

# Socialist Challenge



Poland:  
government  
climbs down

By Davy Jones

THE Polish government has once again backed down, in the face of the threatened general strike by Solidarity's ten million supporters.

Following the police attack on Solidarity members in Bydgoszcz 19 March (see page 5) the national union movement called mass protest actions.

Last Friday over 10 million workers stopped work for four hours. Even Communist Party members heeded Solidarity's strike call despite a party instruction to ignore it.

## Suspend

And to avoid the general strike called by Solidarity the government has agreed to suspend those police officers responsible for the Bydgoszcz affair. It has also accepted the establishment of special commissions to look into the registration of the peasants' union and the persecution of dissidents.

The decision to climb down was made at a stormy emergency central committee meeting last weekend, where party hardliners like Olszowski and Grabski were defeated. The CC set 20 July as the date for the next party congress.

Furthermore under pressure from the party rank and file it agreed to leadership elections by secret ballot throughout the party with more than one candidate permitted. These extraordinary concessions may yet prove the downfall of the party bureaucrats.



But socialists in Britain should not be lulled into a false sense of security. There was massive pressure for a confrontation with Solidarity. The Warsaw Pact manoeuvres are still continuing on Polish soil. Even the Pope got into the act, appealing to the Polish workers not to strike.

An immediate show-down may have been avoided. But the Polish ruling bureaucrats are playing for time. They will not tolerate for long the growing strength of Solidarity as a counter-power to their own.

More than ever Solidarity needs the support of workers in the West.

Socialist Challenge appeals to our readers to support the Hands Off Workers' Poland demonstration called in London on Sunday 12 April. Assemble at Speakers Corner at 2pm. The demonstration is sponsored by Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Bernard Dix and many other labour movement organisations.

# Those who live by the sword...

THE RICH and powerful rulers of the United States are indignant at the attempted murder of President Reagan.

We have no sympathy for them. The society they defend is sick and violent. They constantly use violence against strikers, the poor and the oppressed.

Its forces of 'law and order' are among the most vicious in the world — and their violence is above all aimed at blacks, Chicanos and the poor. What the rich rulers of the United States won't admit is that assassination attempts against politicians are a spin-off from the violence they ritually use to maintain their rule.

Assassination has frequently been used by America's rulers themselves to try to crush opposition — as in the cases of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and Black Panther Leader, Fred Hampton.

On the same day that Reagan was shot police found the 21st victim of the crazed Atlanta child-killer who specialises in murdering young blacks. The violence of the Ku Klux Klan murderers in Greensboro last year went unpunished.

How ironic that Reagan's would-be assassin was an ex-Nazi expelled by the fascists for being 'too extreme'.

The assassination attempt had some macabre spin-offs. The secret service man among those shot was carrying the briefcase with the nuclear button. And for a few scary hours command of America's military forces was in the hands of General Haig — a militaristic, anti-communist fanatic.

Haig's the man behind US support for the barbaric junta in El Salvador.

In those few hours the nature of those in power in the White House was only too obvious — people who wouldn't think twice about pressing the nuclear button.

Ronald Reagan, his family and cronies will get no sympathy from us. The reason that such people are shot at has little to do with 'lunatics' — and everything to do with the lunatic system they run.

When you order society by violence, when you use it worldwide to bolster exploitation and oppression, you shouldn't be surprised if you become a victim of it.

## US Hands Off El Salvador!

March and Rally Saturday April 25th

Chair: Stan Newens M.P.

Speakers:

Michael Foot M.P.  
Leader of the Labour Party

Dr Salvador Moncada  
Representative of the Frente Democratico Revolucionario (F.D.R.) of El Salvador.

Alan Sapper  
Gen. Sec. A.C.T.T.

Ken Gill  
Gen. Sec. A.U.E.W.-T.A.S.S.

Ted Sullivan  
Nat. Sec. T. & G. W. U.

Eric Heffer M.P.  
N.E.C. Labour Party

Fenner Brockway

Assemble 12.30pm  
Speakers Corner  
march past U.S. Embassy  
to rally in Trafalgar Square.





# Editorial

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## TUC wants to march the unemployed up the hill... and down again

**SOCIALIST Challenge** supports the Liverpool to London march for jobs. The march opens up the chance for united protest action against Tory mass unemployment.

But there are signs that the potential of the march is being stifled right from the start.

\*Why has a limit of 500 marchers been imposed?

\*Since when has a labour movement march been led by a green instead of a red banner?

\*Why have the organisers refused an offer from the world-famous rock group 'The Who' to play free for youth on the dole at the London end of the march?

\*More importantly why did the West Midlands organiser of the march vigorously oppose a proposal at last month's Birmingham Trades Council for strike action to welcome the march?

\*Why, when the vast majority of affiliated trade unions are supporting the march, does the TUC refuse to call a national strike on Friday 29 May - the day the march enters London?

The TUC, supported by the Communist Party leadership, is leaning over backwards to avoid making the march a mass event.

The TUC and the Labour shadow cabinet have reached agreement on launching a new social contract, with a pay policy policed by the union bureaucracy. The 35-hour week is not mentioned in the TUC's material for the Week of Action or for the Liverpool to London march.

The fight for a 35-hour week and worksharing with no loss of pay would be a massive gain for every worker. Unemployment would be largely eliminated.

But it would mean an all-out fight with the Tories and the CBI. It took a series of one-day general strikes in engineering to get just one hour off the week.

The Communist Party fully supports the TUC's approach. It calls for the same 'allies' on the march for jobs as the TUC is cuddling up to nationally - firms like the builders Tysons who are in the CBI, the churches, the Social Democrats and the Liberals.

That is why they call it 'The Peoples March'. That is why they oppose strike action around the march.

The only force able to kick out the Tories is the trade union movement taking united industrial action.

You can fool some of the workers some of the time with talk about an alternative economic strategy, when you really mean an incomes policy.

You may even be able to march tens of thousands of workers up the hill and down again on protest demonstrations.

But the crunch will come sooner or later, and workers are going to have to rely on their own organisations and policies.

As they mobilise for the march for jobs and demonstrate Sunday 31 May, workers in the unions, the Labour Party and the CP must ask themselves and their leaders 'which side will the CBI, the vicars, the Liberals and the Social Democrats be on then?'

## National march and rally against unemployment

Sunday 31 May

Assemble noon at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park for march to Trafalgar Square

Sponsors include West Midlands, SE and NW regional TUCs. Irish TUC (Belfast), Manchester City Labour Party, NW Regional Council of the Labour Party, NUM, TGWU, GMWU, FBU, Engineering section of AUEW, Tobacco Workers, Sheetmetal Workers, USDAW, SLADE, Tailor & Garment Workers, NUPE and the civil service union SCPS.

Trains and coaches are being laid on country-wide.



# Into the labour movement, into the workplaces



Raghib Ahsan, Rover TGWU: 'The Tories only understand one thing - muscle. Look at the miners. Let's make the October demo a mass labour movement action.'



Jane Kelly, Peckham Labour Party: 'The economic recession brings unemployment and the war drive threatens the people of El Salvador.'



Phil Davies, FTAT executive: 'We have to get rid of Cruise and Trident missiles, renounce nuclear weapons and if that means getting out of NATO, all the better.'



Bob Wilkinson, GMWU: 'We need another labour movement conference next autumn after the demonstration.'

By Davy Jones

'WE WANT to see the biggest ever demonstration on nuclear disarmament on 24 October.' That was the closing appeal from John Cox, chairperson of the CND organising committee to last weekend's highly successful labour movement conference against the missiles.

More than seven hundred delegates from the unions and the Labour Party discussed the central role of the labour movement in combatting the Tories' missiles madness.

Frank Allaun opened the conference bringing '100 per cent backing from the Labour Party national executive committee'. He attacked the massive spending on military hardware: 'Every family pays £15 a week already for the arms' race.

'Disarmament can only be implemented by a government,' he continued, 'that means a Labour government. I want to see a two-thirds majority for disarmament on a card vote at the next Labour Party conference.'

Allaun finished his speech quoting Victor Hugo, 'Nothing can beat an idea whose time has come.' He commented: 'Comrades, our time has come. We are privileged to be part of the most important cause known to mankind.'

## Trident

Ron Todd, national organiser of the transport workers (TGWU), graphically described the meaning of missile madness: 'Picture 4 giant submarines each with 16 Trident missiles, 34 feet long. Their 2 million horsepower engines thrust them to a speed of 14,000 miles per hour and a height of 700 miles, their course plotted by their own computers.

'Every Trident has 8 warheads, each with 6 times the destructive power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Twenty minutes and 4500 miles later they arrive on target to within 100 metres.

'And all this will cost us £5/6bn, rising as high as £9/10bn with inflation,' he added.

## Housing

Gordon Will, west Midlands NUPE, took up the same theme, explaining that in 1974/5 for every £1 spent on defence, some 96p was spent on housing. By 1979 the housing figure was down to 70p and under the Tories it was planned to nosedive to 33p by 1984.

'What an appropriate date 1984 is,' he said. 'In George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* the minister of war was known as the minister for peace. Similarly today the "Ministry of Defence" is really the Ministry for War.'

Speakers from the

## Who was at the conference

Constituency Labour parties	300
Trade union branches	279
Trades councils	59
Regional/district union committees	5
Labour Party Young Socialists	9
Co-op parties	2
CND groups	3
Various political parties & others	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>702</b>



Conference platform from left to right: Ron Todd (TGWU), Olive Gibbs (CND) and Frank Allaun MP. Todd told the platform: 'Schools, hospitals and the whole welfare state are destroyed in the name of the arms' race.'

floor stressed the theme of 'Jobs not bombs'. Raghib Ahsan from the TGWU, Rover Solihull linked the fight against Cruise missiles with the struggle for a 35 hour week which 'would decrease unemployment overnight by one and a half million.'

## Action

Ronan Brady of the Post Office engineers took up Ron Todd: 'Great speech, Ron, but what are you going to do to get TUC/Labour Party backing for the October demo? Industrial action could defeat the missiles,' he continued, 'We have the power to strike out the bomb, and we have to use it.'

John Parkinson, secretary of Preston Trades Council and the Campaign against the Namibian Uranium Contract, argued for CND to be anti-imperialist.

'Uranium workers in Namibia are doubly oppressed, not just by the repression and work conditions in their own country but also from the threatened use of the nuclear weapons their uranium had helped to create against their own revolution. It is Transport and General Workers

Union members in British Nuclear Fuels who process Namibian uranium.'

Theresa Conway from Islington NALGO explained that 12 resolutions on nuclear disarmament



Frank Allaun MP: 'For all the good it brings us we might as well throw the money voted in Parliament for the army, navy and air force out of the House of Commons' window into the Thames.'

were on the agenda for NALGO's annual conference, 'every one of them has a position of unilateral disarmament.'

'The debate on disarmament and on democracy in the Labour Party are inextricably linked,' she added, 'we must bind

every Labour MP and councillor to party policy on unilateral disarmament.' She urged support for Islington council and the other 41 councils that had declared their area a nuclear-free zone.

The afternoon session was opened by Reg Race who outlined the barriers to be overcome to win the labour movement to nuclear disarmament. 'Resolutionary politics is not enough,' he said, 'we have to win the labour movement ideologically to this policy.'

## Policy

He attacked the 'independence' of the Parliamentary Labour Party from the party as a whole. They had to be made accountable to party policy. He also protested at the government secrecy surrounding nuclear weapons: 'Parliament was not told of the Chevaline project to update Polaris, nor was most of the Cabinet.'

The same point was made by Bob Wilkinson, from the north west General and Municipal Workers Union: 'When the Labour Party is in office, it's not really in power.'



## Disruption at the conference

Unfortunately the conference was partially disrupted in the afternoon causing a few dozen delegates to walk out in disgust. The main responsibility for this situation lies squarely with the CND leadership.

