

socialist newsletter

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Strike against the Tories

STOP THE SELLOUTS!

The miners' ballot expressed very clearly that, given a chance, British workers will willingly challenge the right of the Thatcher government to impose low wage rises, job losses and speed ups. Miners have occupied a special place in the political, as well as the industrial, life of Britain since the great strikes of 1972 and 1974.

Of course a ballot allowing a strike to take place is not the same thing as a strike. This truth was bitterly highlighted at BL and Ford's not long ago. In both cases the union bosses generated a spirit for the fight and then sold out at the last moment on a union basis.

The workers' movement is different to other organisations. The things are expected of Arthur Scargill by those thousands of miners who voted him in. Added to that hundreds of thousands of other workers admire his directness. In a recent article Scargill said that industrial action is 'defence being maintained against a determined counter-attack'. The struggle in achieving the aims of the miners. He is a hundred times right. Industrial action is a powerful weapon through which Thatcher can be driven back. Sellout and fake negotiating by treacherous union leaders was a chief cause for Thatcher staying in office in 1981.

Scargill ends his article by saying, "political intervention in British industry has become more frequent and devastating. The struggle for real control must be waged not only industrially, but also politically."

To make these words come alive, and the miners have the strength to do it, means the next miners' strike must be every bit as powerfully organized as 1972 and 1974. This time the police and other state forces will be on full alert. They have not only the experience of the miners' strikes behind them but also Grunwick's and the riots. Another Saltley Gate will come if there is a strike. The working class, standing shoulder to shoulder with the miners, could clearly win that battle and in so doing force the Tories out of office.

The way is now open, as it was during the steel strike, the upsurge in the South Wales coalfield last February and, briefly, during the BL dispute, for *national action to remove this hated government.*

The NUM leaders, on behalf of all the unemployed, the low paid and those sold out by their own union leaders, must take that road and soon.



BRING LABOUR'S CONFERENCE FORWARD

Trades Unions for a Labour Victory, in reality not all the unions but those with right wing leaders, met the Labour National Executive early in January. The purpose of the meeting, held behind closed doors on the premises of ASTMS, was supposedly to help Labour over 'its problems'.

In reality the union leaders, who do not include leaders of the mine-workers, were trying to find terms for stifling the left, making sure Tony Benn would not run for leader or deputy leader this year and were using union money to prop up the Foot leadership, as an interim measure.

According to the press, Benn said privately that he would not run this year. Whether or not this is true, every Labour Party activist who wants Benn to run should tell their branch and local party and should write to Benn saying so. Trades unionists who pay the levy, but are not normally active in politics, should also write to Benn saying so. This is not a suggestion that Benn should be elected, but that he should be given the opportunity to run.

private chats and blackmail from the union leaders. Leading left wingers are being invited to keep their mouths shut while the right amount the attack. This would speed the rightward drift and tend to isolate those rank and filers who want to fight witch-hunts and oppose possible coalition deals with the SDP.

Local activists must make it clear that union leaders have no right to use the political levy as a bargaining counter for their right wing views.

It is vital that as many local Labour Party bodies and those left leaders with influence, such as Benn and Scargill, begin to campaign for the next Labour Party Conference to be brought forward, as an emergency measure in the special circumstances of the internal crisis and in a situation where the leader, deputy leader and NEC majority have broken the decision of the last Conference not to engage in witch-hunts. Conference policies need to be reaffirmed and the leader, deputy leader and National Executive re-elected.

No concessions to the Witch-hunt!

By Rachel Stein, George White and Frank Irvine

Right-wing hands off the political levy!

At the last conference Sidney Weighell of the NUR tried to introduce a resolution bringing back bans on left wing groupings in the Labour Party. He was defeated by the conference. This reiterated the feeling of the Labour Party rank and file, carried over from previous conferences. Foot, in moving for an 'enquiry' into the *Militant* has bureaucratically overturned the decision of the Brighton conference. In relation to the selection of Peter Tatchell in Bermondsey, Foot used parliament to unilaterally reverse a decision reached, totally democratically by the local Labour Party. Is this now to be the norm? No one has suggested that the selection conference in Bermondsey was rigged. There were Labour Party officials present. No one is trying to expel Tatchell because he has broken the LP constitution. *There are no other grounds within the Labour Party constitution for refusing to endorse his candidature.* Foot has overturned every aspect of democracy within the

Labour Party by attacking Tatchell. He has no claim now to support from those who want to see conference decision respected by the leaders.

The groupings of union barons known as 'Trades Unions for a Labour Victory', who control the purse strings of the Party but never ask their membership to agree their actions, have stepped in to back Foot and Healey and to try to pressure Benn and other left leaders into submission. This is another example of undemocratic practice. TULV must not be allowed to use the funds paid in by millions of rank and file trade unionists for right wing purposes. Once again the democratisation of union representation within the Labour Party is raised.

Were union funds to be withdrawn from the Labour Party it would set the cause of working class political power in Britain back many years. A hue and cry must be raised in the LP and affiliated unions about this abuse of the political levy behind closed doors.

CLPD AGM The Left at the Rubicon

In his report to last month's AGM of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Secretary Vladimir Derer, in arguing for a low profile, admitted that it might "be particularly difficult given the latest attacks by prominent members of the PLP, as well as by the new NEC, upon the democratic rights of the rank and file." The Conference decided that it wouldn't just be 'difficult' but impossible and resolved to take the offensive against the right-wing's attacks.

A unanimous motion was passed condemning Michael Foot's attack on Peter Tatchell in Parliament, and supporting Bermondsey CLP's right to select the candidate of their choice and opposing any investigation by the NEC into party activists. The low-key approach put forward by the CLPD Executive was decisively rejected in favour of a perspective around which activists can unite and defeat the right-wing's preparation for a future coalition government. Such a fight is a precondition for defending the democratic gains already achieved. A motion was passed committing the CLPD to support a new left regroupment to replace the now-defunct Rank and File Mobilising Committee. It is vital that such a body becomes a spearhead for the fight against witch-hunts and bureaucratic actions from Michael Foot and the right-wing.

The need to take the fight into the unions was recognised. In spite of the opposition of CLPD Treasurer Victor Schonfield who spoke "as a

democrat and not a socialist", it was resolved to campaign against the EPTU Executive's practice of packing Labour Party GMC's with 'delegates' appointed by Frank Chapple. Interestingly, Schonfield was the first on the platform to call for a decrease in the proportion of votes cast at Labour Party Conference by the trade unions. This was thrown out in favour of a campaign to take the fight for democracy and accountability into the trade union movement itself.

One of the sharpest debates that drew the full wrath of the CLPD Executive was around a motion calling on Benn to stand again for Deputy Leader and for Norman Atkinson to contest the treasurership of the Party which he lost at Brighton. The motion, supported by Reg Race MP, was narrowly won. This issue is central to taking the offensive against the right-wing traitors.

What happened on December 12th shows that there is no longer any 'neutral' ground of purely democratic reforms left. The fight for democratisation cannot be separated from the fight against Foot, Healey and the SDP. The CLPD must now take the lead in reorganising the left of the Party in a massive campaign to defend Tatchell and fight the right-wing. Either it does this or it will quickly become irrelevant in the eyes of Party activists. The CLPD AGM recognised this: Derer, Schonfield, and their supporters did not.

The meetings of the NEC and its organisation sub-committee just prior to the Xmas break marked a turning point in the development of the crisis in the Labour Party. Without a shadow of doubt a serious witch-hunt has been launched by Michael Foot. In reality it was launched not within the NEC but in the House of Commons. It was in Parliament that Foot announced his refusal to accept Peter Tatchell as the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Bermondsey.

Foot quite deliberately used the anti-working class atmosphere of Parliament to attack the left-wing.

INVESTIGATION

Since then, the NEC, on the initiative of Foot, have voted against accepting Tatchell and in favour of an 'investigation' of the *Militant* tendency and other left groupings. It did not take the right-wing long to take advantage of the rightward shift they achieved in the NEC elections at the Brighton Conference in September. Their intention is clear: they want to use the NEC to mount an offensive against the left to prepare the ground for a possible coalition with the SDP. Foot and Healey have given up the hope of Labour winning the next General Election. Therefore it is necessary for the right-wing to smash down any potential opposition to moves toward a coalition.

EXPULSIONS

At this stage it is difficult to forecast how far Foot will go in hounding the left. The right-wing could go as far as expelling hundreds of left-wingers and disbanding the Young Socialists, which the Labour Party bureaucracy has done before. However, to follow this course would throw the Labour Party into a crisis far bigger than any witnessed before. An all out witch-hunt could lead to the closing down of entire Constituency Parties and the prospect of local parties running parliamentary candidates against individuals chosen directly by the NEC. If Bermondsey CLP refuse to accept the NEC decision regarding Tatchell, then we may well see two Labour candidates there at the next election.



A more likely variant could be the decision to expel a handful of leading *Militant* tendency supporters, coupled with a proscription of the *Militant* paper or at least some form of restriction on left papers. It is certain that the right-wing will put up a big fight to block the adoption of any more left-wing parliamentary candidates. They will also try to follow up the demand of the right wing *Manifesto Group* to reject candidates like Pat Wall and other *Militant* tendency supporters.

The so-called 'soft left' play a crucial role in the entire witch-hunt affair. It was Neil Kinnock who provided the necessary vote for Foot to push through his witch-hunting proposals.



Peter Tatchell

Basnett of TULV

Scargill and left union leaders must speak out against the right wing machinations of Trades Unions for a Labour Victory

The way the left resists the witch-hunt raises important problems. Already Peter Taafe, editor of *Militant*, has stated that he is prepared to make available a full breakdown of *Militant* finances. This is not the way to fight a witch-hunt. Taafe is already conceding the ground on which the right wing want to fight. The left must not in any way accept the terms that the right wing have laid down. The issue is not how *Militant* is funded. What is involved is a straight political fight between the right and left about Labour Party policy and the personnel of leadership positions. Fundamentally, the witch-hunt highlights the conflict between the Labour bureaucracy and the needs of the working class.

MILITANT'S PAST

Socialist Newsletter of course stands four square with the *Militant* against the witch-hunt. However it is necessary to point out that *Militant* has a history of compromising with and even taking part in witch-hunts. When Trotskyists were being witch-hunted in the early 1960s, leading *Militant* supporters abstained and even voted for expulsions in some local Labour Parties. We do not expect supporters of *Militant* to do the same this time. They themselves are in the front line of the attacks of the right. But the concessions Taafe, as editor of *Militant*, has already made, open the road not only to further attacks on the *Militant* but on all left groupings in the Labour Party. The 'enquiry' being proposed is only the thin end of the wedge. It has a certain logic and that logic must lead to further action - of a disciplinary nature.

