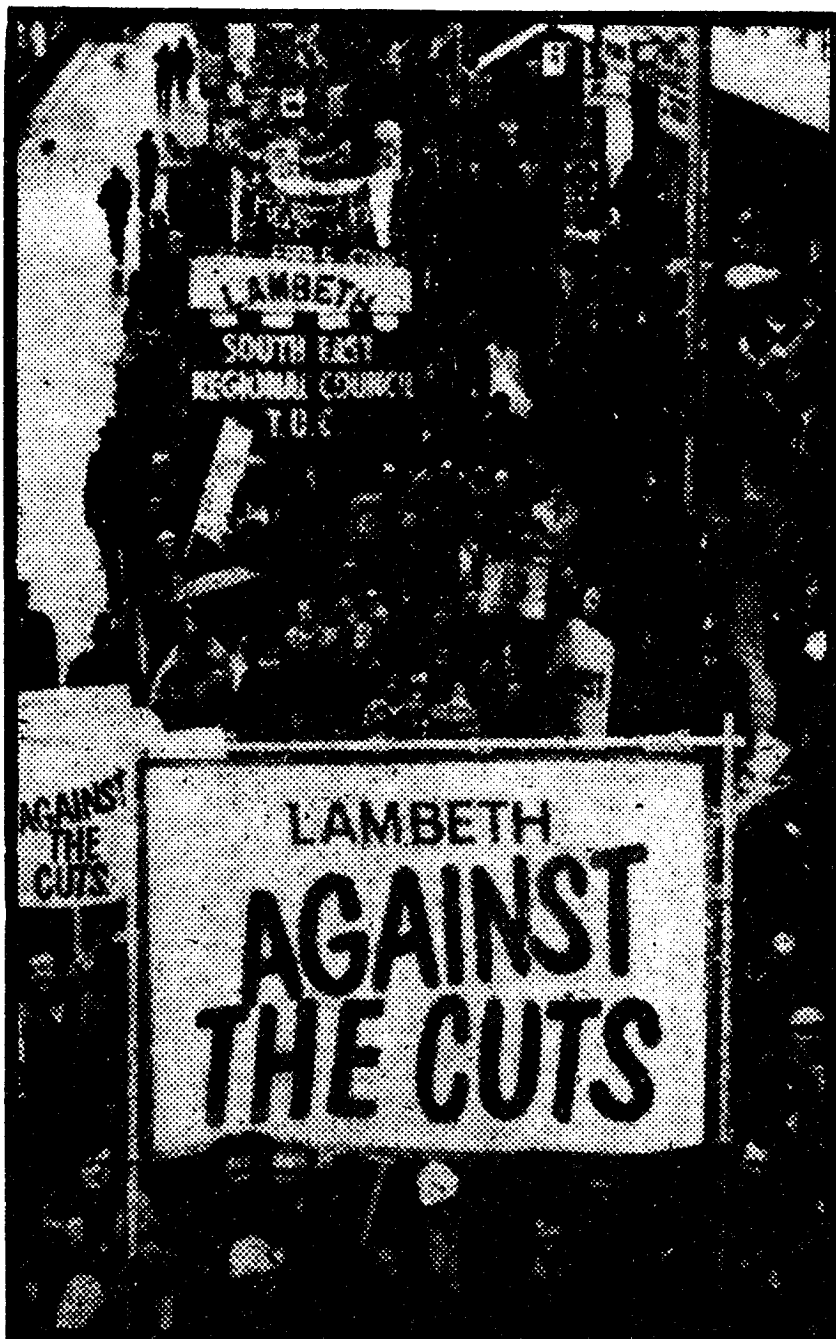
Speaking to the Lambeth Week of Action rally Vanessa Wiseman, President of Lambeth Trades Council, argued that Lambeth Council cannot keep increasing rates and rents to escape the Tories. These remarks touch on the central problem facing workers in Lambeth.

The struggle to defend jobs and services cannot be waged on the basis of soaking working-class council tenants and ratepayers. This tactic, followed by Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight, is leading to a split between council employees and council tenants. Knight has pushed many rent- and ratepayers in Lambeth over the brink. This method is not defence of the services by mobilising the working class, but a form of retreat.

There are only two political options open to Knight: capitulate before Thatcher or build the confrontation to bring her down. Only the second will do for the defence of jobs and the defence of services. This is not an easy road but it is the only road.

This policy of confrontation was in fact agreed by the November 1st 'Lambeth Conference'. Over 800 delegates heard Ted Knight move a resolution against cuts and against rent and rate rises to cover cuts. He also opposed the sale of council houses. Since then he has endorsed the sale of council houses and put up the rent and rates in Lambeth by an average of £6 to £8 a family.