Throughout the build-up to the conference Socialist Challenge supporters argued for resolutions to be taken at the conference. Consistently they were defeated on the organising committee.

Even when the Socialist Workers Party had irresponsibly threatened to disrupt the conference to insist that resolutions be taken, the CND leaders rejected a proposal from Socialist Challenge supporters that the matter be put to the vote at the beginning of the conference to minimise disruption.

The result was simmering discontent throughout the conference over the lack of democracy, the overturning of the organising committee's position on the floor of the conference, and unnecessary disruption of the conference proceedings.

All photos: G. M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

## Policy appeal unanimously passed by the conference

We, the undersigned, support a campaign to win every branch, committee and conference of the labour movement, particularly the TUC and the Labour Party, to the following position:

'This body (branch, conference, etc) commits itself to oppose British nuclear weapons, particularly Cruise and Trident missiles. This means affiliating to CND, active support for the campaign against the missiles, and backing the boycott of all handling, transporting, building and servicing of US sponsored missile bases.

'We therefore give full support and will make every effort to build the national CND demonstration called by National Council of CND for October.'

### What to do after the conference

- Get the conference appeal passed by every labour movement body, from local to district, regional and national level
- Commit the unions and Labour parties to mass leafleting among their members to explain the arguments against the missiles to organise local activities and to mobilise for the October demo
- Commit the national unions and Labour Party conference to this policy and to support for the October demo
- Build CND groups in the unions and workplaces and Labour CND.

Unanimous conference vote for the resolution for action moved by Socialist Challenge supporter Britan Heron.



The initiative for the conference came from Socialist Challenge supporters, who also played a major role in the conference organising committee. Of the 20 speakers from the floor at the conference 11 were Socialist Challenge supporters. The Socialist Challenge fringe meeting attracted 250 of the 700 delegates.

On the platform were Mike Picken, secretary of Labour CND; Carol Turner, Labour councillor from Southwark; Duncan Edwards from Young CND and Revolution Youth; Brian Heron, the conference publicity officer and strikers from the Royal Pride and Mosedale factories in the Manchester area.

Another important strike was highlighted at the conference when Carol Turner gave up her speaking time at the conference proper to Bridie Bellingham of the Lee Jeans' factory in Greenock. Conference chairperson Olive Gibbs resigned her position after conference overwhelmingly rejected her ruling that Bridie could not speak.

Resolutions passed by the conference included one from Edinburgh Labour Party calling for opposition to Cruise and Trident, for Britain out of NATO and unilateral disarmament, for boycotting all work on missile bases and civil defence, and for the expansion of social services.

A motion from the Magazine branch of the journalists' union called for support for the north west TUC march for jobs and for the establishment of workplace CND groups.

## NATO

Another NUJ motion which called for opposition to both NATO and the Warsaw Pact was opposed by Jonathan Silberman from the AUEW in Manchester. He explained that equal responsibility could not be attributed to

Washington and Moscow for the escalation of the arms race. Nevertheless the motion was carried.

Brian Heron, conference publicity officer and a Socialist Challenge supporter, moved the final motion to conference.

## Unity

He appealed for an end to the sectarian wrangling of the afternoon session, and for maximum unity round the appeal submitted by a minority of the organising committee (see separate box) for a mass campaign against Cruise and Trident. The appeal was the only resolution carried unanimously.

Brian also took up the dangerous ambiguity in labour movement policies on disarmament. Frank Allaun had told the conference: 'We're all multilateralists. Unilateralists are multilateralists who

mean it.' Such a position is hopeless. Multilateralists don't mean it. They oppose Britain renouncing nuclear weapons until the blissful future when everyone does the same.

As Phil Davies, delegate from the national executive of the furniture

workers' union, FTAT, said to Socialist Challenge after the conference: 'It's appalling that the Labour Party conference tried to have a foot in both camps — unilateral and multilateral disarmament.

'And it's disgraceful that we have a Michael

Foot in both camps!

Three hundred Labour parties represented at the conference is an important gain for the anti-missiles movement. Labour Party activists must now take the issue into the unions and campaign for the leadership of the labour move-

ment to head the campaign. The next conference should have Foot, Moss Evans, Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn on the platform.

The demonstration for 24 October should be transformed into a mass labour movement mobilis-

ation. As John Cox told the conference final session: 'When we decided on last October's demo back in February 1980 we had just 100 local CND groups. Today when we launch next October's march we have 700.'



By Geoff Bell

THE WEEK before the Social Democratic Party was finally and officially launched, six labour councillors in the London borough of Islington announced their intention to join the new party.

The six were members of the right wing of the Labour Party, but if they bring to the social democrats the practices Islington's Labour right used in their former political home then the 'democracy' part of the SDP could well take on a whole new meaning.

That meaning could be entitled corruption.

## Struggle

Labour politics in Islington, and in the North Islington parliamentary constituency in particular, have long been an arena of left-right struggle. The fight dates back to 1969 when Michael O'Halloran was chosen as North Islington's Labour candidate.

A subsequent enquiry, conducted by Labour's national executive, found that O'Halloran supporters had packed the selection meeting, but the matter was swept under the carpet by the NEC because of the forthcoming general election.

Ever since then the left has struggled to get O'Halloran out, and it is its likely success which has led to the present splits in the local party.

## Left builds the party

**'FOR the first time, ordinary Labour Party members are being invited to play a part in genuine political activity.**

**'Grass roots mobilising and political skills are being learnt by new members; links already forged between rank and file left members in different wards are being cemented.**

**'Formerly disillusioned Labour voters are being made aware that a fighting socialist party, different in character from the Labour Party which has represented them so inadequately in the past, is now being created in the constituency.'**

**STEVE BUNDRED, GLC candidate, Islington North**

The left has toiled hard to achieve such a victory. It has had its setbacks. Two years ago a leading left-winger, Keith Veness, was expelled by the then right wing leadership of the party. Another enquiry conducted by the Labour Party's NEC found that the expulsion was unconstitutional.

When the North Islington party bosses refused to reinstate Veness the party was suspended for six months. Veness was eventually readmitted and the party was welcomed back to the fold by the NEC.

## Success

But this was the signal for an intensification of the inner-party struggle in North Islington.

Most recently this has focussed on the battle for control of the party's general committee. The GC is made up of delegates from seven wards in North Islington, from affiliated trade unions, and the local co-op.

A major success was notched up by the left in January when at the annual general meeting of St George's ward the left won control for the first time. That meant that the right had lost ten delegates to the GC, and the left had won ten.

The AGM of St George's was in itself peculiar. The first gathering of the AGM had failed to materialise because the right wing secretary of the ward had neglected to send out notices of the meeting. When, after pressure, the meeting did take place, the right wing boycotted the affair and the left won the day with over 120

# The making of North Islington's social democrats



**MP's last stand**

**Mayor Jim leads 'gang of 6' split**

*The press coverage of the left's takeover of Islington North CLP has already begun to shape into a witch-hunt.*

members on its side and less than a handful voting for the right.

The day after the St George's AGM the battle was taken up in the Co-op. The local Co-op party has long been the 'rotten borough' of North Islington. With only 40 members on its books it is still entitled to send five delegates to North Islington's GC, because of a large 'trading membership' — that is, those who are members of a local Co-operative shopping society.

## Disarray

The right wing had always managed to secure those five delegates until, at the end of last year, the left waged an offensive. Suddenly the Co-op party had an influx of membership applications. Curiously, a good many of these applications were turned down, although all of them had come from members of the Labour Party.

The AGM of the Co-op in January broke up in disarray when the national agent of the London Political Committee of the Co-op suspended the meeting, and with it the local Co-op party, because of the refusal of party managers to accept membership from 21 individuals.

This meant that the North Islington right had lost another five delegates to the general committee.

The left in the party worked out that this would give them a majority of around ten on the GC.

Michael O'Halloran's head was now on the line. At the February meeting of the outgoing GC a huge row broke out. This centred on accusations by the left that the MP had failed to carry out local party policy on Ireland, by failing to vote against the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

O'Halloran denied that charge and he and his main accuser, Mick Sullivan, ended up by calling each other 'a bare faced liar'. That meeting, too, broke up in disarray and the scene was set for the AGM of the GC held on 11 March.

When that meeting took place it began with the announcement of a batch of new delegates. These centred on five delegates from the TGWU I/723 branch and four from the TGWU I/725 branch. All were supporters of Michael O'Halloran; what else they were has since become a matter of dispute.

## Error

Tommy McNamara was recorded as a delegate to Islington North Labour Party in September 1979 from TGWU I/723 branch. But six months later he was down in the books as a

delegate from TGWU branch 1/725, apparently a typographical error.

For the 11 March AGM this year, the same building workers' branch

had also delegated Bernadette O'Halloran, a nurse who happened to be the MP's daughter, and Morgan Lear, the right-wing secretary of the constituency party, who is an architect for Islington council and a NALGO member.

Confusion reigned at the AGM. Delegates from 1/725 informed the meeting that the branch had a new number, 1/1232. Tommy McNamara left the meeting in a hurry, and has since told neighbours that he wants nothing more to do with politics.

Despite the chaos, Maureen Leigh, the left's candidate for president, was elected by a majority of one vote. A filibuster by the right prevented any further votes being taken. Before 21 March, the new date set for the AGM, the left contacted TGWU headquarters and discovered:

- TGWU branch 1/1232 — a building workers' branch — had never sent delegates to Islington North.

- Branch 1/725 is a public service branch and had not changed its number. It is based in Twickenham and has been affiliated only to the local Labour Party and trades council.

- Branch 1/723 has not paid its affiliation fee to Islington North Labour Party for two years, and is therefore not entitled to send delegates.

- Through unofficial sources it appears that most of the controversial TGWU delegates are not recorded as being members of the union at all.

## Suspect

It was not surprising that at the recall AGM on 21 March apologies were given from all these suspect delegates. At the meeting Morgan Lear announced his resignation as party secretary and from the Labour Party.

Michael O'Halloran sent his apologies, and the left romped home. When North Islington Labour Party select its candidate for the next general election, O'Halloran is not thought to be the candidate most likely to succeed.

Until now, O'Halloran has retained support in his local Labour Party because he has built a base of support among the large community of Irish people in the constituency. His supporters have attempted to label the left's campaign against him as 'anti-Irish'.

## Agent

The irony of this is that it is O'Halloran's alleged refusal to vote consistently against the Prevention of Terrorism Act which may in the end prove to be his downfall.

He has announced that he has decided 'to stay on and fight these people who are out to hi-jack our party', and he has been to see Michael Foot to request the latter's assistance in a witch-hunt.

Meanwhile Morgan Lear, the former party secretary, is acting as agent for SDP local election candidate Pat Shearan, who is standing in Islington North, and for Douglas Eden, who is running against Frances Morrell in Islington South.

## Why the right is known as the 'Murphia'

**TWO Irish-based institutions in Islington have up to now proven Michael O'Halloran's most fertile ground. One is the Gresham ballroom in the north of the constituency.**

The licence holder at the Gresham is Pat Shearan, a stalwart of O'Halloran. He is one of the six Labour councillors who have now gone over to the SDP.

All six appear to think highly of the Gresham. Last year they supported at a public enquiry an application from the Gresham for an extension of its drinking licence.

Company accounts show that in 1978 the Gresham made a £2,000 political donation. There is no record of the Labour Party as such receiving this money, but whether it was used to finance the Labour right's own political campaigning may be another matter.

The second institution associated with O'Halloran and his supporters is the Islington-based building company of J Murphy and Sons. The controversial 1/723 TGWU branch is based at Murphy's. O'Halloran was once an office manager at Murphy's.