Already Taafe, under pressure from the ruling class on television and in the press, has fallen into the trap of debating whether he is for or against 'parliamentary democracy'. Taafe says *Militant* supports 'parliamentary democracy'. But what the media were really asking is whether Taafe supports the ruling class version of 'parliamentary democracy' and he made the error of answering yes. The current crisis in the Labour Party is not about whether its members support 'parliamentary democracy' or not. *The constitution of the Labour Party says that it exists to fight elections. No-one so far has argued against that.* This is a red herring introduced by the right wing as an excuse to stage a witch-hunt and nothing else. Debating on this level only aids the right wing and their backers in the ruling class press. The struggle at hand is really defence of the electoral college, of reselection on a regular basis, of implementation of Conference policy and of the right of local Labour Parties to choose their own candidate without interference from the right wing who hold positions at national level.

To win these battles and to achieve a Labour government against the SDP wreckers, still inside the Labour Party as well as outside, the left must continue the offensive. The witch-hunt can only be stopped by driving the hunters out of positions which they can use against the rank and file. All groupings within the Labour Party, such as the *Campaign for Labour Party Democracy* and the *Militant* itself, must find unity against the right wing. This unity must not be the unity of secret conclaves but that of open opposition to all witch-hunt measures, against anyone on the left.

OPEN LEFT CONFERENCE

A conference should be called of all those fighting against the threat from the right - of the whole left of the Labour Party - to appeal to the whole Party and to the millions of trade unionists who vote Labour and pay the levy.

Tony Benn argued at a meeting in defence of Peter Tatchell that Michael Foot is a prisoner of the right wing and appealed to the left not to be too hard on him. Benn called on those present to fight the right wing to protect the leadership of Foot. *This is a wrong argument. Let the left be clear, Foot is a leading witch-hunter.* His old credentials as a left winger, and those of Kinnock and Lestor, are useful and indeed necessary for the right wing as a stick to beat the left of today. *Foot is not a prisoner.* He has decided to cross the line and lead the right wing attack.

This places a giant question mark over his leadership of the Labour Party. Whatever the past, the present problem is to defeat the SDP-Liberal attack and to remove the Tories. The method of the right wing and the Footites is the opposite - they are attacking the roots of the Labour Party. This does not help the fight against the SDP traitors. It gives extra weapons into their hands. Michael Foot's witch-hunt is an aid to more defections to the SDP at a time when it will suit Healey and the others to walk out, after they have done the maximum damage.

RECALL CONFERENCE

Foot must be challenged as leader and the National Executive majority, now a bunch of witch-hunters, must be changed as soon as possible. It is necessary for the left, especially those with influence, such as Benn and Scargill, to campaign for a Special Conference of the Labour Party to re-elect the leader, deputy leader and NEC. This is the only sure way to stop the witch-hunt and turn the Labour Party to its real task, supporting the working class in its fight against the Tories and campaigning to bring them down, stop the SDP and secure a majority Labour government at the next election.

For an Open Left Conference

One of the major discussions currently taking place among the left of the Labour Party is over the form that the organised left should take. Some argue that the left should keep quiet for a period, perhaps on the basis of a 'truce' with Foot and Healey. This, according to the logic of one or two leading activists in the *Campaign for Labour Party Democracy*, could allow the Labour Party to unify before the next election.

This argument is based on a number of false premises. First it assumes that the right will stop their attack on the left. In fact the opposite would be the case. Every division within the left and every hesitation would be used to make a new move towards driving thousands out of the Labour Party. Second, even a 'truce' deal will not answer the threat from the SDP, both electorally and in the possibility of more defections. Only a full blooded political fight around issues like disarmament, to win the youth, withdrawal from the Common

Market and from NATO, will allow the Labour Party to stem the tide towards coalition politics. And the leadership of the Labour Party includes some who are *in favour* of the idea of a coalition, even if they dare not say so openly. *How is the left to stop them moving towards a deal with the SDP if it is keeping silent?*

Third, if the left accepts the status quo up to the next election then it accepts the leadership of a proven witch-hunter and the deputy leadership of a man who opposes nearly all the central planks of Labour Party policy. After the election these could be saddled onto the Party for a further period. Fourth, it is the right and their allies who currently control the Parliamentary Labour Party, the National Executive and other leading bodies. How is the left to campaign to regain control of the NEC and ensure a PLP which supports Conference policies if it does not *now* start to campaign towards the next Labour Party conference, around the unions and in the areas removing right wing MPs? Are not these things necessary and do they not require organisation?

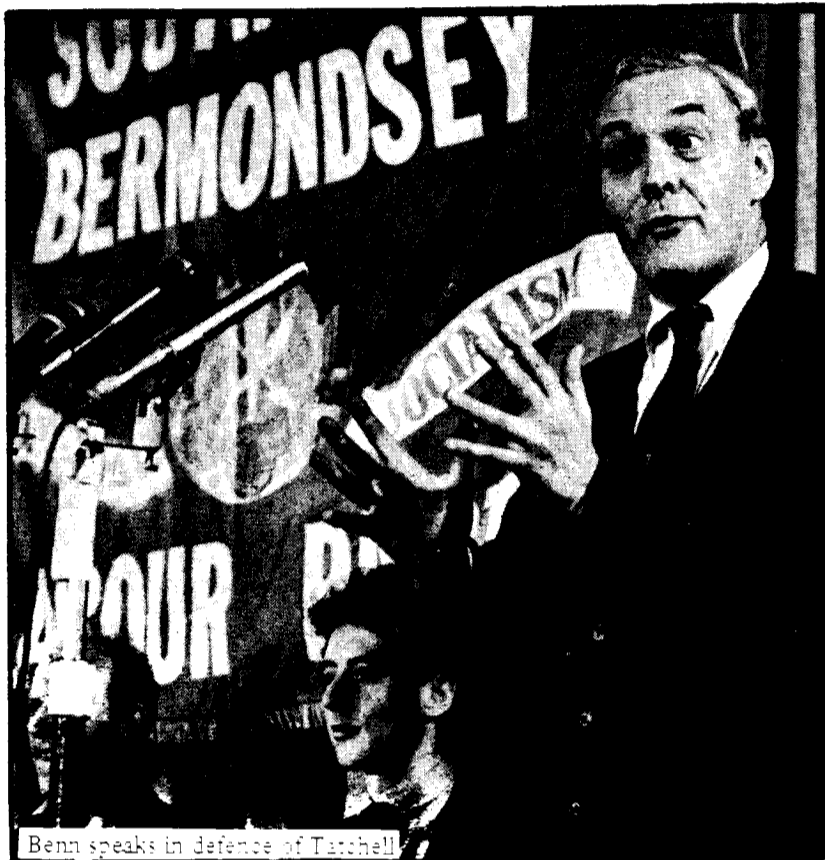
The organised left in the Labour Party must include all possible currents. Secret cliques working within parliament or through invitation only meetings are not what is called for. It is the right and their backers in the unions who have the use of the press and the money. The left can only successfully counter this war machine by clear organisation. *A conference representing all the national and local groupings which make up the left within the Labour Party must be called as soon as possible.* Its agenda must include two things: fighting the witch-hunt and preparing to win the leadership of the Labour Party.

To those who argue that such a conference would anger the right and provoke further splits we reply that there will be more splits anyway — on the initiative of the right. The witch-hunt has begun and must be fought out in the open.

LCC WITCH-HUNTERS

There are those on the left of the Labour Party, centrally, some of the leaders of the *Labour Co-ordinating Committee*, who are helping the right wing by making divisive attacks on other elements of the left. For instance Nigel Stanley of the LCC appeared on television to attack *Militant*. It is not an accident that it is these same people who are ardent supporters of the 'low profile' for the left. They are only half a step away from supporting bans and expulsions — only so long as the axe does not fall on them. This double standard must be fought tooth and nail. The right wing might be attacking *Militant* today but it will be the whole left tomorrow, including the Labour Co-ordinating Committee. If Nigel Stanley wants to help the attack on Labour Party democracy then he should leave the LCC.

It is through the convening of a broad conference that these differences can be thrashed out and the momentum which brought about Labour Party reform and so nearly made Tony Benn deputy leader can be maintained.



Benn speaks in defence of Tatchell



Neil Kinnock the treacherous left

The 'Soft Left'

A key change in the balance of forces within the Labour Party since the Brighton conference last October has been the emergence of a so-called 'soft left'. Its best known figures are Kinnock and Lestor. On its right flank are people like Judith Hart, on its left those like Eric Heffer.

This current is not organised but it does dominate the *Tribune Group* in parliament. Its characteristic method is to denounce witch-hunts and bans on the left and then vote for them or abstain in the Parliamentary Party or on the National Executive. It is useful to the right, in that the past, left credentials of Heffer and Kinnock provide a cover for attacks on the left of today.

Neil Kinnock's local Labour Party expressed differences with his support for attacks on *Militant*, showing that he does not represent rank and file feeling in South Wales. But this will not stop Kinnock and the others using up

with Foot and Healey every time they step up the pressure for expulsions, bans and enquiries.

Everyone in the Labour Party today should be judged on what they say and do to drive out the rest of the Social Democrats still lingering in the Parliamentary Labour Party and what they say and do about attacks on the left and the constitutional changes which have increased the power of the rank and file within the Party.

The 'soft left' MPs must be challenged to vote *against* all anti-democratic measures in the NEC and to support whatever candidates the majority of the left run for NEC position, leader and deputy leader. Not alone were the 'soft left' responsible for Denis Healey taking the deputy leadership, they have gone on to back Foot in the witch-hunt.

All illusions that they can be trusted to stop short of support for bans and expulsions should be cast aside.

CPSA

The full claim in 1982!

By Lloyd Bush

The Civil and Public Services Association, largest of the nine civil service unions, elected Alastair Graham to succeed Ken Thomas as its new general secretary when Thomas retires in May. The job carries with it a seat on the General Council of the TUC. Graham is a leading right winger and played a role in the selling out of the civil service pay dispute last year.

Demoralization over the pay dispute among civil servants was shown in the very low turnout, under 40%, to vote in the election. The election itself was the first in the history of the union, caused by the rule change at the 1981 conference. Previously full time officials were appointed.

Right wing CPSA president Kate Losinska, appealed for a vote for Graham through the press, in order to stop a 'marxist' takeover of the union.

In the event Graham won by the narrow enough margin of 16,000 votes.

The 'marxist' candidate in the election was a *Militant* supporter already a full-time official, Macreaable. Another left winger Ainsworth, who betrayed the Brighton strike against communist in 1980, but was endorsed by the Broad Left, ran for the full-time post of Treasurer.