It is not surprising, in view of Knight's actions, that the movement around Lambeth has declined since last November. The January Re-Call Conference had half the delegates and was far less representative. The week of action was a low key affair and very confused. Although TGWU members were on all-out strike and NALGO members occupied the Housing Advice Centre, NUPE and GMWU did not join the strike. The march on February 4th was less than one quarter of the size of that in November 1979.



The role of the 'Steering Committee' nominated by the November 1st Conference was at the centre of the problems. Knight and others just ignored the decisions of the two Conferences. This led to demoralisation and division, since people waited for Knight to back up his words and lead from the front. Secondly, the Committee avoided the problem of fighting for the unity of all trade unionists

within the borough. Knight's main work in fact has been to justify rent and rate rises. The Committee waited on Knight, himself bending before Heseltine, and this led to the shameful decision to take the February 4th march to the Imperial War Museum. The House of Commons is less than a mile up the road!

Knight and the majority of the Lambeth Labour Group now face a

revolt on the housing estates. The idea of a rate strike, against the so-called 'Marxist' Knight, is being floated. Knight has allowed the Tories and the Chamber of Commerce to harness this feeling, to the end of bringing down the Labour Council. Let us be clear on this, it is Knight's cowardice which has given the Tories this opening.

There is no reason why a strike against rent and rate rises on the council estates should not be linked with the fight by council workers to defend their jobs. The Lambeth Labour Group majority must stop retreating at the expense of council tenants and ratepaying workers in private houses and fight for a rent and rate strike on the basis of no cuts and for an end to the government.

Militants in the Labour Party and trade union branch must not draw the defeatist conclusion that because the Tories have organised a rate strike movement of small businessmen that they must fall in unconditionally behind Knight. The recent Lambeth Labour Left meeting of January 30th made this mistake. *Socialist Newsletter* supporters moved a resolution in favour of a rent-strike on the basis of no cuts and in defence of the Labour majority. This was narrowly defeated. The justification for its defeat provided by *Socialist Challenge* supporters was that "the most important problem is to fight the Tories' rate-strike". This line offers no way forward for angry council tenants who are on the brink of taking action anyway and are by no means Tories.

Lambeth Labour Left must now decide if it wants to remain as a 'closed doors' ginger group in the Labour Party or whether it will seek to give an active lead on the estates, fighting to overcome Knight's dangerously divisive policy and if necessary calling for his removal as leader. It is to the working class in Lambeth that any discussion must be oriented. They are not rejecting the Labour Party

but they are rejecting the idea of more money being snatched from their pockets for nothing.

The Lambeth working class faces a number of problems: the threat of massive cuts; the threat of job losses on the council; huge increases in rates and rents; the avoidance by Knight of leading a clear refusal to comply with the Tories.

There is a vicious circle in which council workers, fearing redundancy, call for rate and rent rises to maintain their jobs, while tenants and ratepayers can't afford the money being taken from their pockets. These problems pose the need for unity of the Lambeth working class.

The root of the problem is the action of the government. The divisions can only be overcome if the Labour leaders, nationally and locally, confront the government with a campaign to bring them down. To make this campaign a reality it is necessary for manual and clerical workers in local government to form *united trade union committees to defend jobs*. Then it is necessary to build something more than paper unity between the unions and Labour Councils. The tenants and small business organizations should be brought together under the auspices of a *united front of Labour councils and local government unions* against the Tories.

The political basis for such unity is through a lead being given by figures such as Ted Knight, signalling that he is prepared to go *all the way* against the Tories. Only then, when the leaders have placed themselves on the line will the Labour Party and unions be able to unite to drive the local Tories out of the lead of the rate protest movement and the national Tories out of Westminster.

The Labour Party, and the left of the Labour Party, which in a number of key areas in London is organised on a regular basis, is the key to the problem. *Lambeth Labour Left, Camden Labour Left and Haringey Left must seek unity at an all London level*. They must put it to Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone and others who could give the clear lead necessary: *put yourselves at the head of the fight for unity against Thatcher or make way for those who will*. They must say to the National Executive Committee: *the responsibility will be yours if the local councils are slaughtered one by one as Heseltine intends*. It will be yours if the full strength of the movement is not mobilised in defence of services and jobs. *You must call the movement, together with the TUC, into action in a national and unlimited campaign to bring to government down*. You can stop the retreat today. You can put an end to the overwhelming problems which are being heaped on the backs of working people.

**The NEC and the TUC must take note of the success of the Tories in dividing Labour Council, unions and tenants in Lambeth. So must all local activists. Lambeth for the moment, the whole country next if the fight for unity to bring down the Tories is not begun.**