## 'The most anti-socialist group in Poland is the party political bureau'

TORUN is a town of 230,000 people, 200 kilometres to the south of Gdansk. Recently its prestige has made it of interest to all of Poland. Solidarity supporters throughout Poland speak of the Torun Inter-Factory Strike Committee (MKZ) with great admiration and respect.

Pierre Caen went to Torun for the Fourth International's journal INPRECOR. The Torun MKZ militants took him to the Towimor industrial region, 'the soul of the movement'. It

was in a factory which makes machinery for the naval dockyards that the strikes last August began.

A strike committee was set up. For once Communist Party militants were in the lead. Then the wind of Solidarity blew through the party. Pierre Caen met CP militants inside the party offices in their Towimor factory. In particular he spoke to Zbigniew Ivanow, the best-known opposition militant of the CP.

### What happened in the Communist Party within the factory?

It began with the strike. Most party militants in our factory, Towimor, were for the strike. Some were on the strike committee. Stanichevsky was our delegate to Gdansk. After the strike, we soon realised that Solidarity was a safeguard for the people.

Later we had to split from Solidarity because the constitution of Solidarity says that people who hold party posts cannot hold responsibilities in Solidarity. It is not possible to have two major positions and to do them both well. Despite all that, we did everything to help our MKZ comrades because we are still members of Solidarity.

We saw, very quickly, that the changes we had instigated in our party in the factory were insufficient. Thus we sought contacts with likeminded members of other party organisations. The quickest response came from the party at the University.

Now we have 32 organisations in the commission. It has no leader. There is a weekly meeting. Each time somebody else chairs to avoid one person dominating. All documents drawn up by the commission are circularised in the rank and file party organisations where they are debated to see if they meet with approval.

We are workers, not diplomats, we do not mince our words in the meetings. When we think someone is a thief or a gangster we say so.

The people who do not want a regeneration of the party listen without pleasure because they are not used to it. They think we should always applaud the First Secretary's speeches without questioning if it is right. They would not shout in the hall that he is an idiot or that he tells lies.

It was over these problems of manner and not of substance that they expelled me from the party — it was a bit like the Inquisition. One Sunday, I was told that I must attend a meeting on Monday. On the Monday they expelled me, and on the same day the factory organisation rejected it.

Hence I am the only party secretary who is not in the party! Of course I appealed in writing but it is



three months later and still no reply — it is true that the commission must have lots of work to expel other militants who are bigger fish than me!

Today the party control commission is coming to discuss my case (laughter). It is a ploy to win time because this commission can do nothing to reverse the decision. It is playing for time. I am doing nothing else. Just continuing my work.

### How can you impose democratic elections at all levels before the congress?

In the present party rules there are several points

which are undemocratic and we want them changed. The number of candidates is limited — that cannot continue. Votes can be manipulated because everybody is not a delegate.

Here, in our discussions, we have gone still further. We think that the party authorities at all levels should be elected by direct suffrage.

For example, in a party meeting to elect a secretary there would be several candidates, each outlines their programme and finally there is a knowledgeable vote. Everybody, by voting for his or her candidate, would feel respon-

sible for the candidate of her or his choice.

Also we have considered the role of the party. Until now our party has played a role that it should not have: it doubles with the functions of the state (administration, police). This is why we think that this duplication of state apparatus in all fields of the party apparatus, this bureaucracy, has to disappear.

We must also consider the role of the CP in the factory and what it should be. It must be a force making positive proposals on all the problems and not an instrument of government. I would like a party like that in our country. To join this party one should wait a year or two in order to show what you can do, to get some quality not quantity.

### You have spoken about self management in the factories but how do you envisage it in society as a whole so that the workers really decide?

Now, you say that the factories belong to us. Not true. They are in the hands of the government. The government is led by a very limited group — not even all the political bureau of the party — but only a few of them.

It is they who decide. Society has no influence and it bears the consequences of their decisions. That is why we want to make this reform as quickly as possible. How to achieve this reform? To clean up Poland ....

I think that the factories must have greater



Lech Walesa addresses supporters from the Solidarity HQ in Bydgoszcz

autonomy and the ultimate aim is to let the workers decide. I see that as a series of councils of all the workers from all parts of the factory. They could not be bought. Otherwise the one with more money would win.,

The workers would

decide how to develop the factory, how to share things, how to recruit, that would be a reform of all the factory administration. Marketing would be developed.

At this moment the interview ends as the

party control commission arrives in the party offices in the factory. The party control commission upheld Ivanow's expulsion from the party.

## What really happened in Bydgoszcz

By Davy Jones

The police attack on Solidarity members in Bydgoszcz was a premeditated provocation masterminded by Politburo hard-liner Stefan Olszowski and implemented by the secret police.

Olszowski picked his time carefully. Party leader Stanislaw Kania and premier Jaruzelski were both out of the country. Lech Walesa and other Solidarity leaders were about to leave on a delegation to France. Warsaw Pact military manoeuvres were in progress in Poland.

Furthermore Bydgoszcz branch of Solidarity is particularly militant and police violence there was guaranteed to provoke a defiant response.

The police violence occurred on 19 March at a meeting of the Bydgoszcz District Council, to which Solidarity delegates had been invited. When the Council voted to postpone the part of the meeting in which Solidarity had the greatest interest, the Solidarity delegates insisted on staying

put and continuing the meeting with some remaining Council members.

Later in the evening the local prosecutor arrived and insisted on Solidarity members leaving the hall. When they asked for more time the police and secret police were sent in to eject them.

The secret police systematically beat up the Solidarity members, hospitalising Jan Rulewski, Bydgoszcz Solidarity president and a member of Solidarity's national commission. Most of the injured were local farmers, including one 67 year old, Barcoszcze, who had a heart attack and brain concussion. He is not expected to survive.

Since the attack Solidarity has demanded the dismissal of all those responsible for the violence, including Deputy Prime Minister Stanislaw Mach, who was present at the Bydgoszcz meeting and did nothing to halt the violence. So far only one person, Edward Berger, chairperson of the provincial council in Bydgoszcz has offered to resign.



Solidarity member after the security police attack



## Take action against the Nationality Bill

By Toni Gorton

**BOTH Tory and Labour leaders say that curbs on immigration are an attempt to stop the black 'threat' to British culture.**

It is in the interests of the ruling class to whip up hatred and dissension among the working class.

If the blame for the ever-deepening crisis can be laid at the feet of black people then it takes the heat off those who govern.

They aim to make black people feel that they

have no rights in white Britain and to turn the wrath of white workers on their black workmates and neighbours.

The Labour Party bears a heavy responsibility for the present state of affairs. It was Labour that introduced the '68 Immigration Act that laid the

basis for subsequent laws. The Tory's Nationality Bill is based on Labour's Green Paper.

A recent Labour Party report has shown that Labour has less of a relationship with the ethnic communities than the Tories.

The labour movement in conjunction with the black community should be in the forefront of the fight against all racist laws — the Nationality Bill be-

ing the most immediate target.

The present economic crisis is international and people around the world are suffering from it. The only solution to the problems we all face lies with a change to a new type of society.

Laws which discriminate on the basis of colour, land of birth or one's parents should be abolished. The repeal of all immigration laws presently on the statute books

should be part of the programme of a future Labour Government.

Please join the demonstration on 5 April organised by the Campaign against Racist Laws, which is supported by all the major Asian and black organisations, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, the Anti-Nazi League, Labour Party, Communist Party, International Marxist Group and the Socialist Workers Party.



# Tories aim to drive black people out

By Oliver New

A NEW and frightening piece of legislation, the Nationality Bill, could become law in June. Because this bill is so complicated few people understand the issues involved and the threat that it represents to the rights of black people in Britain.

A superb booklet 'The Thin Edge of the White Wedge' recently produced by the Manchester Law Centre goes a long way in explaining the current thinking of the Tory government.

A lot of publicity has been given to the proposal to divide British citizens into three categories — British citizens; citizens of the British Dependent Territories, and British Overseas Citizens.

This only reflects the existing situation under the 1971 Immigration Act — those people who are allowed to enter Britain now would still be able to do so.

What the Bill will change, is the immigration status of black people already in Britain by making it more difficult for them to become full British citizens.

Many immigrants now living in Britain have the right to register as British citizens but the Bill would take away that right — instead of registering, people will have to become naturalised.

Naturalisation will be more expensive (£150) than registration and will be subject to cultural and political tests to ensure that people — as the bill puts it — 'demonstrate a

real intention to throw in their lot with this country'.

### Dubious

Nor will anyone be allowed to become naturalised if they have a 'dubious reputation or ... no sense of loyalty' to this country.

The booklet reveals that 'The point is that the White Paper is part of a wider, and already existing, process of reducing many black people in the UK not merely to second class citizens — but to second class citizens within the context of the welfare state ...

On the one hand there is the deprivation of black people of social benefits. On the other hand there is the internal surveillance by the state over the lives of black people.'

### Rights

Under the present Immigration Rules dependents who are applying to join a person already here are subjected to certain conditions which will affect their rights when they are settled in the UK.

The rules lay down that anyone wishing to bring dependents here 'must be able to maintain and accommodate his dependents without recourse to public funds, in accommodation of his own or which he occupies himself'. It is a criminal offence to fail to maintain a dependent brought over.

This sort of rule affects every black person living in Britain. If they apply for Social Security, council housing, health service treatment or education they may be subjected to checks that they are not dependents who are breaking the terms of their entry into this country.

There are increasing numbers of examples of people being refused basic services and of collaboration between the Home



Deportation picket in September 1980

**'Unfortunately many people who can somehow instinctively feel that the Bill is all about racism, actually misunderstand and underestimate the consequences of the proposals.**

**Most people concerned with opposing racism seem to think that what is being proposed is just another form of Immigration Act — aimed at keeping yet more black people out... In fact the Bill is pretty much based on the assumption that the 'battle' against black immigration has already been won.**

Office and other government agencies.

We are moving towards a situation where any black person will have to prove that s/he is legally entitled to basic facilities.

Black people have been

asked for their passports before being allowed to apply for supplementary benefit — others have been refused NHS treatment.

In one case a doctor who referred a patient to

St Bartholomews Hospital in London discovered that the hospital authorities had contacted the DHSS and had been sent the immigration history of the patient.

**What it is actually about is attacking the security, status and rights of black people already living in the UK. It is about redefining many black people already here as second class citizens.**

**It is about making the huge, but logical leap from immigration control to the control of 'immigrants' once here.'**

### 'The Thin End of the White Wedge'

A DHSS spokesperson

stated in relation to the case that hospitals had a duty to check whether someone was 'an ordinary resident or legal immigrant'.

In other words, any black person is subject to

investigation and to welfare authorities being sent information on them from the Home Office computer in which records of immigrants are kept.

The Nationality Bill will increase this process of internal surveillance of black people and lay the basis for even more frightening developments. It is no exaggeration to say that we are now going along the road to a pass law system in Britain.

If you want to fight the development of state racism then you should get hold of this pamphlet.

'The Thin Edge of the White Wedge' is produced by the Manchester Law Centre, 595 Stockport Road, Longsight Manchester. Cost £1 plus 11½p post.