Faced with the challenge of the current 4% limit the strategy of the CPSA leaders is to concentrate on arbitration for the 1982 claim and ignore the need for all public sector unions to unite *now* to smash the pay limit. Graham has no intention of fighting for the 13% needed to keep pace with inflation or to call action for the £12.50 minimum underpinning claim submitted by the Council for Civil Service Unions. We can expect him and the right wing to quickly 'fall back' to a 7% or 8% deal with the Tories, with no industrial action. The method of the CPSA leaders is to turn to arbitration this year and hope that the Tory Megaw inquiry into civil service pay for 1983 will produce a fair rise.

CPSA members and other civil servants will be left once again at the bottom of the pay rise league, taking cuts in pay, if they allow Graham to passively follow the results of a Tory inquiry.

The CPSA has a great deal of strength as a union. The problem is to make it fight to maintain living standards under very difficult conditions. Militants in the CPSA begin with the problem of turning the Broad Left of the Union into a current capable of taking back the leadership from the right wing. At the moment the Broad Left is run by supporters of *Militant* and the Communist Party. These opposed all out action in the pay dispute last year, until the last possible moment, when it was too late. This inaction handed the campaign to the right wing officials and allowed the sell-out. *Militant* have supported Ainsworth, who betrayed the victimised civil servants in Brighton. This stand must be opposed by those *Militant* supporters within the CPSA Broad Left who want a fighting union.

In the first instance the *Socialist Caucus*, the third tendency in the Broad Left, must be built and win the leadership of the Broad Left as a whole. Its programme should be short and clear: *No reliance on Tory led 'arbitration' to defend civil servants' living standards. Public sector unity committees and industrial action to smash the 4% limit!*

Go for the full claim in 1982. No to a deal in stages which gives less than 13% with £12.50 minimum!

The SDP Agents

The SDP gained its 28th Labour MP last month. In parliament the SDP members rail against the trade unions and labour movement, whilst the Tories' policies of unemployment, wage cutting and arming for world war are passed over in silence. This once again reveals the SDP as a bosses' party.

The SDP, from the start, has not been able to actually attract the working class into its ranks. 57% of its members are from professional layers and only 7% are manual workers. This is despite its origin as a breakaway from the Labour Party. It also gives the lie to the idea that the SDP represents the real 'moderate' wing of the working class which was driven out of the 'intolerant', 'undemocratic' and 'infiltrated' Labour Party. It is worth remembering when the 'democratic' accolades are being handed out

that nine MPs have defected since voting for Denis Healey as deputy leader at Brighton, including John Grant who joined the SDP 5 days after voting in the Labour Shadow Cabinet elections.

The Alliance with the Liberals is not without problems. The Liberals are unhappy about being the junior partner — a fact which is having a damaging effect on their funds, while the SDP is cleaning up. They are putting the boot in on negotiations over who stands in which seats at the next elections. The 11 Southwark councillors who joined the SDP were branded by the local Liberals as being just the same old Labour machine.

Such internal problems will not be decisive however. The Labour movement must not rely on them to stop a coalition government. Only determined action in the

Labour Party and trade unions to combat the SDP and its fifth column allies still in the Labour Party will do that.

Is it an accident that a steady stream of MPs are defecting to the SDP? Enough to keep the pressure on.

Statements to the effect of "I'll never go to the SDP" were made by a number of SDP MPs to their local Labour Parties, to be followed by the goodbye. Even Shirley Williams at one time attacked the idea of a 'centre party'. Should the loyal Labour Party rank and file and the left, who want Labour in power after the next election, not an unprincipled coalition, allow the right wing MPs they suspect of wanting to go, to choose the most damaging moment to defect?

We say, no!
A campaign must be mounted to drive out of the Labour Party all those MPs who will not speak clearly against a coalition government.

POLAND

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But the working class in Britain, wanting to stand shoulder to shoulder with their Polish sisters and brothers should not line up with the various leaders of the capitalist West who claim to speak in the name of "democratic rights". First among these is Reagan, that deranged geriatric cowboy who has the blood of thousands of Salvadorean workers on his hands.

Reagan has called for a trade boycott of Russia and the Eastern European countries. In Britain Thatcher echoes his anti-working class outpourings.

Immediately, blacking measures especially a blockade of food to the Soviet Union and to Poland itself, is not a weapon of working class solidarity with the Polish workers. Such actions are the cold war methods of imperialism. The people who push them, no matter how much they talk about "democratic rights" want to restore capitalism to Poland. This is why they call for trade boycotts. Who were the people who spoke at the right wing rally in the Albert Hall in London on January 4th? Apart from Tories and Bill Rodgers of the SDP, the speakers included Denis Healey, Frank Chappell and Kate Losinska of the Civil Service union. These people claimed to speak in the name of the working class and they were calling for cold war actions. They were lining up with Reagan. No activists in the Labour Party or trade unions should have anything to do with calls for blacking of goods to the USSR and Eastern Europe emanating from these quarters.

WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

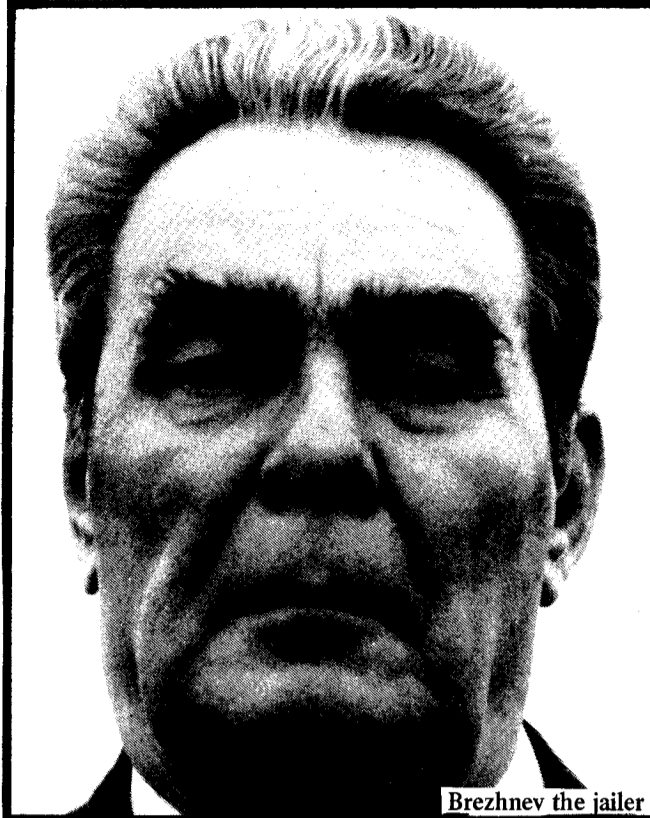
The maximum pressure must be put on Labour and union leaders to besiege the Polish embassy, to call a massive *working class* demonstration in solidarity with *Solidarity*, as opposed to that which allows Tories and near fascists to speak off the platform. All links with Stalinist 'official' unions in the East must be broken off immediately.

In particular, influential leaders like Arthur Scargill, whose record in relation to defending free trade unionists in the East is not good, should be swamped by calls for *action* in defence of the Polish miners who so heroically occupied the pits in Silesia and paid with their lives. *The British miners can and must be mobilised.* It is on this basis that the red baiters like Frank Chappell can be challenged within the workers' movement. *The field must not be left to the reactionaries.*

WESTERN CPs

What have the 'Communist' Parties of the West been up to since the coup? The British Communist Party issued a leaflet calling for the release of trade unionists and restoration of democratic rights. But they go on to lay the blame for the coup at the feet of *Solidarity*, saying "some of the statements and calls by *Solidarity* ... in recent times have actually been provocative." This is tantamount to saying *Solidarity* and workers' power in Poland was all right so long as it did not challenge the political dictatorship of the PUWP, which the vast majority of Polish workers did not support.

Georges Marchais, leader of the French Communist Party, the PCF, said, "Jaruzelski has used legal means provided for in the Polish constitution to re-establish order and avoid a bloodbath." He went on to remind the French parliament, in which he was speaking, that Article 16 of the French Constitution gives the same rights to the French ruling class!



Brezhnev the jailer



Walesa and Walentynowicz

Smash Stalinism! For workers power!

Marchais was forced by the anger of the rank and file of the PCF and its supporters in the unions to change his tune. But his first response was the *true* message of Stalinism: he told the French ruling class that Jaruzelski, faced with an upsurge of the workers, was doing no more than de Gaulle had done before him!

The US State Department, in the course of 1981 issued a number of statements in which they told the Kremlin that *Solidarity* and the Polish government should sort out their problems internally, without direct Kremlin interference. In this context imperialism promised the Kremlin that it would do nothing to upset the status quo. Brezhnev and Jaruzelski have not gone all the way to open Russian occupation. But they have gone further than Reagan would like, threatening a major crisis which would destabilize the fragile division of Europe which both the White House and the Kremlin want to maintain.



Jaruzelski

It is in this light that we must understand the meaning of the warnings from people like Carrington against a Kremlin invasion. In Poland the working class is already suffering the direct blows of Stalinist counter-revolution. But by reducing things to a potential Russian invasion the leaders of the capitalist West show how they cynically accept the right of the *Polish* Stalinists, at the behest of their Russian masters, to crush the independent workers' movement.

Members of the Labour Party and trade unions should not turn to hypocritical capitalist leaders, but the international workers' movement to take action against the threat of Russian troops.

The Socialist Labour Group and the international Trotskyist movement to which it belongs, stand fully with the Polish workers in the fight to throw off the shackles of martial law. For more than forty years the Trotskyists have fought, starting with the tens of thousands who died in camps in the Soviet Union at the hands of Stalin, for political revolution in the Stalinist controlled countries which would place the working class at the centre of state power.



Militia on the street

The papers and television in Britain have not done anything like justice to the scope of the resistance by the Polish people. During the first days of the coup all of Poland's eight major cities were in a state of siege. The city of Radom was in a state of insurrection. Workers armed with iron bars and clubs fought riot troops and armoured troop carriers. The general strike call by *Solidarity* gained very wide support, for instance women textile workers had to be dragged at gun-point from the factories which they were occupying. The miners of Silesia in the south stayed down the pits for weeks, until they were forced out by starvation, gas and deliberate flooding. Many were shot as they emerged. In the Baltic shipyards occupations took place in every major yard, only to be smashed by tanks. After the troops pulled back the workers occupied again and the process was repeated. All the time thousands of workers and students were being dragged off to concentration camps.

The exact toll of dead and injured is unknown, but it is far higher than the two dozen admitted by the military regime. *It runs into the hundreds.*

The condition of those in the open in freezing conditions. Frostbite and gangrene have occurred. Rumours that prisoners would be shipped to Russia have circulated.

Thousands of students and teachers have occupied colleges and schools. Many have been arrested. Buildings have been stormed by troops.