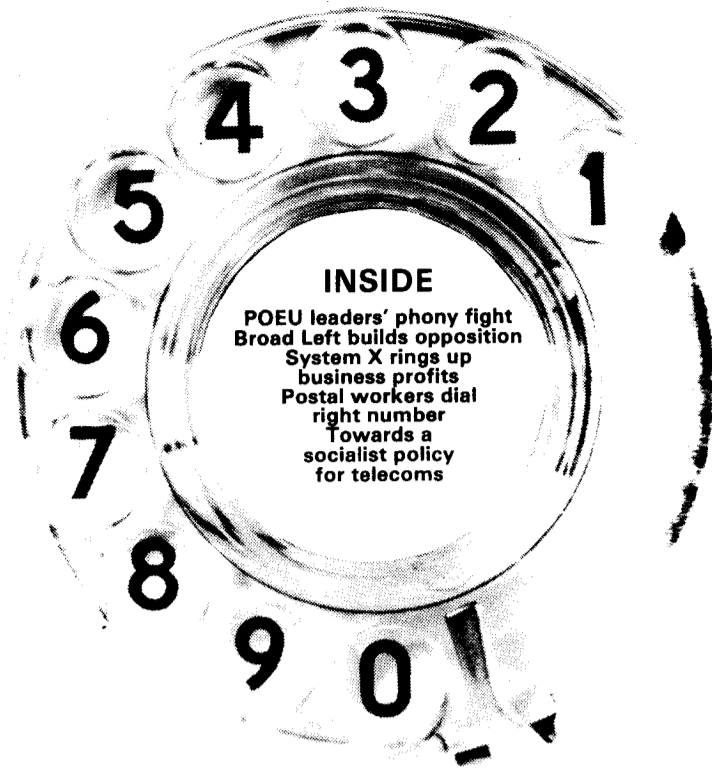
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# Socialist Challenge

Supplement on the battle against the Telecoms Bill



# HANDS OFF THE POST OFFICE

By Kevin Simms, Branch Secretary, London North West POEU

**THE Tories are out to smash the Post Office. That's the truth behind the so-called British Telecommunications Bill. They want to destroy this nationalised industry and ruin it as a public service.**

**They want to hand over the juicy bits to their friends in big business and the rest of us, ordinary customers and Post Office workers, will be left to pick up the pieces. The message from PO workers and the labour movement must be: Hands off the Post Office!**

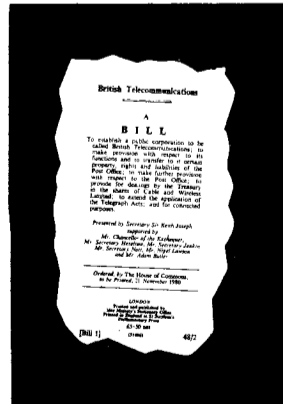
The lobby of Parliament on 1 April is a great first step in the campaign to turn these words into reality. We know this government. We know that they will not be turned aside by sweet reasonableness and logical argument, or moved by compassion.

The 2.5 million on the dole are enough testimony of that. We know we have a fight on our hands.

Of course, we aren't the only ones. Every nationalised industry is coming under the hammer blows of Tory 'free enterprise'. Some have decided to fight back. The miners took on Maggie and Keith, and the government is still reeling from the beating they took.

But we shouldn't simply praise the miners for knocking the Tories back on their heels. We've got to learn from them.

Three vital factors lay behind the miners' victory in the defence of jobs and their industry. First, they had an alert membership who recognised the threat and the need to confront it with the only power they have — industrial power.



Second, they had support from many other workers, especially the railway workers and lorry drivers. It was clear that no coal would move if the strike developed.

Lastly, they had among their leaders some who were prepared to say clearly, 'Enough is enough', and to stand up to Thatcher's bullying whatever the consequences.

While the lobby shows that there are many rank and file in the Post Office who are prepared to fight,

it also shows the painful lack of leadership from the Tom Jacksons and Bryan Stanleys of this world.

We will hear many fine, and maybe even some fiery, words from our leaders at the lobby of Parliament. But it will be so much hot air.

If they really intended to defend the Post Office from the Tories' ravages then they would have brought out the whole of the almost half-million Post Office workers to tell Thatcher and her big business friends: Hands Off!

## Vain

Instead they have based their campaign on the absurd demand, impossible to achieve, for the Tories to defend nationalised industries.

But we will wait in vain for such decisive leadership from the smug bureaucrats who run our trade unions. We have to rely on our own strength. We have to go back to our branches and start organising.

Some people will undoubtedly say — it's too late, the Bill will shortly become law and there's nothing we can do to stop it. Well maybe we can or maybe we can't, but there's a world of difference between the Bill becoming an Act and between a piece of paper becoming reality.

## Article

It's to the implementation of the Telecoms Act that we have to turn our attention.

Our first task is to step up the campaign of information and discussion among the rank and file. It is not through the odd article in a trade union journal that you mobilise our hundreds of thousands of members.

The leaderships of the POEU, UCW and CPSA should be organising regional and local rallies, day schools and meetings to carry the message to the membership. If they don't do it, then union branches and regional committees should take up their responsibilities.

Sir Thief Joseph presents:



Secondly, we have to look closely at ways in which we can frustrate the Tories' plans through selective industrial action. If the Tories intend to allow private companies to

A similar approach to the attachment of private equipment would soon slow down the attempts to hand over this lucrative business to firms like GEC, Plessey, and IBM.

organise to carry them out ourselves.

And we have to organise to boot out the fools and rogues who think that our union is really their union, and that they know better than we do.

Thirdly, we need to stop being so insular. There are twelve million trade union members in Britain. We should go out and tell them about the attack on the Post Office, about how Post Office workers are going to suffer, and about how it will mean deteriorating services for ordinary working people like themselves.

We need their support and solidarity and we shouldn't be afraid to get out and campaign for it.

Resolutions and speakers to trades councils, Labour parties, trade union branches and shop stewards' committees would start to turn the tide of filthy lies being pumped out by the papers and TV about Post Office workers.

The miners have shown that Thatcher can be stopped. They have shown that the nationalised industries can be defended. Now it's up to us to show that we can do it too.



make a killing from the Post Office apparatus through allowing 'value added services' on private wires, there is a simple target for a campaign of boycotts and disruption.

In central London, the management are going all-out to set-up special teams of engineers, the Circuit Provision Divisions, to install the flood of new private wires. A spanner in that particular works won't hurt the ordinary customer but it will foul up one aspect of the Tories' plans.

## Your services under attack

THE Tory government is putting a Bill through Parliament to attack the Post Office. Under the guise of introducing 'free competition' into the provision of postal and telephone services, they are trying to hived-off the profitable parts of the Post Office to private enterprise.

What will be left will become a lame-duck, incapable of providing a decent service for the customer or a decent job for its workers.

Giant companies like GEC and IBM are waiting for the wings to feed on the spoils, while the unscrupulous small-time operators are already selling shoddy goods to the unwary.

## Won't competition mean better services?

THERE are problems with Post Office services. The main cause is the government's policy of 'free competition'.

Unlike private companies, the Post Office is prevented by the government from making a profit to finance its investment programmes — programmes which are vital to update Post Office services and to give the customer a better deal.

The cash-limits are strangling these programmes and preventing the Post Office providing the sort of services it would like to.

Competition will only make this worse by taking more resources away from the Post Office and putting them further into its modernisation programmes.

## But there's nothing wrong with fair competition

WELL, the competition won't be fair. The Post Office will have its hands firmly tied behind its back, while the private companies will have free reign.

The cash-limits policy and other restrictions prevent the Post Office from directly manufacturing its own apparatus to put onto the end of telephone lines. It's forced to play middle-man, buying from private manufacturers and re-selling to the public.

But of course the private companies will be able to get straight to the customer. Hardly fair competition.

Much more fundamentally, the Post Office has an obligation to provide a universal communications service over the whole country. Whether you live in Penzance or Paddington, the Post Office has to provide a posts and telecoms network to meet your needs.

The private companies are under no such obligation. They can just dip into the lucrative parts of posts and telecoms, make a fast buck, and accept no responsibility for the needs of our society as a whole for a decent communications network.

## Won't it mean lower prices?

AS the Post Office loses profitable services to the private sector but retains the obligation to provide a modern national network, the squeeze on its resources will get tighter.

The last round of telephone tariff increases was a direct result of the cash limits. This will get much worse once the Telecoms Bill becomes law.

## So what can be done about it?

THE main Post Office trade unions, the UCW, POEU and CPSA, are united in opposing the attack on the Post Office monopoly.

We say that the ordinary customer and Post Office workers are going to have to pay the price of hiving-off the profitable parts of the Post Office to private enterprise.

The customer will pay through higher prices, through getting ripped-off by unscrupulous cowboy firms and by deteriorating services. Post Office workers will suffer through lower wages, worse conditions and being forced to work harder to 'compete'.

The only ones who will profit are the giant Telecoms manufacturers, the banks and firms who want greater choice of apparatus and the rogues who exploit the new situation to rip-off ordinary customers.

You can join with the Post Office trade unions in saying to the government and the private manufacturers:

## Hands off the Post Office!

Published by branches of the Union of Communications Workers (UCW), Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) and Civil And Public Services Association (CPSA) in London Telephone Region — South Central Area, 70/71 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1



## System X Ringing up profits for big business

By Marcella Fitzgerald,  
London North Central Internal POEU

**NEW technology is transforming the national telecommunications network, and the government wants to make sure that these changes benefit big business.**

**It's the ordinary telephone user who will be footing the bill, with a 22 per cent rise in charges last time round — 4 per cent more than that for business users.**

Around £1,500m will be invested this year by British Telecoms on modernisation of the network, £200m less than it would like to spend. The shortfall is caused by the Tories' cash-limits policy, so if this level of investment is to be maintained, prices will continue to rise and the wages of telecoms workers will be threatened.

Last July the first of the new range of telephone exchanges, known as System X, was installed. Almost £40m was spent by the Post Office in 1980 alone on the development of this new system, which enables exchanges to transmit information digitally, like a computer.

System X will be the lynchpin of the modernised telecoms network, and big business stands to benefit from this programme in several ways:

- The new system will allow the computers of the banks, finance houses, and giant corporations to 'talk' to each other over the public network, which is no use to ordinary subscribers.

- A range of facilities, such as abbreviated dialling, conferences by phone, 'follow me' call switching, are great for the busy executive but hardly a must for the 2.5m unemployed.

- The replacement of existing, analogue exchanges by the new generation is often making 'obsolete' exchanges which still potentially have a long life — a useful boost in orders to the private sector manufacturers during a slump.

- The development costs of System X — so far over £100m — have been mainly paid for by the Post Office. The private manufacturers involved — GEC, Plessey, and STC — stand to lose nothing while they have a guaranteed market for the new system in the Post Office.

At the same time, they have equal shares with the Post Office in British Telecoms Systems Ltd, a joint company set up to market System X internationally. So, with minimum risk and investment, they stand to cream off a small fortune from sales of the new system.

While the ordinary customer foots the bill for this modernisation programme in the interests of big business, telecoms workers will suffer, too.

No staffing levels have been agreed between the POEU and the Post Office for System X because the PO refuses to get down to serious discussions.

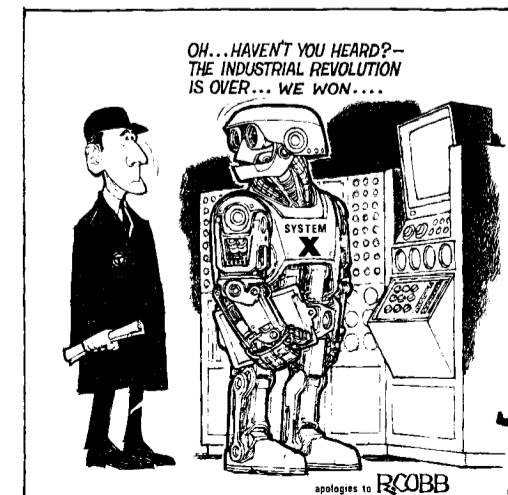
System X is designed to be, as far as possible, self-maintaining. At present, the old electro-mechanical exchanges each require the attention of a skilled team of engineers to keep them running. System X will end all that.

It will be able to locate and isolate faults in itself, which in most cases will then simply require someone to replace a plug-in unit. Teams of engineers will be able to cover a number of exchanges from a central maintenance centre. The job losses will be phenomenal.

While new technology can bring vast improvements to people's lives, reducing the drudgery needed to produce the goods and services we all need to survive, it isn't being used for that today.

System X presently means rich pickings for the few parasites who own and control the economy, together with higher prices, lower wages, and unemployment for the rest of us.

Only a planned economy, run by and for working people, can turn the wonders of new technology from a source of oppression and misery into a whole new world of opportunity and plenty.



By Pete Cooper,  
London West POEU

**THE Daily Mail, now joined by the Thames Report TV programme, has been waging a campaign against Post Office telecoms in general and PO engineers in particular.**

On 26 February 1981, in an article headed 'the phone fixing fiddlers'. The workers' friend alleged widespread illegal installation of telephones and PABXs (private branch exchanges) by Post Office engineers.

The article was technically inaccurate.

It described the PABXs being 'illicitly tapped into the national switchboard'. There is no such switchboard, and it isn't possible to secretly put

# Why the Broad Left has upset the Daily Mail

lines into the national system. The *Mail* offered no evidence for its allegations.

A small amount of illegal installation of apparatus, such as the odd extension, undoubtedly goes on, but on nothing like the scale suggested by the *Mail*. The main problem — the backlog in installation — is caused by lack of cash, itself the result of government-imposed cash limits on the nationalised industries.

Also in February, the *Daily Mail* ran a piece on 'Computer power take-

over', attacking the Post Office engineers' Broad Left.

This detailed the advances made by the left in the POEU, and quoted general secretary Bryan Stanley and right winger John Price of *Mainstream* about the need to stop the left.

The *Mail* wants to put the blame for the undeniable backlog in apparatus installation on PO engineers by calling us lazy and corrupt. It is thereby justifying the government's handover of this juicy part of the business

to its friends in big business, who are not subject to any cash limits.

These slanderous attacks on PO engineers are also designed to isolate us in the event of confrontation over the monopoly or pay.

This is made more likely by the advance of the Broad Left in the union, so the *Mail* gives backing to the desperate attempts of the right wing *Mainstream* group and the majority on the executive to cling to power by alleging a sinister left-wing conspiracy.

The present leadership

of the union has completely failed to defend the interests of its membership from the 35-hour week sell-out in 1978, last year's sell-out on pay, and total failure so far to mount an effective campaign in defence of the monopoly.

By contrast, Broad Left supporters have fought on all these issues and far from being secretive and manipulative conspirators, we have always been completely open in campaigning for our ideas.

The Broad Left was

# POEU LEADERS FIGHT TORIES WITH KILL

By Colin Talbot,  
POEU Westminster Branch

**THE way in which the Post Office Engineering Union has responded to the government's attack on the Post Office is a text-book case of misleadership and conservative cowardice.**

When Sir Keith Joseph launched his assault on the Post Office last summer, he had already won half the battle. The main Post Office trade unions, the POEU and the Union of Communication Workers, were already divided among themselves.

The issue was whether the posts and telecoms parts of the Post Office should be split, with the POEU strongly in favour and the UCW bitterly opposed.

The two halves of the Post Office are quite different in several respects. The postal side is labour intensive, employing mainly unskilled workers. It is stagnant and unprofitable. Telecoms, on the other hand, is capital intensive, with a skilled engineering workforce, a high growth rate — about 8 per cent a year — and it is very profitable.

## Vengeance

In true Tory style, the principle of 'divide and rule' is now being applied to the Post Office with a vengeance. Sir Keith realises that in the next few years posts is likely to decline, with the impact of information technology taking away much of its bulk commercial traffic.

It will be much easier to push through the massive redundancies that will follow the decline if posts is separated from the more profitable telecoms network, where posts work will be in the form of data transmission.

The carrot dangled before the POEU leadership is that if it ditches the 'millstone' of posts, telecoms engineers will receive a decent slice of the growing telecoms cake. Like the donkey, our leaders have taken the short-sighted option and, like the donkey, they are being fooled by an ever receding dream.

The British Telecoms Bill neatly exploits the division between the leaders of the postal and telecoms workers by combining splitting of the Post Office into two with a vicious attack on both the posts and telecoms monopolies.



**Tories' Telecoms Bill paves the way for massive redundancies among postal workers. System X (right) threatens Post Office engineers' jobs**

A serious fight against the Bill has therefore been hamstrung from the start — because the POEU is in favour of the legislation and simply wants to alter clauses on the monopoly, while the UCW has raised the more forthright slogan, Kill the Bill.

United action in defence of the monopolies is still possible, but not with our leaders at the helm.

When the Tories came to power it was apparent that they had the Post Office monopoly in their sights, as part of their general campaign against the nationalised industries.

Shortly after Thatcher's election, the Post Office Engineering Union's conference in June 1979 passed a crystal clear resolution: 'To oppose by all means possible, including industrial action, any attempt to break any Post Office monopoly.'

## Message

The resolution was passed unanimously, with the full backing of general secretary Bryan Stanley. At the 1980 conference an almost identical motion was passed, only a

month before Sir Keith announced his plans to attack the monopoly.

How did the POEU respond? Their first message to membership, in Letter to Members 1021, stated that the 'best way of protecting the employment of members is for British Telecoms to seize the new opportunities created by a more competitive environment to win new markets.'

One could be forgiven for mistaking this 'opposition' as a possible means for its own craven capitulation. But that was yet to come.



up in October 1978 after the 35-hour week sell-out. Since then it has gone from strength to strength.

With nine supporters among the 23 members on the executive, 30 years of right-wing stranglehold on the union is nearing an overdue end.

The Broad Left publishes an excellent and widely circulated magazine, *Spark*. It is supported by all the tendencies on the left in the union, and unlike Broad Left formations in other unions, no single tendency exercises political or organisational control.

The founding statement of the POEU Broad Left calls for free collective bargaining; nationalisation of the telecoms manufacturing sector; for

the opening of the Post Office books for inspection by workers; for better working conditions; and for union democracy.

Socialist Challenge supporters in the POEU give full support to the Broad Left. We think that it needs to take up active campaigning among the membership.

One of the most important steps towards this is the setting up of local Broad Left groups, to involve the widest numbers in discussing the policies and supporting the campaigns of the Broad Left.

That's the best answer to the *Daily Mail's* slanderous attacks.

● To contact the POEU Broad Left, write to: Carl Melson, 16 Messaline Avenue, London W3.

### Women in British Telecoms

Meeting on Tues 5 May, 6pm  
Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, London NW1



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By Derek Davies and Steve Bell, Cardiff UCW

'SIR Keith Joseph rules the Post Office.' That's the intention behind the Tories' Telecoms Bill.

The blackmailing powers which the Bill hands to Sir Keith Joseph aim to provide fire-power to management. And it will need it, since the breathing space it gained by smashing the 1971 postal workers' strike has run out.

Many members of the Union of Communication Workers have bitter memories of '71.

They ran up against a union-bashing Tory government before it was taught a lesson by the miners. We were singled out as a bloody example to other workers and the Post Office was a willing accomplice.

### Mail

Similar problems existed then as now — a need to cut labour through mechanisation, flexibility and redundancy; to keep wages low and hours worked high.

There is bitterness, too, over the role of the union's executive council and general secretary Tom Jackson, who misled the strike before it even started.

Overtime was worked until the moment the strike began, so all mail was sorted and delivered. Plenty of notice was given to businesses and the public services, which pushed out their mail and bills early.

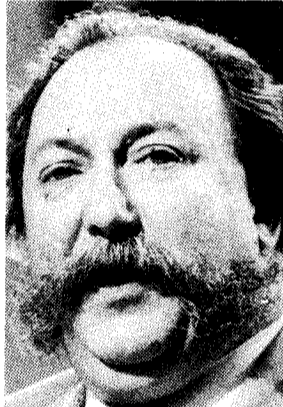
No strong approach was made to the telephone engineers for solidarity action, and the UCW operators in the telephone exchanges were not brought out through mass picketing. The union strike fund was almost empty.

### Cynicism

All in all, it was a crushing defeat. Bitterness and cynicism spread through the union ranks. The sell-out executive became stronger after the defeat, which was too deep to create any defiant organised opposition.

The Post Office followed up its victory with mechanisation,

## Postal workers lay the ghost of the '71 strike



UCW general secretary Tom Jackson

redundancies, and scrapping old work practices. It meant low wages and long hours.

But within eight years the PO found that its '71 victory was not enough — the postal side still struggled to break even. A new shake-out was called for.

Subtlety is never an attribute of a management with a victory under its belt. In reply to the union's 1979 claim for an 8 per cent pay rise plus an inflation escalator payment, full consolidation, and a 40-hour week, the PO offered 8 per cent, part consolidation, and the introduction of regular casual labour.

All hell broke loose, and by a large majority branches voted it down.

Recommending acceptance, the executive was left out on a limb.

### Duties

After years of giving, postal workers wanted a few improvements. Many had joined the Post Office after the '71 strike, bringing with them the standards and confidence of other industrial unions.

The union has agreed on paper to help the service by more flexibility and a 7 per cent cut in duties; a productivity deal for the London region; and the trial introduction nationally of a 'voluntary' productivity scheme.

Measured against the PO's long-term aims, it's slow going. Management now looks to the Telecoms Bill to get the strength of the Tory government around it in order to push

through its cutbacks.

None of this has reduced the postal workers' mounting anger or sapped our confidence.

The Post Office has only got as far as it has through the assistance of the UCW executive, and this has given rise to an organised opposition within the union, the Broad Left, which has emerged from the rank-and-file revolt to the leadership's policies.

There were revolts over pay in 1979 and 1980; democratic reforms were adopted at the rules revision conference; and the executive's attempt to restructure the union in line with the Telecoms Bill was referred back.

The Broad Left's programme rejects the executive's policies. It calls for no productivity, wage restraint, or job loss, and it outlines an alternative: a decent living wage adjusted to inflation; a 35-hour week; a Post Office under workers' control, and one union for all communication workers.

Democratic overhaul of the union is also among the Broad Left's aims. This includes bringing

under members' control the union officers and their abuse of our bloc vote at Labour Party conferences.

The Broad Left's badge sums it up: 'For a fighting union'. It is no mere boast.

Public meetings on technology and job loss have been held. Fringe meetings at conference have been well attended. There was a campaign for an alternative policy for the 1981 wage claim, and opposition amendments to the April conference on productivity have been coordinated.

Best of all, Broad Left supporters led the recent Manchester strike which defeated management attempts to unilaterally scrap duty rotas as a punishment for not entering a productivity scheme. As Pete Dodd, secretary of Manchester amalgamated, said at a recent Broad Left meeting: 'For us, the Manchester strike has laid the ghost of 1971.'

The UCW Broad Left can be contacted through its secretary, Pete Dodd, 18 Lynton Rd, Chorlton, Manchester 21. Tel 061-861 8390.

# HTING THE GLOVES



us that the date for action had been postponed 'to some time around April 1981' when the Bill came up for its third reading in Parliament.

The whole of January and February was then wasted as the union's national machinery was swung behind the strenuous but futile attempts of the Labour MPs on the parliamentary committee considering the Bill to delete its worst aspects.

Instead of relying on the strength of the members, and waging a vigorous campaign to get them more involved explaining the threat posed by the Bill, the leadership tried to fight the Tories on their own terms in their own patch. Of course, they lost.

Finally on 6 March in Letter to Branches (LtB) 1341, members were informed of the lobby of Parliament on 1 April, which sounded more like the Last Post than the bugle call to action.

### Panic

'This is not intended to be a mass lobby,' the letter announced. 'Union funds cannot be used to compensate for loss of time... Appoint a group of representatives.' No call for mass action. No appeal for membership involvement in any way whatsoever. No call for token industrial action. In short, a big fat nothing.

The truth was that at the national executive council meeting, supporters of the Broad Left had pressed for implementation of POEU conference policy by calling for a one-day strike on 1 April, to give the parliamentary lobby some teeth.