The political revolution by the Polish working class is not over. It can only be stopped by the total repression of the working class and virtual slave labour under the bayonet. Against this the Polish workers will rise, in one form or another they will fight. If the

Stalinists attempt such a massive repression it would, in itself, destroy the basis of the Polish economy just as surely as a General Strike by the whole working class would bring it to a halt.

The Polish working class must not stand alone. Our solidarity, that of the British workers' movement and not Margaret Thatcher or the cold war mongers of right wing groups such as 'Solidarity with Solidarity' is an urgent necessity.

The watchword of the campaign in Britain must be - forward to the workers' political revolution, not back to Stalinist repression! No common campaign with the capitalist butchers Reagan and Thatcher or their agents in the workers' movement, Chappell and his ilk! Mobilise the Labour Party and the unions!



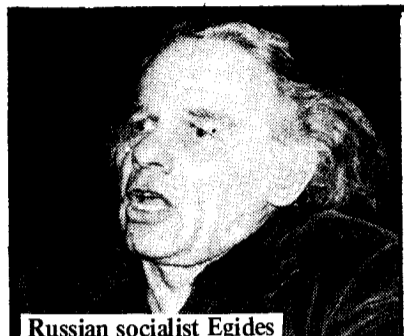
Solidarnosc members defy troops



Solidarnosc will live on!

SECOND EUROPEAN CONFERENCE IN DEFENCE OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

a report



Russian socialist Egides

"THE FIGHT HAS ONLY JUST
BEGUN."

Edmund Baluka, four hours before
being taken to a concentration
camp.



Edmund Baluka

The second European Conference to Defend Free Trade Unions in the USSR and Eastern Europe, took place in Paris on December 19th and 20th. The coup against *Solidarity* dominated the proceedings. Every single one of the seven *Solidarity* leaders who should have made up the Polish delegation were instead languishing in Stalinist concentration camps.

Since the first conference of its type took place, in April 1980, the scene had been transformed by the emergence of *Solidarity*. The conference heard the text of a letter from the President of the Liaison Committee elected in April 1980, the Polish shipyard worker, Edmund Baluka. The letter was written by him just four hours before troops came to lock him up. He expressed full confidence that the supporters in the West would rise to events and finished, "The fight has only just begun."

The conference was hosted by Force Ouvriere, the French socialist trade union federation. Messages of support were received from delegates representing the Italian trade union confederation, the UIL, which organised street demonstrations in defence of *Solidarity*. The national executive of the Spanish trade union federation, the CNT, sent greetings, as did many regions of the French trade unions. A leading member of the Irish Transport union described his meeting with Lech Walesa the previous May.

The conference was inspired by a message from a representative of a group of East German workers, who called on the international movement to fight for the release of East German workers jailed for distributing leaflets in support

of *Solidarity*. He said that there had been a big response to *Solidarity* in East Germany. This was the reason the East German Stalinists were so keen to wipe out the 'Polish disease'.

From Britain a delegation of 12 conveyed a message of support signed by 17 Labour MPs, including Tony Benn, which called for the release of Baluka and Kuron in Poland and Vladimir Klebanov in the USSR.

Ken Stratford, President of Thames Polytechnic students union, spoke on behalf of the London Students Organisation. He condemned the fact that the National Union of Mineworkers had recently hosted a "conference for peace and detente" to which leaders of the puppet 'unions' in the USSR had been invited and had refused to take up the case of the jailed Russian miner Klebanov.

"The Jaruzelski regime admits to shooting dead eight Silesian miners this week," he said. "We call on Arthur Scargill to join in the work of international solidarity with the Silesian miners. He should join Tony Benn in demanding the release of Vladimir Klebanov."

Greetings were sent from assistant secretary of NUPE, Ron Keating and from printworkers on Merseyside and Labour councillors in Haringey. The British delegation agreed to work for the setting up of a liaison committee to campaign in this country.

Present at the conference were members of *Solidarity* who were outside Poland when martial law was declared. They said trade union support groups would be set up in each country.

London Labour debates Ireland

Nearly 100 delegates attended a conference organised by the Greenwich Labour Party on November 28th entitled 'Ireland - a way forward?'

The organisers deliberately limited the conference to 'political education' and delegates' contributions to questions to the platform. In this way the main speakers could not be committed to organise any activity and the meeting acted as a left cover for their bankrupt positions. Clive Soley MP, shadow deputy spokesperson on Ireland to Don Concannon, called for 'unity with consent', which comes down to support for partition, as the loyalist minority will obviously not consent to abolish their materially advantageous position, which is sustained by the existence of the six-county statelet.

The overwhelming feeling of the conference however, was for a united Ireland without conditions.

Other 'ways forward' such as the so-called 'northern trade union option' were, as Paddy Logue of Derry Trades Council and the H-Block/Armagh Committee pointed out, only cul-de-sacs. And Richard Balfe, Labour Euro-MP for South London, under pressure from the floor, stated that he could not condemn the military struggle of the Irish people.

The calls from the floor for Labour to make a genuine break with the bipartisan policy with the Tories and for British withdrawal from Ireland resulted in local Labour Party activists setting up a South-East London Labour Committee on Ireland. The aim is to go beyond talking shops on Ireland by working with LCI activists in South-West London to coordinate plans for activity in the labour movement throughout South London.

Communist Party Congress

THE AGONY OF STALINISM



CPGB Congress

The congress of the Communist Party, held last November, should be studied by all workers, in the context of the crisis of Stalinism internationally. Not alone was 1981 the year of Poland, it was also the year when the French Communist Party, the most important in the West, suffered a great humiliation in the elections.

DECLINE

The congress of the British party revealed an organisation unable to halt a drastic decline in membership, collapse of the sales of its paper, the *Morning Star* and an admitted decline in the activity of its branches.

DISTRUST

In the past four years the CP has lost 6000 members and is now down to 18000. Several speakers, including CP leader McLennan, pointed to a continuing fall in members and their inability to stop the rot. A target of 1000 new members a year has turned into a loss of 1000 members a year. Trying to explain this the main congress resolution blamed "... the distrust of many who remain deeply suspicious of our aims and methods..."

Quite so! But not in the way the Stalinists mean. It is the treacherous policy of the CP in the unions which workers mainly distrust.

MORNING STAR

They have a target of winning 3000 new readers a year for the *Morning Star*, but they lose readers at a faster rate than they are supposed to win them. The Peoples March was the biggest CP/*Star* campaign for years, yet sales actually fell during the March!

Discussion on the *Star* also showed the breakdown of branch work. In the resolution on the *Star* the Stalinists confessed, "All the branches should work to ensure that all members buy the *Morning Star*." Party members are not buying their own paper! The decline in sales of the *Star* reveals that

branches are not campaigning for it in any way at all. Campaign work in general has virtually ceased. The resolution on Industrial Work noted "... an unacceptable level of organisation."

IRELAND

Such collapse has its roots in the politics of the CP. On Ireland the congress revealed a craven cover up for imperialism. Their solution to the crisis in Ireland is: call the troops back to barracks but leave them in Ireland, introduce proportional representation from Westminster and no final withdrawal until 'peace' is achieved. The congress avoided at all cost reference to fighting the oppression of Irish national right by British imperialism. Indeed, the only mention of the national question in the whole congress came in a resolution calling for the safeguards on "... the independence of Britain ... from multinationals."

British imperialism, where are you?

McLennan referred with pride to the CP's Marxist understanding of the capitalist state, then reduced the struggle against the state to calls for trade union rights in the army and police! Added to this the CP supports proportional representation, which of course the SDP advocate correctly as a measure to defend the capitalist state.

LABOUR PARTY

On the Labour Party the CP congress was revealing. It lauded the work of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee. It is this body which has blocked the growth of a broad national left regroupment to fight the Labour right wing. The CP has kept allies in the LCC, such as Nigel Stanley, who appeared on television to witch-hunt the *Militant*. McLennan said in the congress, "We do not seek to build the Communist Party as an alternative to the Labour Party." No, the CP knows that to protect the labour bureaucrats it must now have a large presence inside the Labour Party.

The CP will field candidates in elections, to derail those traditional supporters who still look to it for a political lead.

This minimal open presence will allow them to try to collapse the labour movement into what they call the "democratic movement". This idea includes vicars, Liberals, and above all, the SDP.

The CP talks about a Labour government "of a new type". This expresses in their peculiar form, the idea that it can be left to a Labour government to carry out a socialist and Marxist programme.

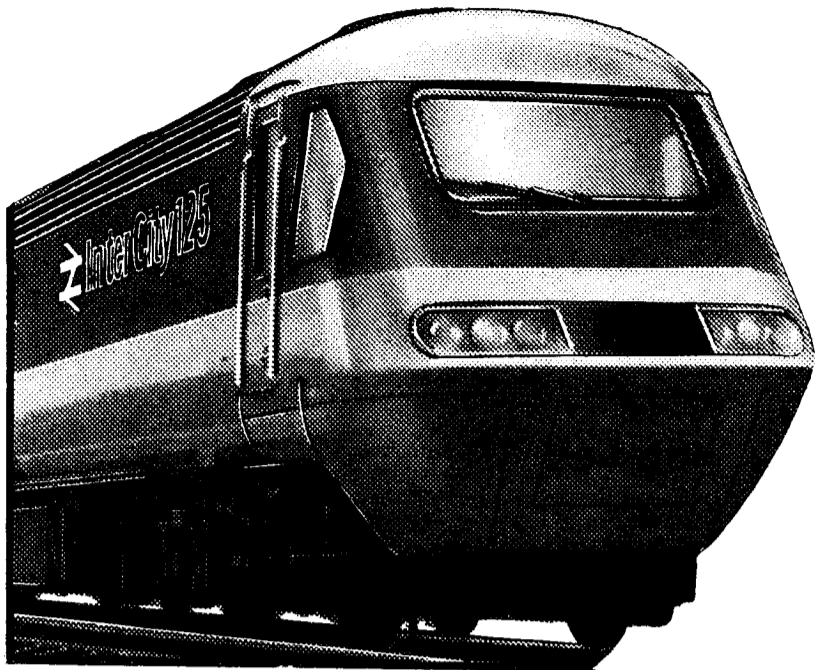
DETENTE

It is on international questions where the CP reveals its Stalinist character most clearly. The debate on Afghanistan split the congress, with 157 delegates opposing the invasion and 115 supporting it. But the 157 who opposed it did so because it threatened to "... further sabotage detente." But detente is nothing more than the agreement between the Kremlin and imperialism to jointly hold in check the movements of the working class. Detente in action means the Kremlin keeps out of Salvador if the West keeps out of Poland. Recently, the *Financial Times* graphically expressed detente, from a capitalist point of view, when it said of Poland, "... stability must, sooner or later, be imposed from above." This is what the CP 'wets' support.