This proposition was defeated by the narrow margin of 11 votes to 10. In their fear and panic, the right-wing majority on the executive went all out to prevent any action that could dent the Tories' resolve. Hence LtB 1341.

The only conclusion to draw from the way that the majority on the executive has shifted from its supposed support for industrial action to defend the monopoly in 1979 to outright opposition in 1981 — against the decision of conference — is that they are unscrupulous manoeuvrers who deserve only one fate: to be kicked out of office to make way for those who take seriously our members' jobs, our future, and our union.

while

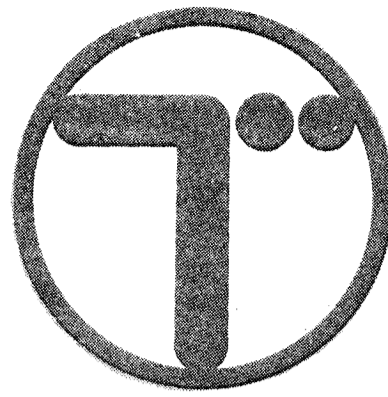
Four months later, in November 1980, Sir Keith finally published the British Telecoms Bill. The union's reaction was a stronger condemnation of the proposals and a call for 'a mass meeting and Parliamentary lobby... sometime in January 1981.'

In the meantime, local POEU branches were supposed to approach local MPs to put the union case. Many branches did this, with the unsurprising result that the second reading of the Bill in December received a 69 vote majority.

As a Christmas bonus for our good work, Bryan Stanley sent out Letter to Branches 1223, informing



# Labour and the PO monopoly



## Working for Weinstock

By John Parkinson, GEC Preston  
**THE Tories' decision to elevate Sir Arnold Weinstock, managing director of GEC, to become Lord Weinstock of Bowden wasn't short sighted. As head of GEC, his ability to purchase successful race-horses and talented servants (Kissinger and Angus Olgivy) has set him apart from us lesser mortals.**

As an individual of modest means (he owns 2,779,441 shares in GEC on which he made £327,974 in 1980) he has not been deflected from his chosen vocation as the messiah of Britain's regeneration, despite Rupert Murdoch's gazumping of his bid for the Times.

For GEC, one of the three main suppliers of the Post Office, communication is a key word. Its telecoms business, with five factories in Coventry and other sites in Treforest, Aycliffe, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy, is a highly profitable section of this multinational giant.

### Systems

A substantial part of Post Office business goes its way, with its business communications' systems featuring strongly. After all, without such systems, the rationalisation of industry to which Lord Arnold is so committed would be a far slower process.

GEC also plays a major part in the project of developing System X. The introduction of this system is bound to undermine jobs and conditions for Post Office workers, but what about the workers in GEC?

GEC is certainly doing well out of it. Profits in the electronics, automation and telecommunications group alone rose from £76 million in 1978 to £101 million in 1979.

This is the transformation into hard cash of Lord Arnold's belief in an 'effort to reverse the steady increase in the share of national wealth disposed of by the state organisations'.

Despite the myth put about by Lord Arnold and his friends in Thatcher's government, increased profits and increased productivity do not create jobs. Despite GEC's vast profits and productivity increases of over 200% over the past 11 years, the workforce has fallen by 70,000.

### Schemes

With the breaking of the Post Office monopoly, competition in the private sector of telecoms will get fierce. GEC telecoms jobs will follow those lost in other areas, as Weinstock carries through his ruthless schemes to get his hands on 'the share of national wealth' disposed of by Post Office Telecommunications.

What is needed is not pipe-dreams and fantasies about 'planning agreements' with the likes of Weinstock, but an offensive by telecoms workers in the public and private sectors to save jobs.

Cross industry organisation between Post Office workers and the supply side can frustrate the ambitions of Keith Joseph and Arnold Weinstock and lay the basis for a planned telecoms industry.

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By Andy Hollis, Leeds Internal POEU

**THE attack on the Post Office monopoly will be implemented over two or three years after the Telecoms Bill becomes law. Many Post Office workers desperately hope that by then Thatcher will have been kicked out. But what alternative is the Labour Party likely to offer? What policies should it follow?**

At a recent meeting of the Post Office Engineering Union national executive council the Labour spokesperson on Industry, Stan Orme, discussed these issues with the union's leaders. The result wasn't promising.

Union general secretary Bryan Stanley had written to Michael Foot to demand that an incoming Labour government should hold talks with the POEU 'to halt, and ideally to reverse the damaging consequences of the liberalisation of the monopolies'.

Not surprisingly, Stan Orme was quite happy to assure the NEC that such meetings would take place, because they commit the Labour government to absolutely nothing.

The first thing we need written into the Labour manifesto is a clear commitment to the repeal of the British Telecommunications Act. Only such a policy can begin to 'ideally reverse' the effects of the Tories' marauding attack on the Post Office.

But Labour policy has to go a lot further. It has to make it clear that those in-



POEU general secretary Bryan Stanley

involved in signing-off the assets of the public communications network are going to pay dearly for their actions.

The only way to keep the grubby hands of the GECs and IBMs of this world off our nationalised industry is to say that anything they cream off will be nationalised without compensation.

Repeal of the Telecoms Bill and re-nationalisation without compensation are the foundation stones of a genuine socialist policy towards communications.

The advent of new technology also opens up tremendous possibilities of increasing the access of every working class person to a wealth of information and contacts denied to them by our present system.

Such a system can only be built by seizing control of the whole communications industry and running it in the interests of working people.

That is why the main telecoms manufacturers — GEC, Plessey, STC and the rest — should be nationalised under workers' control. Plessey, to take just one example, makes tremendous profits out of its sales of main exchanges to the Post Office — over £5m in 1980. This rip-off

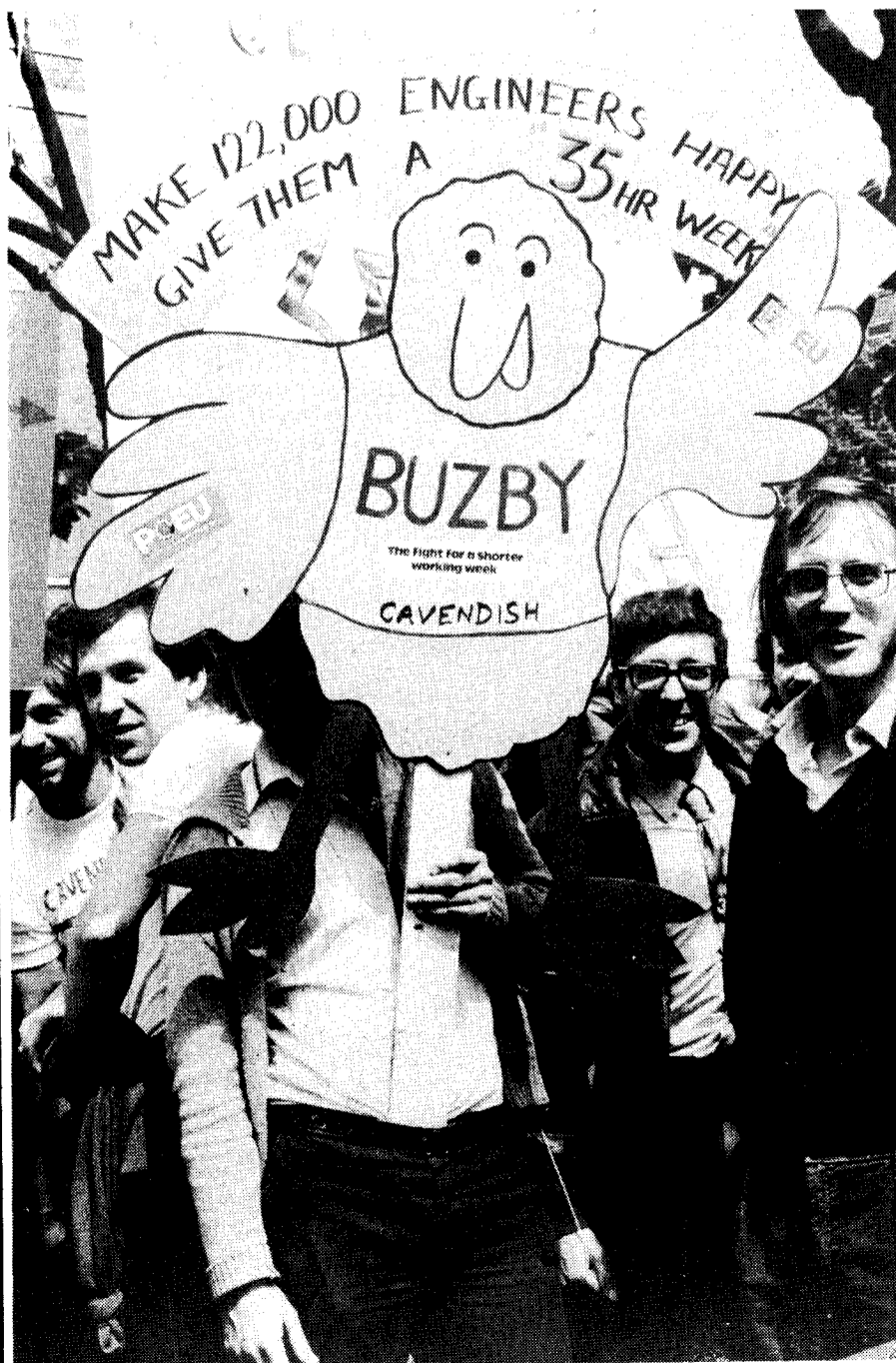
has to end.

The West Yorkshire political committee of the POEU has begun to forge links with activists in other PO unions, activists in other nationalised industries that are under attack such as British Rail, and with workers in the private sector, especially members of the electricians union EETPU.

Such a campaign to win broad support for defence of the Post Office monopoly will raise the issues of a socialist policy for communications. Every POEU and UCW branch should urge their local Labour parties to discuss it.

We want the incoming Labour government committed to genuine socialist policies, not to cosy chats with our trade union leaders. The best way to do that is to rely on our own strength and start the fightback now.

## PO engineers Broad Left policies



**A GROUP of Post Office engineers formed the Broad Left in 1978. It brought together socialists and trade union militants who were sick of the conservative misleadership of the Post Office Engineering Union and wanted a real change.**

**The statement 'What we stand for' was issued by the POEU Broad Left a month ago as part of the campaign to win support for the Broad Left candidates in the forthcoming elections for the POEU National Executive Council and other posts.**

#### WHAT WE STAND FOR

1. Mobilisation of the membership in defence of the monopoly. No to the split. One industrial union for all PO workers.
2. A level of pay fully commensurate with the needs of the members, their skills and knowledge. No Government interference in wage bargaining. No to the Tories' 6 per cent limit.
3. A 35-hour, 4-day week as a first step towards a 32-hour, 4-day week, to be achieved on the basis of work-sharing with no loss of pay.
4. A genuine strengthening of democracy within the union with the aim of making any future leadership truly accountable to the rank and file and more in tune with the members' feelings and interests.
5. A sliding scale of hours tied to the introduction of new technology with the object of preserving jobs in the telecommunications industry.
6. Nationalisation of both sides of our industry, manufacture and service, with the workforce and customers having a major say.
7. Open the books. We demand to see the full facts and figures behind the assertions and forecasts of the PO. The members should be aware of the statistics that will determine their future.
8. No to cash limits, or any other mechanism designed to make the public sector industries the tools of Tory policies. We must fight these attacks on our wages and conditions and our ability to provide an efficient service to the public.
9. We oppose at all levels cuts in public spending and call for active support for these workers struggling to resist cuts.
10. We call on Government to take into public ownership key sectors of the economy, which must include some of the main monopolies, multinationals, the banks, insurance and financial institutions, as envisaged in Labour Party policies.
11. Kick out the Tories and return a Labour Government committed and accountable to a truly socialist programme.