The CP congress hailed the Kremlin's "... constant striving to preserve world peace" at the moment Jaruzelski crushed the Polish workers on its command. They called the United Nations "a bulwark against imperialism". Lenin called its predecessor, the League of Nations "a thieves' kitchen".

The Stalinism of the CPGB was best and disgustingly expressed in the brief resolution on Poland, which extended "fraternal greetings and solidarity to the PUWP." The *British CP is a brother to the butchers of the Polish working class*.

Rail unions on the line



ASLEF leader Buckton



The current outbreak of trouble between train drivers and the management of British Rail reflects very basic problems, affecting not only drivers but all rail workers. The rail industry has always been a labour based one in which job demarcation and working conditions were high on the list of priorities for its workers.

The officials of the National Union of Railwaymen last year took the lead in loosening agreements on demarcation and hours, in return for a two stage pay rise. ASLEF and the TSSA also took part in these talks. The TSSA, like the NUR, has a very right wing leadership and generally holds aloof from supporting the demands of blue collar workers, echoing prejudices which go back to the days when wearing a white collar meant something. Those days are long gone but the elitist attitude of the TSSA hierarchy remains.

The leaders of the NUR, which represents the majority of railworkers have long been more or less company men, deeply involved in the post 1926 negotiating structures which took away much of their ability to work independently from management. Sid Weighell in particular has presided over a great rundown of railways, barely countering BR agreements about 'overmanning' and 'efficiency'.

The real criminals are the governments who ordered, year after year, the rundown of capital expenditure on railways, reducing efficiency, worsening conditions and threatening safety. The recent Seer Green disaster highlighted the archaic conditions on many important lines, with equipment the Victorians could work with.

ASLEF has seen its membership drop to a quarter of what it was years ago. Train drivers, among the most skilled of rail workers, have seen their status eroded at the same time as the job became technically more demanding, if not as physically demanding as it used to be. The struggle for the five day rostered week and the 8 hour day was one of the main planks around which ASLEF was built. Asking drivers to work 'flexitime' seems innocent enough, but the medium term result would be a return to the kind of conditions which existed before nationalisation, where drivers had to go where they were told, however long it meant being away from home.

British Rail management have clearly been told to make a stand by the government. It is essential for all railworkers to see that ASLEF is not defeated. The NUR and TSSA leaders, in refusing to back the drivers, are doing the management's dirty work. All rail unions must negotiate together, defend conditions in common and not barter jobs and conditions for wages. The future of what is left of the rail industry is at stake.

1400 Jobs lost in St. Helens

The town of St. Helens, a town based on the glass and allied trades, will see 1,400 more on the dole in February. At the Fibreglass subsidiary of Pilkingtons 500 are to go. This plant has only been open two years and makes loft insulation, a supposed 'growth' product which has been hit by the decline in do-it-yourself, as wage packets shrink and housebuilding slows down.

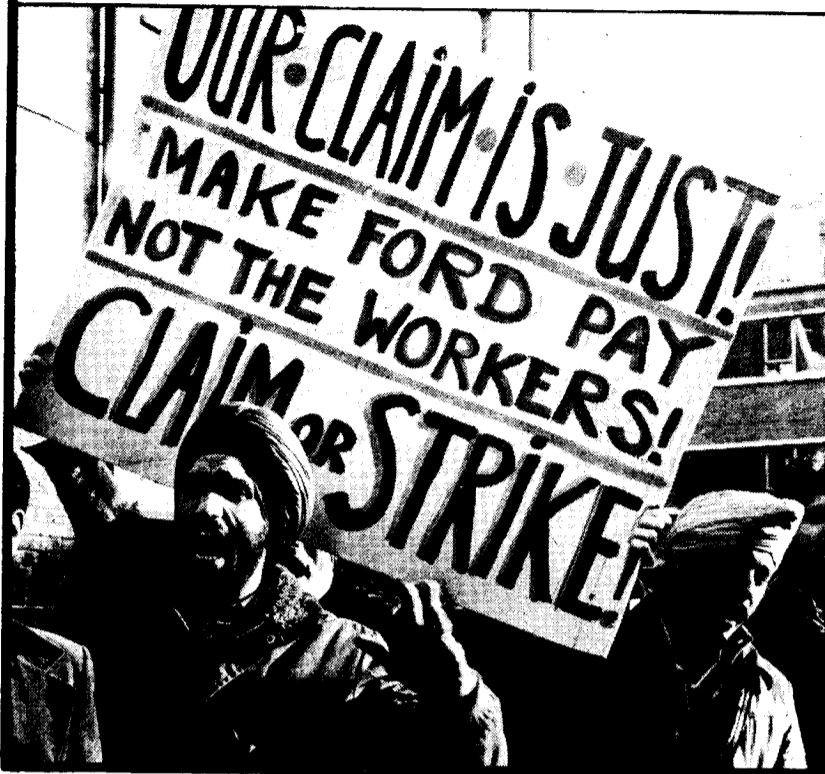
At the Rockware glass container factory, around 900 jobs will be lost. Some workers are being invited to get on their bikes and move to South Yorkshire or Scotland!

In both cases the trade union involved is primarily the GMWU, whose leaders have offered no viable perspective to the workers for fighting the closures. Indeed, the GMWU officials seem to have given up the jobs without a fight.

Redundancies such as these can be stopped, if the unions use their industrial muscle.

Basnett, the GMWU leader, was once personally responsible for the area of St. Helens. Recently he called for wide action to stop Thatcher dismantling the closed shop plant by plant. The battle against closures is just as crucial for workers on the ground and should be fought in the same way. Why should Pilkingtons and Rockware be allowed to 'rationalize' their companies to the benefit of profits and at the expense of the workers? The onus is on Basnett to stop agreeing meekly to closure after closure and put the union in the firing line. Now is the time to call a halt to the rundown of glass, not two or three years' time when thousands of jobs have gone in St. Helens.

Another official sellout in cars



Ford workers voted, by about 2 to 1, to call off their strike and return to work.

The pattern of the dispute was almost a carbon copy of that at BL. At the last moment management 'improved' the offer and union leaders recommended a return to work. As well as the 7.4% pay offer, what was involved in the dispute was a package of 'efficiency measures' which are sure to result in job losses.

The prospect of the dole and pressure from the union leaders combined to create a mood of hesitancy over the strike at Dagenham. But in Swansea and Halewood, both very depressed areas, the militant mood was remarkable. The mass meeting in Swansea passed a vote of no confidence in Ron Todd, chief union negotiator. At Halewood 10,000 body and assembly workers voted to stay out for a full week.

The 7.4% deal seems high compared to the 3.8% offered to BL workers. But Ford is a much more profitable company and under the full agreement many traditional areas of job demarcation and work procedures will be done away with. Once again union leaders have connived to sell jobs and impose worse working conditions on their members.

Ford workers were at the heart of the Winter of Discontent in 1978-9. If the strike had gone ahead this time it would equally have been a political strike. This adds to the treachery of the TGWU and AUEW leaders.

May Elections

Continued from back page

No deal should be made between Labour and the SDP on the local elections or any other elections. It was breaking from such deals, which were carried out secretly by Ramsay MacDonald in the early days of Labour, which led to a strong Labour Party.

Already Labour parties are dividing on the election manifesto for the local elections. The right wing calls for cuts in jobs and services, dressed up in talk about 'logic', which is a cover for total acceptance of Heseltine's axe. Labour loyalists are fighting for every means to obstruct the Tories and place the blame where it belongs - Downing Street. In one north London borough, right wing councillors have issued what amounts to an entire alternative manifesto, spitting on the local parties and the consultation procedure. This is the way the Gang of Three started.

Public sector workers and council tenants have a right to expect a united fight by all Labour councils to block the Tory offensive. If all the London boroughs, the GLC and the Labour controlled authorities in the cities and working class towns made a simultaneous stand it would force a General Election.

This is the road to breaking the march of the SDP and the ruling class, not craven attempts to contain the aims of the Labour Party within the limits set by a right wing Tory government.

The Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party called a conference last December 13th to discuss the crisis in local government. There the officials of Frank Chappell's EEPTU used their block vote, along with other union bosses, to just get through a motion that Labour councils were each to stand alone, that there was to be no joint resistance. This contradicted the approach of the regional London Labour Party, which called for non co-operation with Heseltine and a united front of councils and public sector unions.

Right wingers within the Labour Group on the GLC have threatened



the very existence of a Labour majority. This is SDP blackmail from within. It accepts that Tory judges have a right to double fares and sack London Transport workers. And how are London Transport workers to respond to this? No doubt through 'extra-parliamentary' activity which will be condemned by Foot and Healey! Labour councillors should not sack workers for the Tories, not attack the social wage and services on which the poor, the sick, the elderly and working people generally rely, in favour of the rich.

Between now and May trade union militants should join the Labour Party and make their voices heard.

No official Labour manifesto should be based on Tory arguments that cuts in jobs and services are necessary. The workers and service users say otherwise. No concessions must be made to the SDP. Any Labour councillor caught dealing with the SDP over the elections must be disowned. Any right winger who uses the threat of the SDP to reject the Labour manifesto must leave the Labour Party.

Hard cheese...

The social effect of the heavy rise in unemployment in Britain, combined with the fall in real earnings can be seen in the types of food being eaten. Taking the second quarter of 1981 as against that of 1980, purchases of food at stable prices were down 2% overall. People bought less milk, cheese, eggs, sugar and meat.

poultry, fish and preserved meats rose and a lot more potatoes were eaten as prices fell. Tea and instant coffee remained about the same, because prices fell. Bread and other cereal products were eaten more. Overall a change in the average diet towards starchy food.

£16 a week!

Say no to industrial conscription

By George White



The new 'training scheme' which the Tories are forcing on all 16 year old school leavers without a job is nothing less than industrial conscription. 'Training' is 'offered' to all unemployed youth. But if they refuse it they will be left penniless and unable to claim benefit.

For the upkeep of those who go on the scheme, the Department of Employment will generously pay £16 a week. At the moment young workers on YOPS schemes get £25 a week. They have found even this hard to get by on.

On top of the fact that young unemployed people are offered a choice between conscription and starvation there is the fact that the 'training scheme' is designed to drive down wages in industry. An employer who pays 'trainees' less than £40 a week gets £15 in subsidy. If they are paid a penny over that the boss gets £7.50. This is an incentive towards low pay which must affect all workers, not just the youth on the scheme.

WAGES AT RISK

Every trade unionist has a vested interest in opposing this scheme. If it is widely introduced many workers could be made jobless, especially in unskilled jobs, to make way for the subsidy gained from low paid 'trainees'. Employers can also use the scheme to keep wage rates down generally.

Current wage rates for 16 year olds vary greatly but average out at between £30 and £50.

Finally the 'training scheme' is not a training at all. There is no real development of skills and the piece of paper offered at the end will be worthless on the job market. The Tories are out to exert more direct social control over the kids who rioted last summer and to quickly lower the official unemployment figures before the next election. What they will actually do is create a large number of very angry young people living in poverty. Many may well prefer not to go on the scheme at all for £15 a week.

Add on the cuts in education which are closing down courses in Further Education colleges and 1982 is a year of big attacks on the youth of Britain. The road out of hell for working class 16 year olds lies through self organisation. Action groups should be set up locally to fight for facilities from the local council.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Campaigns highlighting the problems should be aimed at the trade union branches, from whom active help and finance should be sought. *The TUC must be pressed to answer the Tory scheme with a directive to union members not to co-operate on the job.* It must run a national campaign against it with roots in every town. Trades Councils can play the central role in fighting attempts by employers to use the scheme to drive down wages.

1982 must be made the year of unemployed youth by the whole labour movement.

Help our £3000 fund!

The £3000 development fund for *Socialist Newsletter* has just gone over the half way mark. We have raised £1650 so far. We want to complete this stage of the fund, which will go towards developing our office, by the end of February.

We ask all our readers and supporters, who want to see *Socialist Newsletter* develop in size, to a regular twelve pager, to give generously to the fund and help us build the paper as a service to those in struggle.

SEND A DONATION NOW!

Students

The Left Alliance blocks fightback in NUS

By Michael Keene

The winter conference of the National Union of Students, held at the start of December, can best be characterised by the betrayal of a fight against the Tories carried out by the NUS national executive.

The 'Left Alliance' led executive sold out the fight to defend students' standards, flouted democracy in the conference and ran away from the fight against the Thatcher government.

Before conference opened, the executive drew up a statement, which it agreed by 14 votes to 5, concerning the proposal by some student unions to include Owen Carron MP in the priorities ballot for the right to be a guest speaker at the conference. The executive statement condemned Carron as a supporter of "terrorism" and moved not to take any guest speakers to stop him speaking! What's more, the 'Left-Alliance' and Labour Student leaders united with the Tory students to say that they would leave if Carron was allowed to speak. The executive statement was signed by Communist and Labour students, in common with SDP, Liberal and Tory students. The ban on Carron was narrowly supported in full conference on the basis of this unholy alliance. Despite this typical Stalinist antic, 500 delegates heard Carron at a fringe meeting and a statement was put out by 46 members of the National Organisation of Labour Students, including one member of the National Committee, condemning the NUS leadership and in particular the officers of NOLS who had signed the attack on Carron, without any mandate. NOLS has no effective policy on Ireland and the officers, closely linked to the stalinist 'Left Alliance', refused to allow a full caucus meeting to discuss their stand.



On the questions of education cuts and grants, which Keith Joseph has elevated to a virtual crusade against whole areas of third level education and the ability of working class people to go to college at all, the NOLS-'Left Alliance' leaders acted in equally treacherous fashion. They opposed an emergency motion signed by 95 colleges calling for an effective campaign in support of students in occupation at the Polytechnic of Central London and at University College Cardiff, to oppose cuts. NUS President and Communist Party member Aaronovitch made it clear that he wanted to "occupy people's minds, not buildings", another way of saying he wanted to do nothing. The motion on cuts proposed by the executive was totally university oriented and said nothing about mobilising the mass of students here and now. The resolution

contented itself with the policy of pressuring "all political parties" to recognise the value of higher education.

The executive tried to separate the issue of fighting the Tories on cuts from that of grants. The miserable 4% grants increase, which amounts to a 6% cut, has been trumpeted by the NUS leader as "a real move", which they had forced on the government. The reality is that thousands of students already on the bread line will find it



impossible to continue their studies for three years on this level of grant. This attack by Joseph can only be fought by the NUS pushing on all fronts against the Tories. The motion from the leaders, carried on the basis of the same unholy alliance of CP and Labour students with SDP, Liberal and Tories, called for a weeklong 'protest strike' on grants. This deliberately pathetic move is hedged around with reservations such as the non-participation of final year students. It is designed to be a flop. Such a failure will allow Aaronovitch to turn round and blame the students for not fighting, and allow him to continue to bend in front of the Tories.

Another noteworthy example of the craven behaviour of the executive was over the emergency motion supporting the Labour GLC against Lord Denning's ruling against the cheap fares in London. The unholy alliance moved to delete any reference in the resolution to the need to sack Denning. Not content with this defence of the ruling class judge, the executive opposed even the watered down motion, which was nevertheless carried against them by 296 votes to 295.

A high point in the conference was the speech made by Gzregorz Baniecki, from the Polish free student union, NZS. He was allowed to speak, against the wishes of the platform, after a successful challenge to the agenda from the floor. NUS still recognises the SZSP, the state run stalinist union in Poland. But the platform could not refuse to let Baniecki speak.

The lesson of Blackpool is that the current leadership of NUS is rotten to the core. All students who want to fight back against Thatcher, who want to really defend grants and stop the cuts, have only one option - build a solid campaign body within the NUS and throw out the present corrupt 'Left Alliance' leaders next Easter. A significant battle for a fighting left has been opened in the National Organisation of Labour Students. This must become the rallying point for a movement to provide a fighting leadership for NUS.

Broadwater Farm Estate organizes

The mini police station which was proposed for the Broadwater Farm Estate in North London has so far not materialised. This scheme was strongly opposed by many tenants on the estate. The tenants have now organised a youth club, with a hundred and twenty five members, black and white. The campaign which the tenants built up to stop the police station, from which the young people on the estate would have been harassed, resulted in the council making a shop available for the youth club. This shop is open all day. As yet there is no heating or cooking facilities but meals are cooked in a local flat and taken down to the shop.

Every week there is a disco to raise

money for the club and evening classes are being run in O Level Law, drama, football, keep fit and music.

Steps forward have been made for the young people on Broadwater Farm. The campaign work of the tenants has wrung out of Labour controlled Haringey council some concessions. This shows that council tenants can and must organise to improve the living conditions on the estates. More can be won. Like many council estates the local community centre is still run by what amounts to an unrepresentative clique. *Labour controlled councils must be made to hand over control of these local facilities to the people who live in the area.*

1981 The year of Poland & Ireland

By Frank Irvine

When Marx and his comrades formed the International Working Men's Association in 1864, among the first issues they took up were the fight for national independence in Ireland and Poland. In 1981 these countries were once more at the centre of world politics.

In Poland the process of political revolution by the working class unfolded to a far higher degree than ever before seen in Eastern Europe, including Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. At one time Walesa stated that *Solidarity* was not a political organisation and that it accepted the 'leading role' of the Stalinist PZPR. The membership of *Solidarity* did not agree with Walesa and pushed for *Solidarity* to take a role in politics, to help give the workers independent political expression. This firm stand was underlined at the second session of the Congress of *Solidarity* which issued a historic call to workers throughout Eastern Europe and the USSR to follow the example of *Solidarity* and form free trade unions. The military crackdown in December has solved nothing for the Stalinist regime, the working class is fighting on. Both the western banks and the Kremlin expressed an interest in suppressing the Polish workers in the interest of 'stability'.

At the other end of Europe the Irish working class was fighting to get rid of British rule over part of their country. 1981 will always be remembered as the year when 10 Irish Republicans died on Hunger Strike. The Irish workers went to the streets in hundreds of thousands to support Bobby Sands and his comrades and shook British rule to its foundations. Thatcher was humiliated by the election of first Sands and then Carron to the Westminster parliament. There could have been a great movement in both Ireland and Britain were it not for the role of the British trade union leaders and Labour leaders who kept their united front with the Tories and applauded the deaths of the Hunger Strikers. The Hunger Strike was defeated but the movement was not.

1981 did not see a completely positive year from the point of view of the working class. The junta in El Salvador continued its mass murders, with the aid of Reagan's armoury. But they were unable to crush the resistance of the 3 million people of Salvador, despite butchering 200 a day.

In Turkey the military dictatorship proceeded with trials and executions of trade unionists. But imperialism, which wanted to use Turkey as base from which to attack the people of Iran was unable to do so. In Iran itself the polarisation between the Khomeini regime and organisations like the Mojaheddin, which have wide popular support, led to widespread terror and attacks on democratic liberties by the mullah-led state. The question posed was whether the Iranian revolution would continue on to workers and peasants government or whether Khomeini would stay in power, threatening the basis of the revolution.



Khomeini

This problem was not resolved in 1981.

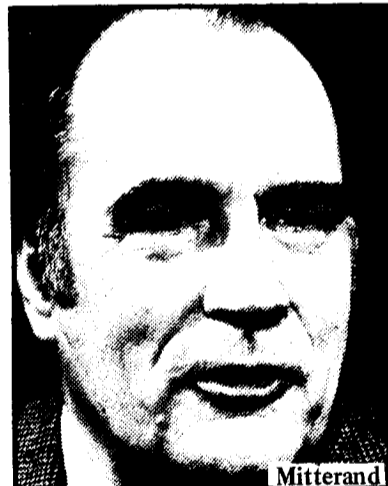
Throughout the Middle East, 1981 brought signs of the fragility of regimes and the aggressive intentions of imperialism. Reagan staged a provocation off the coast of Libya which could be the prelude to an attempt at a coup by pro-US forces. Israel annexed the Golan heights at the end of the year, posing a new war threat to the area.

In Egypt the hostility of the people to the direct military interference of Washington in the area was shown by the killing of Sadat just before US troops were due to stage manoeuvres in Egypt. In the Lebanon and on the West Bank of the Jordan the Palestinian people kept up their fight for national unity and statehood.



Racist leader Botha

In Southern Africa Reagan sanctioned the invasion of Angola by South African racist troops and continued to block the independence of Namibia. The invasion of Angola was an act of counter-revolution, but its immediate cause was the fear by the white racist South African government that the revolution would brim quickly over from Zimbabwe and Namibia into South Africa itself, where bombings, mass demonstrations and protests marked a rise in the struggle of black people.



Mitterand

Although Poland and Ireland were the storm centres of action in Europe, tremendous victories for working people were won elsewhere. In Greece the socialist party, PASOK, struck a huge blow to end years of military and direct rule by capitalist parties. In France the election of Mitterand was of even greater importance. It underlined the problems of world Stalinism. In order to kick out Giscard the working class forced unity against the wishes of the French Communist Party, reducing its poll to the lowest since 1936 and creating a crisis in its leadership. The French working class, impatient for an end to the Gaullist Fifth Republic, united to throw out a capitalist president, creating favourable ground for the French Trotskyists to build a real revolutionary mass party. At the end of 1981, with nearly 6,000 members, the Trotskyists started to build a party, the PCI, Internationalist Communist Party.