## El Salvador - towards a new offensive

By Phil Hearse

**THE LIBERATION forces in El Salvador are moving towards the opening of a major new offensive against the military dictatorship. That's the almost universal view in El Salvador, including that of spokespersons of the regime itself.**

The rainy season is rapidly approaching, which will severely hamper the government's new military tactics and create a new situation for the conduct of warfare in the countryside.

Since the failure of the 11 January general offensive to achieve all its objectives, the left-wing guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) have adopted new tactics — those of 'prolonged people's war'.

Essentially they boil down to a mobile war of manoeuvre, rather than a

static war of position. During the last two months the FMLN have conducted numerous raids on small government outposts, bombings of government buildings, and temporary occupations of towns.

But the FMLN have avoided large scale stand-up battles against government forces, recently bolstered by huge supplies of American arms, including artillery, tanks and helicopters.

Spurred on by their American 'advisors', the National Guard and the army have also adopted

new, Vietnam-style tactics. Small mobile groups are sent out on 'search and destroy' missions against villages alleged to be controlled by the FMLN, and against the guerilla columns.

While the fighting continues, it is clear that a debate is taking place in the highest councils of US imperialism and its western allies about the possibility of a compromise solution to the conflict.

### War

The Reagan-Haig 'hard line' policy is under fire from the American Democrats, especially Senator Edward Kennedy, and some of the United States' international allies, in particular the West Germans, are arguing strongly



against the possibility of a military solution to the war.

The 'compromise' would be an attempt to marginalise both the

revolutionary forces of the FMLN, and the extreme right wing elements inside the military.

The West German government argue that a

'moderate' government could be made up of civilian members of the present junta, including the president Duarte, together with the less 'ex-

treme' supporters of the FDR, the political wing of the guerilla movement.

They have in mind, in particular, Guillermo Ungo, leader of the social democratic MNR (National Revolutionary Movement). It seems highly likely that secret negotiations are going on about the possibility of such a solution.

### Junta

Could the moderate, compromise solution work? While such a situation is very attractive to imperialism there are extreme difficulties in bringing it about. The balance of forces inside the present military junta makes it unlikely that the majority will have any truck with a section of the FDR.

Moreover, inside the FDR, Ungo and the MNR are a tiny minority. However much the imperialists may manoeuvre, both the military junta and the FMLN are looking for total victory.

# Iran: the war and the mass struggle

*WHAT'S really going on in Iran? It's now two years since the Shah was overthrown. But all we've heard in the Western press has been the hostages' saga and reports of the Iran-Iraq war. We talked to a militant of the HKS (Iranian section of the Fourth International) about the struggles of the Iranian workers, their response to the war, the struggles of the Kurds, and the situation of women in Iran.*

### WHAT was the effect of the war with Iraq on the Iranian workers?

The war was a gift for the capitalists. Nationalistic feeling increased dramatically. At first the people were enthusiastic to go to the front and fight since they saw the war as an imperialist threat to their revolution.

The Islamic Republican Party (IRP), which represents the hard-line religious wing of the capitalists, set up its own reactionary militias — the 'revolutionary guards', the 'Crusade for Reconstruction' and so on.

Bani Sadr, who leads the 'liberal' wing of the capitalists, has tried hard to build himself a base in the army — with some success among the more junior officers.

We didn't see the war as a directly organised imperialist intervention, but the imperialists certainly stood to gain from the defeat of Iran.

Some people took an abstentionist position, but we argued differently. Under the Shah, Iran was the gendarme of the region for imperialism, but now the situation is completely different.

Although previously the mass of the people had illusions in Khomeini, these are rapidly being dispelled as the economic crisis gets worse. But at this stage they see Bani



Sadr as the alternative.

Working class mobilisation and struggle is still continuing. During the anti-Shah revolution the demands of the masses were mainly economic. Now they are fighting for democratic rights.

What position did the

### HKS take on participation in the war?

Our line was to demand of the government that they arm the people to fight Saddam Hussein and the Baathists in Iraq — the reactionary army couldn't defend the revolution.

The government con-

structed ideological 'tests' for those trying to get into the army. But despite this, quite a number of revolutionaries went to the front — especially the Mujahadeen. Many of them were arrested and harassed by the Islamic zealots of the regime.

What is the state of



### workers' self organisation? Do the workers' committees still exist in the factories?

Before and during the revolution strike committees were set up in the factories around the fight for the 8-hour day, and better wages and conditions. Often these demands were won.

After the revolution many of these turned into genuine workers' councils. In some factories they even locked up the management and ran the factories themselves. The Islamic Republican Party began a campaign for 'Islamicisation', that under Islamic law workers couldn't run factories.

Bit by bit the IRP dismantled many of the councils and replaced them with Islamic councils which work hand in hand with management.

But workers are still fighting for their demands, and in many places people are demanding new elections to the factory councils to replace the 'Islamic' delegates. Our position is for the regeneration of the councils, leading to regional

councils and a united national workers' council.

A good example of continuing workers' militancy has been the series of struggles over the new year bonuses. Under the Shah workers were paid bonuses over the Islamic new year. Workers realised that these weren't real bonuses — they relied on them as an integral part of their income.

This year the government said that they couldn't afford any bonuses. But the workers are saying: 'Why should we pay for the crisis?'

The Tehran bus drivers went on strike, but the government brought in 5,000 drivers from the army and the front to defeat them. But many workers in the factories won the demand to be paid their bonuses.

### What is the state of the Kurdish struggle for self-determination?

The Kurds have had effective autonomy since the time of the revolution, despite the government's furious military attacks on

them. The Kurds have taken an abstentionist line on the war, which we think is wrong.

We advocated that they demand a ceasefire from the central government and propose a joint fight against the Baathists. The Kurds are far from defeated. They are still at the heart of the Iranian revolution.

### What is the situation of women in Iran now?

The veil is the least of our problems. The IRP is trying to push through very reactionary measures against women. One is called 'ghassas', Islamic punishment.

If a man kills a woman, all he has to do is pay the 'price' of her blood to the family. And women can't be called as witnesses for a murder trial.

The second thing is the institution of 'temporary marriage'. After the revolution the 'red light' areas were demolished — prostitution was 'against Islam'. But now men can go to a 'temporary marriage' centre.

There are other important battles women are fighting like the right of inheritance, for equal wages and nurseries.

### What about the forces of the left?

The most important force on the left is the Mujahadeen — they have been in the forefront of fighting for democratic rights and against reaction. They have mass support in the big cities. The problem with them is that they are uncritical of Bani Sadr.

When Bani Sadr raises the demand for democratic rights, then we support that. But we shouldn't forget that he represents another wing of the capitalist class. The IRP is holding a revolver against us, but Bani Sadr is waiting in the wings with a cup of poison.

That's why the HKS says that the fight for democratic rights can't be dependent on any section of the capitalists, but must be fought for by the unity and independence of the workers.



## Dirty Harry on the Falls Road

By Rob James and Jane Watt

Back in the matinee with this shooter in  
its holster,  
makes me feel big like a bomb in the  
pocket  
Bowie knife, coonskin hat, Davey  
Crockett

I like the way the echoes carry

Chorus

Blow off your head like Dirty Harry

Up on the Falls, in an armoured car;  
in a blue vest, I'm a killer looking for a  
suspect,  
a copper looking for some respect.  
It's a joke; five shots or six, a joke death  
killing kids for kicks  
but on the big screen the hero's not  
sorry  
I like the way the echoes carry

Chorus

Are you seeing me, fixed in your seats in  
the back row?  
Turning aside with your 'I don't know'?  
Confusing, yes, it's safer that way  
to look at six counties in a Hollywood  
way,  
watching me dancing with my '45  
swagger.

shooting up the baddies in the IRA,  
I like the way the echoes carry  
RUC, SAS, SPG, RUC,  
I like the way the echoes carry.

These lyrics from Oxy and the Morons' single (Music for the Deaf label) illustrate more crisply than we can the depth and compassion of their political commitment. It's a far cry from the one-dimensional platitudes that have come to characterise most 'political' pop — it's even literate!

But it's more than just the lyrics. The music matches them for hard invention as guitars and tape loops — featuring a particularly strong vinyl debut by the Rev. Ian Paisley — provide a backdrop for menacing vocals.

And the other side's even better. The Morons work their politics too. They've been to Belfast twice to play explicitly anti-repression gigs, unlike the normalising liberalism of the Specials/Beat syndrome — benefits for kids' holidays and CND in the middle of Belfast! And they've even played Socialist Challenge benefits!

If this all seems like a hard sell, then it basically is. The Morons are one of the few groups worthy of socialists' support — they get virtually none from the straight pop world.

Copies of the single are available from Oxy and the Morons, c/o Box 33, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8. Cost 85p, cheques and postal orders to M McMahon.



Oxy and the Morons — socialists should support them

## '...Frustration: At least it's free' — The Quads

By Steve Coxon

THE Quads are a band from Birmingham made up of three unemployed brothers and their unemployed neighbour/best friend. And they don't like the way they've been treated.

'Unemployment is a curse and a misery,' says Josh Jones, vocalist and oldest of the three brothers, to nods of agreement from his two brothers, Jack (guitar), and Johnny (drums) and bassist Jim Doherty.

'So we wrote a song trying to describe our feelings of being in that situation, the same feelings shared by thousands of unemployed young people right across the country.'

That song, *Gotta Getta Job*, was written over a year ago when the band was first formed in the depressed Acocks Green area of Birmingham. It's even more relevant today and, by popular request, they will release it as a single on the Birmingham independent label, Big Bear Records, on 10 April.

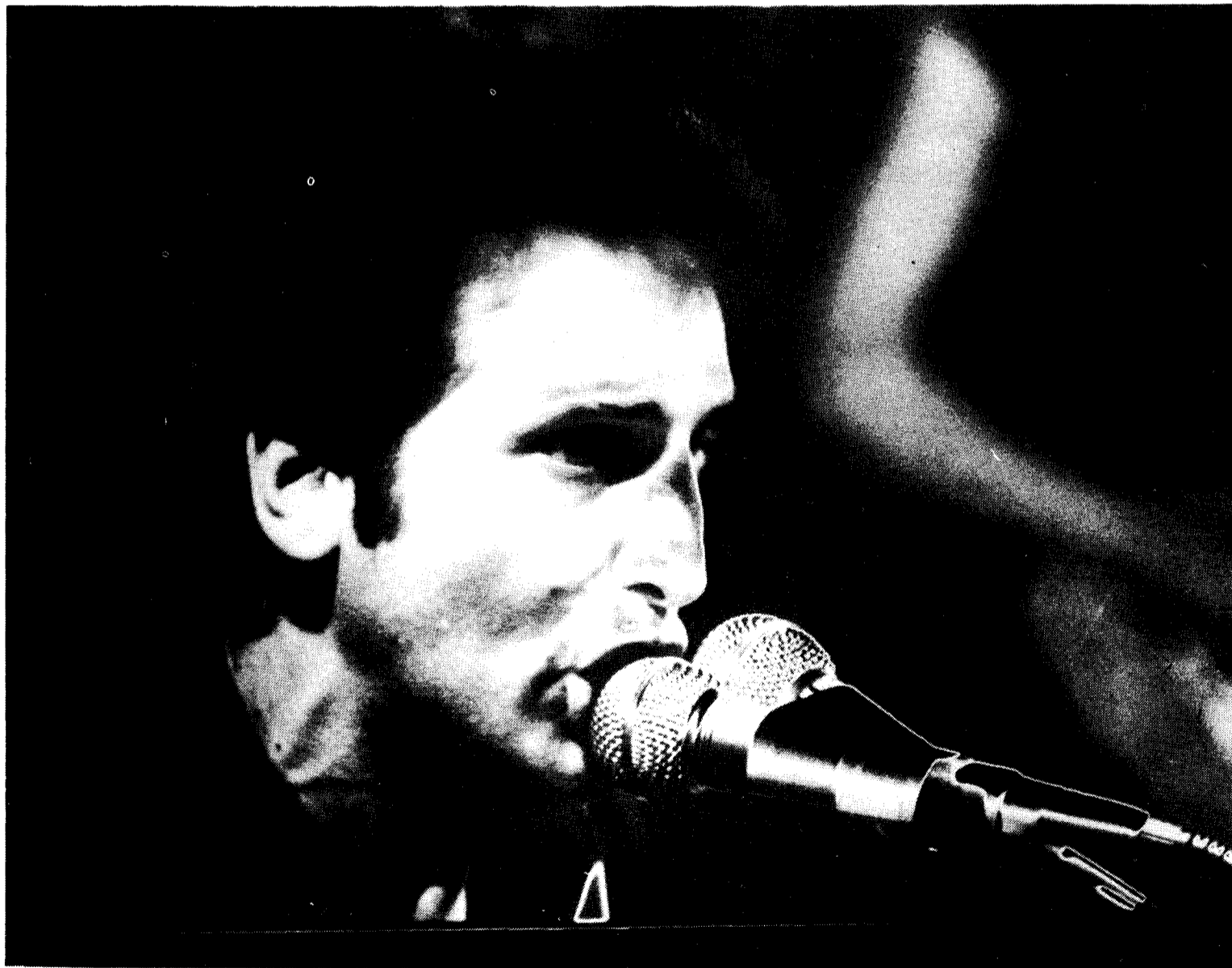
You've probably heard of the Quads before. Their first single, *There Must Be Thousands*, so impressed John Peel on its release in 1979 that he immediately put it into his all-time top 20 published that year.