1981 was a year of political tension in Britain which was not released through a major struggle. As early as February Thatcher had to bow before the threat of a national miners' strike. But 1981 provided classical examples of why the working class has not yet brought down the Tories. The civil servants were locked in dispute with the government for 13 weeks. All the main civil service union conferences voted for all out strike action. Yet the civil servants were sent back to work by their union leaders, with only half the claim won. The recently thwarted BL strike, which would have challenged the government itself, is another example of the treachery of the union leaders.

That the working class will fight is clear. The Peoples March in May brought hundreds of thousands onto the streets. Despite the TUC's attempt to play down the march the sentiment all the way was, 'Kick out the Tories'.

The drawn out struggle in the Labour Party took explosive new turns in 1981. This was the year when the decades old tradition of the leader being elected only by MPs was overturned. The response of the right wing was the formation of the SDP, aimed at blocking the election of a future Labour Government and wrecking the Labour Party. Inside the party Foot launched the first witch-hunt against the left for seventeen years. These moves have not stopped the pressure from workers faced with the dole, with cuts in living standards and with attacks on the unions, to get rid of the Tory government as quickly as possible.

The working class was denied a chance by its leaders to win a major battle against Thatcher in 1981.

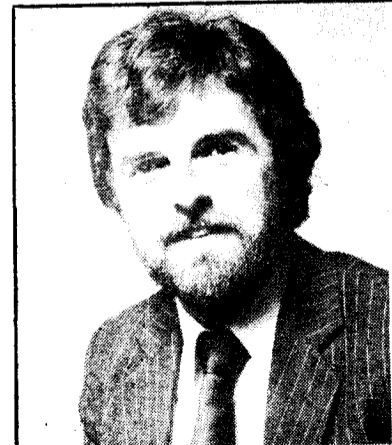
In the Labour Party the right took the initiative but the fight has only begun. 1982 opens with the Tory government merely hanging on. It was saved by the right wing union leaders but it couldn't strike a decisive blow itself. Perhaps the most graphic illustration of the real balance of class forces and the temper of the working class, the oppressed and the young, were the summer riots. These gave a dramatic warning that new layers of angry young working class youth are coming on the scene. The decline of Britain, which is the backdrop and the cause of the impotence of the Tories, the crisis in the Labour Party and the needs of trade unionists, was not arrested in 1981.

Ireland From debate to a wide campaign

On February 27th a conference on Ireland is being organised called, "Time for Tory policies to go". This conference should be widely supported within the Labour Party and unions. It gives as its aim, carrying "the debate on Ireland into the wider labour and trade union movement."

However its aims are ambiguous. There is a danger of claiming victories where these have still to be won. Speaking of the last conference of the Labour Party in Brighton, the organisers of the conference say, "A significant blow against bipartisanship was made when the conference adopted the NEC's recommendation." Let us talk plainly. The proposal by Labour's National Executive was not a break with bipartisanship with the Tories, but part of a move taking place both within the Labour and Tory parties to allow the dealing between the British and Irish governments to continue. This dealing reflects the needs not of the working class in Britain and Ireland but the ruling class. We say this not in order to lessen the importance of the 54 motions on Ireland which were on the agenda at Brighton but to clarify what happened to them. Those which called for the ending of the bipartisan agreement with the Tories were all thrown out, on the recommendation of the National Executive Committee.

Within the unions we must not forget that the TUC bans any trades council from taking a position in relation to Ireland. Trade unionists get victimised for discussing Ireland in their unions.



Vote Carron X

The battle within the Labour Party to break with the Tories still has to be fought and won.

On this front the Labour Committee on Ireland is absolutely crucial. Those who are proposing to turn this body, which had the major hand in getting the 54 motions on the agenda in Brighton, into merely an 'educational' committee must be opposed. What is needed is not simply discussion on Ireland in the Labour Party but a full campaign which can provide a platform around the country for Owen Carron to speak to British workers and to ensure that Ireland once again occupies a major place in the next Labour conference.

The organisers of the conference on February 27th want "to give hope that political violence will cease within the foreseeable future." Political violence in Ireland is of two kinds: That carried out by the British troops and their official and unofficial allies, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the UDA and Paisley's supporters. This is the violence of colonial repression. Then there is the violence of the Republican movement and the hundreds of thousands who took to the streets to support the Hunger Strikers. This is the violence of an oppressed people trying to get rid of British rule.

British socialists must learn to distinguish between these two kinds of political violence. British workers have nothing to gain from supporting the violence of the army and its friends. It is not necessary to agree with the methods of the Republicans to call for an end to their repression.

The conference must go on record four square on this question. If it puts an equals sign between all violence in Ireland it will end up supporting the hypocrisy of Foot and Concannon.

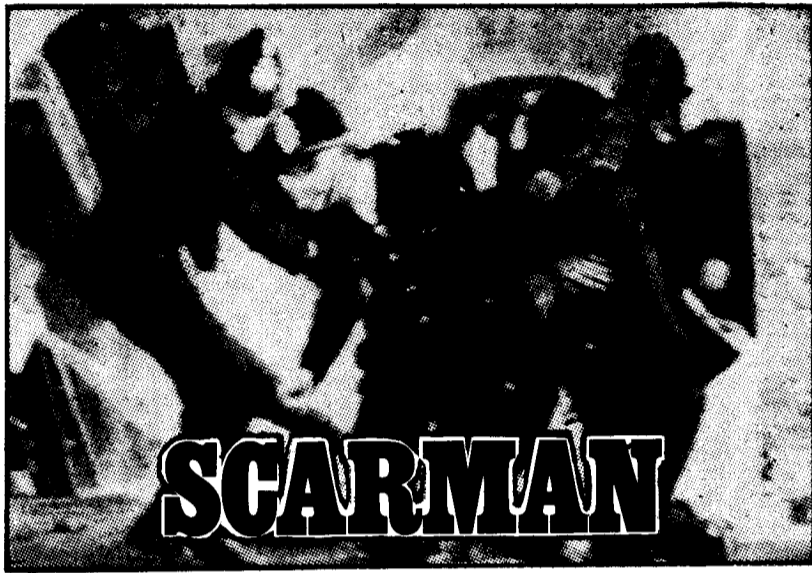
The Hunger Strikes made Ireland an unavoidable issue in the Labour Party last year. The crisis there is less spectacular now, but it is far from over. Nothing has been solved.

The main issues are the same as in 1981.

**British troops out now!
Political status for political prisoners!
Break the alliance with the Tories on Ireland!**



IN DEFENCE OF TROTSKYISM



MARXISM AND THE STATE

The publication in December of the Scarman report shows that once again a noble judge has done exactly what was required of him by the ruling class. The illusion of a searching investigation and the conclusions - which will never be implemented - will amply satisfy the anguished concern of the middle class community relations merchants and their dog-collared followers. For the black youth of Brixton, or the black and white kids from Liverpool 8, there will be no concessions from the British state. No public 'enquiry', close 'liaison' with the police or 'ethnic police force' will get rid of their social and economic oppression.

Scarman's report reduces the latest wave of police violence to tactical errors of judgement on the ground. Its function is basically to whitewash the workings of the repressive state machine, and there is no other kind of police force. Scarman says the police and the army can be kept under 'democratic' control. This is an illusion. At the end of the day the forces of the capitalist state have remained intact and stand between the working class and effective political power. Workers learn on the picket line and on the street fighting fascists that the police are never neutral in the class struggle.

But to those who claim to be Marxists and who conceal this fundamental reality, the better to stay on good terms with the Labour bureaucrats and union bosses, are doing a dangerous disservice to the working class. The day after the first riots in Liverpool 8, the *Militant* influenced Young Socialists issued a leaflet calling for the democratisation of the police and their 'trade unionisation'. The first demand is simply out of the question in a capitalist state. The police is one of the key weapons of the ruling class in defence of private property, there is no way they would see the police deprived of the power of repression. Enquiries like Scarman merely provide a veneer of 'accountability' without anyone really being brought to account. Is this what *Militant* wants - more Scarmans?

The idea of trade union rights for the police might have substance if large numbers of police were demanding it. After the first World War there was a movement within the police for trade union rights. But the ruling class totally stamped that out, sacking thousands of police in the process. Since then applicants for the 'force' are carefully vetted

to ensure backwardness and brutality. The police are not simply 'workers in uniform'. Once they become police officers they cease to be workers and become agents of the capitalist state. They are the front line enemies of the working class and the youth. A police officer who wants to change this should get out and nothing else.

It is this appreciation of the class nature of the police and army, the forces of the capitalist state, which separates Marxists from other currents in the working class. As Trotsky said, in the Programme of the Fourth International, the *Transitional Programme*, "The reformists systematically implant in the minds of the workers the notion that the sacredness of democracy is best guaranteed when the ruling class is armed to the teeth and the workers are unarmed". He was referring not only to the police but to the other repressive options at the disposal of the police, such as fascist gangs and private armies. The difference between these and the police is only one of degree.

Against them the working class can only rely on its own organisations and its own strength. Just as it builds trade unions in the economic struggle against the bosses and parties to achieve governmental power, so it has to face up to the armed forces of the ruling class. It needs *self-defence groups* and other bodies to counter the brutality and repression of the state on the picket line, in the housing estates and on the street. It needs to mobilise its parties and unions to fight police repression directly, not to foster the illusion that the police can be reformed or 'controlled' by the working class.

Every ruling class needs a state apparatus to repress the class it is exploiting. The workers need the *destruction* of the capitalist state and its replacement with a workers' state. Such a perspective is at the foundation of Marxism. Many socialists chatter on about class struggle and exploitation, but as Lenin wrote, "Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the dictatorship of the working class. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxists and the ordinary petty bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested." This is clearly a test which, in Lenin's eyes the *Militant* would fail.

Split in the FI(IC)

Since July 1981 a political crisis has gripped the Fourth International (International Committee), to which the SLG belongs. This led to a split at the end of October. Nahuel Moreno, the leader of the Socialist Workers Party of Argentina, led an internal campaign of slanders and falsifications about the politics of the French section, the Internationalist Communist Organisation (OCI).

Moreno accused the OCI of having given up the struggle for Trotskyism in France, in favour of support for the Mitterand government. He accused its leadership of bringing the influence of reformism into the Trotskyist movement, and used the expression Lenin used to denounce the socialist leaders who supported the imperialist war in 1914 - social patriotism - about Pierre Lambert, one of the main OCI leaders.

Moreno split the FI(IC) last October. From July to October Moreno stayed away from the work of the international leadership. This stopped a genuine discussion on the problems.

On October 30th, Moreno's supporters in France announced their intention of setting up a centre from which they intended to organize public opposition to the OCI. Moreno later withdrew this proposal but his actions since then have been to split the FI(IC).

In this context a meeting of the international General Council of the FI(IC), the highest body between congresses, was regularly convened last November 21st. That meeting was boycotted by half the members, by agreement with Moreno. Eight members of the General Council met and called all sections of the FI(IC) to participate in a committee to prepare a World Congress in six months time.

This committee was convened in Paris on December 21st. Moreno and his supporters once again avoided the dis-

ussion by boycott. The meeting was attended by Trotskyist organizations from the following countries: Antilles, Austria, Algeria, Brazil, Britain, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Palestine, Spain, Switzerland, Senegal, Sweden, Tunisia and the USSR.

The meeting adopted a number of resolutions which will be published separately, including a statement on the situation in Poland. A unanimous resolution was adopted on the road to the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Whilst the split has weakened the forces fighting for the rebuilding of the International it will not go by without a struggle for political clarification, itself a part of that fight. The pretexs given by Moreno for the split, based on lies about the work of the OCI, have been answered at length, by reference to fact and in several documents spelling out the anti-Marxist method of Moreno. The political basis of Moreno's operations is shown by what is happening to those groups following his orders. In Brazil, for example, Socialist Convergence, has been turned back from fusion with the OSI, which would have produced a Trotskyist organization thousands strong. Socialist Convergence has been pulled back from work in the Labour Party in Brazil and forced to devote all its energies to study and discussion on France.

Moreno has taken administrative measures against a number of other groups and militants who were in the ex-Bolshevik Faction. By these means he is trying to reverse the direction taken by organizations developing within the context of the work of the FI(IC).

For us the work of the FI(IC) is to build strong organizations in each

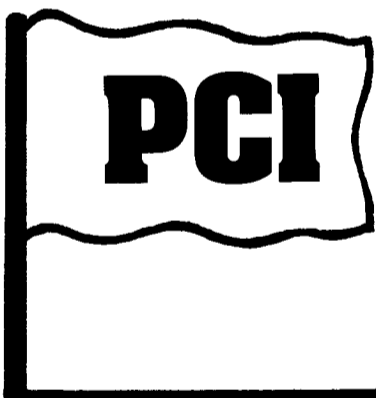
country, taking part in the day to day struggle of the working class, as the foundation for a developed international leadership. Political and organizational leaps forward have been made in Eastern Europe, Brazil, in France and in Senegal, where the Trotskyist organization has grown from tens to hundreds in one year.

Moreno will not break these gains. These steps forward represent not only the tenacious work of Trotskyists but also the needs of the working class, which is forced to seek a road towards workers' power and to find those organizations which can provide a fighting perspective.

The resolution said, "The rebuilding of the Fourth International is therefore a necessity in order to give an answer to the crisis of working class leadership, at a time where the elements are shaping up inside the masses to allow a positive overcoming of this crisis."

The resolution called for a World Conference of all the organizations which formed the FI(IC) next summer. It went on, "The action taken by all our organizations in defence of the Polish revolution makes all the more urgent the need for a permanent liaison of all the organizations which place themselves on a common platform, at the same time the preparation of a world conference demands an international organization, a common struggle, with the rebuilding of the Fourth International as its aim. Considering this we decide to form the Fourth International (International Centre of Reconstruction) on the basis of the programme of the Fourth International, the Theses and documents adopted by the Parity Committee and the FI(IC)."

The Fourth International (ICR) is the political continuity of the work of the FI(IC) and of the Parity Committee. The Socialist Labour Group has no hesitation in joining its ranks.



French Trotskyists found party

The 26th Congress of the French Trotskyist organization, the OCI, was held at the end of December. The OCI had 5,900 members represented at the Congress and planned to grow to 6,500 by February.

The congress recognized the need to become a party with wide influence in the working class. It changed the name of the organization to the PCI, the Internationalist Communist Party. This change

does not mean that the mass party is already in existence, the job of building it still has to be done. But the banner has been raised in order to fight for its future.

The OCI was built around a long battle to smash the Gaullist Fifth Republic and the founding congress of the PCI went over this twenty years long experience. The congress characterised the Mitterand victory as one for the working class, break-

ing through the attempt of the ruling class to saddle another Giscard government on the French people.

The current campaigns of the PCI will centre on expressing the immediate and general demands of the French working class. These demands are addressed to the Mitterand government, which the PCI characterise as a Popular Front.

The PCI calls for nationalisation of industries, workers' control, shorter conscription, and defence of social welfare.

They are demands addressed against the ruling class. In this the PCI follow the long experience with Popular Fronts, starting with the Kerensky government of 1917 in revolutionary Russia.

The situation in France is leading towards a new crisis. The working classes there have been patient with Mitterand but its expectations are high. The Popular Front government will oppose the development of a revolutionary movement against the ruling class. Yet the masses are beginning to understand that the PCI has been formed. Its current campaign is for a meeting of 15,000 in Paris at the end of January.



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Workers action for **Solidarność**

By Peter Lane

General Jaruzelski's military coup in Poland has brought forth the condemnation of workers across Europe, with large demonstrations in France, Britain, Italy, Germany and elsewhere. The leaders of the workers' movement have been forced to make statements condemning the coup, with only the Kremlin and its various agents daring to try to justify the bloody clampdown and interning of up to 50,000 in hell camps without trial.

The Kremlin's lies about *Solidarność's* anti-socialism are even more transparent than their excuse for invading Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Only one assertion of Brezhnev can be taken seriously — that *Solidarność* went "too far", too far that is for the Stalinists in the Kremlin.

The Polish workers were no longer prepared to accept the corruption, lies and repression of the hated bureaucrats of the P.U.W.P. *Solidarność* was becoming a mass political opposition, threatening the basis of Stalinist rule, which lies in the monopoly of political life and the keeping of workers out of state life. In the very last days of free trade unionism the National Commission of *Solidarność*, under great pressure from the ranks, demanded a national referendum to see how a number of industrial disputes should be settled. This was, in effect, a direct challenge to the dictatorship of the Stalinist Party.

Solidarność and other groupings widely supported in the working class were all set to take part in the local elections due early in 1982. These have now been cancelled.

One of the phoney reasons for the coup based on a false image of Jaruzelski as a 'moderate', which has been given some support in the capitalist press of the West, is that a military takeover was needed to stop the Kremlin staging a direct invasion. At least Poles are still in control, the story runs. To accept this argument would be to misunderstand the role of the Polish Stalinists in the repression. Jaruzelski and the other generals have no freedom of action separate from the dictates of the Kremlin. Faced with a political revolution by the Polish working class the whole bureaucratic apparatus of Eastern Europe, with the Kremlin at its heart, has acted to smash the embryo of workers' power which would traverse all their national frontiers.



There is no evidence of a 'hard-line' versus 'liberal' split in the top echelons of the Polish United Workers Party. The events of 1981 in Poland are not like those of 1968 in Czechoslovakia, which began with arguments among the Stalinist leaders. No current of the P.U.W.P. has acted as a political focus. This role has fallen to *Solidarność*, which represents a political break with the P.U.W.P. Rather, the explosion of workers' discontent was born outside of the official Party structures and in opposition to them. True, the P.U.W.P. has been affected at

every level and many members support *Solidarność*. But this is a reaction to and not the cause of, the upsurge of workers' power.

It is the very roots of the working class, in the mines, shipyards and factories, which have thrown up *Solidarność*. This gives clear and renewed evidence that the working class of Eastern Europe wants to break with Stalinism and build its own organisations. *Solidarność* literally drove the Party bosses and their agents out of the workplaces.

Continued on page 4

Stop the cuts! No sellout over May Elections!

Local Labour Parties are currently selecting candidates and drafting election manifestos for the council elections next May. The elections take place against the background of two great questions: the Labour Party attitude to Heseltine's cuts and the challenge of the SDP. There are still many inside the Labour Party who have accepted since the first Tory ultimatum to local councils in 1979 that council rents rise and services and jobs be cut. This is now compounded by an even greater threat to jobs from an attempt to keep rate rises within the limits laid down by Tory central government.

The majority of Labour controlled councils are run by right wing Labour Groups. These have managed to prevent a strong national defence of jobs, services and rents which would have provided a political challenge to the government. Combined with this, the fight by the left in 1981 focussed on the Lambeth Council and Ted Knight its demagogic leader. A national rank and file movement was generated and then demoralised under Knight's misleadership. Knight himself carried out cuts in Lambeth spending. His antics allowed the middle class

Motions to the London Conference

Conference recognises that Labour controlled councils face enormous difficulties in trying to defend essential services against the background of the government's vicious cuts in grant. It recognises also that local circumstances are varied, and local groups, in consultation with local party organisation must make their own judgements on expenditure priorities and on the level of rates which their local communities can bear.

The position of the EEPТУ

Labour Groups should refuse to make budgets on Heseltine's terms. The GLC, ILEA and Labour borough councils each taking that decision, will present the Tory government with a local government crisis which could force its retreat. We ask the public sector trades unions and the wider trade union movement to consider their position, to take appropriate action, which many include industrial action, to support Labour councillors who take such decisions.

The position of the
Greater London Executive
of the Labour Party

elements who will now support the SDP-Liberal alliance there to organise a right wing ratepayers movement. He also antagonised the council workers' trade unions by his double standards.

Three quarters of the 33 metropolitan authorities, which have huge working class populations, are being told to make even larger cuts this year. The government claims council spending will be 4% lower in 1982 than 1981, but this is a deception. Inflation and money needed to give employees pay rises are not taken into account. If these are paid council spending will drop well below 4% and make planning nearly impossible. What is absolutely certain is an average rent rise for council tenants of £2.50 a week.

The Labour right wing, in parliament, council chamber and union head office, has given the Tories months to sort out among themselves how to shear the sheep. Labour MPs should have obstructed parliamentary business at the least and councillors should have refused all co-operation with Heseltine.

The right wing quickly accepted the right of the judges to interfere with the Labour run GLC. We should not forget that it was legal interference with trade unions — after the Taff Vale case in 1900 — which led to the Labour Party being founded in the first place. And around 'extra-parliamentary' action at that!

Cuts in spending and sackings of council workers will do nothing to revive the economy. If Labour runs on these policies it cannot win votes from the Tories or the SDP. Talk is going around about the 'natural' Labour voter being turned off by left wing policies. There is no 'natural' Labour voter who does not want a job, adequate services and reasonable rents and rates. It is the Tories who are demanding attacks on these things and some Labour councillors are prepared to do their dirty work.

Indeed some Labour councillors, not wanting to defect to the SDP before the May elections but of like mind with the SDP, are engaged in secret talks with their old friends towards the end of a carve up of seats.

Continued on page 3