They've had a couple more singles released since then but neither of them achieved the success of *Thousands*.

That record was released at a time when everyone was trying to find some sort of great meaning to attach to every new song that was being written, when the whole music industry was being turned on its head by punk.

'It was, if you like, about bigotry in a very general sense. But it wasn't sloganeering on a particular aspect of life in this country.'

*Gotta Getta Job* has got a similar feel to it, and



makes a similar type of general statement — although musically it's totally different,' says Josh.

'What we're trying to do with the song is say to the unemployed young people: 'Look, we know what it's like to have people blame you for not finding a job, for treating you like you've got no right to even breathe; for finding you guilty of being young and being a victim of

things beyond your control.'

'It's very important that people in our predicament should realise they are not alone with their problems.'

'We don't blame anyone for unemployment; we don't think that we as a band need to in that song, because what we're writing about and singing about is the fact of being thrown on the scrapheap, not the whys and wherefores.'

Because of its restraint, the power of the song is increased to an incredible level. Strident vocals burst out with:

'...Frustration: At least it's free'  
*Your future is yours and you're told  
Your future: No jobs no soul...*

(Reproduced courtesy of Bear-songs)  
And there's more of the same all adding up to one of the most stunning indictments of the spectre of youth unemployment yet written.

'You could say,' claims Josh, 'that we're not really

a 'political' band. But the way we see it is that everything anyone does is political in some way, because politics is simply an alternative word for life.'

'So what we are doing is writing about our own feelings on life and how it affects us, that is political.'

When bands like the Quads, who have not previously been seen as performing from any identifiable political stand-

point, start making statements like that, it's certain that the general awareness of the political situation in Britain today is on the increase.

People are beginning to realise that the fence on which they have sat for so long is rotting and will no longer support their weight.

They are saying: 'It's time to knock down the fence and build a new one — one that we want, not

what they want.'

And when that happens, there'll be no room for sitting on the fence — and no-one will want to.

The Quads are that rare type of people who have total conviction in what they are doing combined with a happy approach to their work.

'A lot of bands get so tied up in the job of getting across a message that they stop entertaining the audience. We are entertainers first and foremost, but we hope that when people go away from one of our gigs they've not only enjoyed themselves but they have something to think about as well.'

'You see, we've been branded as playing 'music for optimists' because although, like in *Gotta Getta Job*, we write about topics which we feel strongly about, it doesn't mean we have to be doleful and totally pessimistic about the situation.'

'We're trying in that song to manufacture our own antibody to the degradation of enforced unemployment. It's really a matter of saying that you don't have to be depressing to make your audience aware of what is basically a horrible and soul-destroying mess.'

The Quads are a new generation of music — the ultimate result of the turmoil and upheaval in the music business which began with punk.

A major record company executive recently told me that 90 per cent of all the tapes it was receiving from hopeful bands were straight, old-fashioned, sickly-sweet pop songs.

The Quads also play pop songs. But their lyrics are razor sharp and have a steel edge which cuts through all the 'spoon in June' nonsense normally associated with the genre.

*The Quads can be heard in April on Radio One's Peter Powell show playing a live session recorded at the BBC's Pebble Mill studios in Birmingham.)*



## Women's TUC fails to provide the answers

**'THE lady says she's not for turning — but the lady has turned. The miners turned the lady!'**

Jane McKay, delegate from the transport workers union to the annual Women's TUC last month gave one of the most stirring contributions.

She pointed to the fight to save jobs at Linwoods and Lee Jeans. 'Our jobs are not for sale,' she declared, 'They're not ours to sell.'

Unemployment amongst women was upmost in delegates' minds but a fighting strategy was largely absent from the discussion.

In her opening remarks, Marie Patterson, chairperson of the Women's Advisory Committee of the TUC condemned the attempt by the Tories to drive women back into the home, to lay the blame for unemployment at their door.

The right to work, she said, belonged to every woman.

She advised the delegates to fight for the TUC's campaign for Economic and Social Advance and to join in activities like the TUC Week of Action, which this year involves a lobby of Parliament by 500 women employed in the school meals service.

Debate around the conference motions on the issue was a catalogue of woes as delegate after delegate got up to detail the latest statistics for their industry. One older delegate told the conference, 'Everything we fought for in the thirties has been lost.'

Meanwhile, strikers from Lee Jeans weren't

By Yvonne Taylor

even asked by the WAC to address the conference. They were left literally out in the cold, on the doorstep of Southport's Floral Hall, collecting tins in hand.

### Disgust

To the disgust of many delegates, similar treatment was not extended to include Southport's Tory Lord Mayor, and local employers' federation member, who was invited to speak to the conference like an old friend.

### Call

A motion on positive action, called for the TUC to initiate a campaign for legal measures and for improvements in collective

bargaining, to ensure the elimination of job segregation by sex.

### Lost

The motion was carried without opposition and with some delegates calling for the trade unions to 'put their own house in order' and take positive steps to include women in the decision making bodies of the trade union movement.

But then the majority of delegates also voted against a motion proposed by the NUJ which called upon the TUC to give automatic time on its conference agenda to five of the motions discussed at the Women's TUC.

One could be forgiven for wondering whether delegates really understood what positive action

was all about!

It was ironic that the only contentious motion and the only motion to be defeated at the conference, was one which could have transformed the Women's TUC from a 'talk shop' into a powerful force for women.

At the moment, far too many delegations to the Women's TUC are 'chosen' and not elected, discussion is dominated by the policies and interests of the union leaderships. Rank and file women in the union don't think the conference is important to the furthering of their demands.

All of this could be changed if prioritised motions from the conference were guaranteed a hearing at the TUC.

Women trade unionists should make sure that this proposal becomes policy in their union. There was certainly sufficient support for the idea amongst this year's delegates to warrant the optimistic thought that the days of the Women's TUC as the women's talking shop were numbered.

## 'I don't work for pin money'

**THE majority of workers who have been occupying the Royal Pride factory in Salford are women. They are fighting their boss Robert Nowak who has threatened to close the factory rather than give in to their demand for union recognition. Some of the women spoke to Socialist Challenge about the issues.**

*Why is the boss so prejudiced against women?*  
**VAL:** He says women are unreliable — he says we come in late or we have to finish early because of kids. It's not true. If some girls do have time off it's usually because of the conditions in the factory. I have arthritis.

Some say women shouldn't go out to work, but I have to go out to work to pay the bills and the mortgage. I mean, last year we managed a holiday — we hadn't had one for two years. We certainly won't get one this year.

I certainly don't work for pin money. My husband's on a two-day week at the moment anyway.

**SUSAN:** There's no way we can live on my husband's wage. I don't work for pin money. But apart from that I need to go out to work. I also think that even if I didn't, I should still have the choice.

I won't have anyone saying to me that I have to stay at home. We've all got a right — I've got as much right as a man.

We've had a couple of men crossing the picket lines and going into work and saying they have to, because they've got a family to support — as if we haven't.

They say it's alright for us because of our husbands. Well, I don't believe there's a man or a woman running a house. I think they both do it jointly. We do in our house.

My husband collects the children, hovers everything — same as me.

*Why are women leading the strike?*

**SUSAN:** I think women put up with more but then come to boiling point. And you think — I'm not going to let myself be ruled anymore, not by him, not by any men who think they rule. I mean it's the women in there who run his factory for him.

**VAL:** We've got the least to lose. The conditions in our job are so hard. We get half an hour lunch and no afternoon break. I think women will stick out for things — they're more resilient.

*Do you see similarities in what the boss is doing and the Tories?*

**VAL:** Oh yes, he goes round at election times and tells us to vote Tory. He complains that no one wants luxury furnishings anymore. We tell him it's because of this government.

This government has changed my views in lots of ways. My life has changed because of prices, unemployment etc — it's like Thatcher's come into my house and changed my whole life around.

It's a real let down that the first woman prime minister is doing so badly for women. But it's because she comes from a different class even though she's a woman.



# Lee Jeans 'somebody has to make a stand'

**THE majority of the workers at Lee Jeans in Greenock are young and female. As they head into the third month of a sit-in to save their jobs, Judith Arkwright spoke to some of the women about their experiences.**

Lee Jeans is the trade name of the VF Corporation, an American multi-national that is seeking to close its Greenock plant and move production to its Belgian and Irish factories.

**Linda:** We think it was all planned three years ago — it's nonsense to say as they do that if we keep our jobs that the lasses in Ireland will have to lose their's.

The boss wants to move to Ireland for profits. It's cheaper labour in Ireland and the company wouldn't pay rents and rates there.

We're asking for the books to be opened so that we can see if they're losing money or not.

If they can prove it then we'd give up for the sake of the Irish lasses. But they won't — they're hiding something.

**Ellen:** Yes, we believe the boss's shifting it all over to Ireland in order to get the subsidies — free rent, rates, cheap labour. The lasses there aren't as well organised.

**Agnes:** I would never find another job — most firms nowadays ask for experience. I've only just left school.

*Why has the union (the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers) taken so long to make the strike official?*

**Caroline:** I don't think they thought we'd stick it out. They said they had to ballot Ireland first which we don't agree with. We should decide and then explain to the Irish lasses.

*Why is everyone so determined?*

**Ellen:** Well you've got to fight for your jobs, otherwise this country is going to be a scrapheap.

**Linda:** Anyway it's good fun in here, we're having discos and parties — our morale won't go down.

**Caroline:** It's difficult for the married ones with kids, but most of us are single — we don't have any responsibilities.

The old ones could have got more redundancy money too, so they've given up more really. I've only given up £29.

**Ellen:** There was one girl and her husband went mad when she phoned up and said one night that she wouldn't be able to come home.

**Theresa:** Yes, my mother said when I phoned her up, that I had to come home. What do you mean you're on a sit-in, she said. But they all support us now.

The first night the only access was through one window — there were queues of relatives at the window with food.

**Linda:** I think everyone's got a right to work — I don't see why a girl should be told that she doesn't, especially today.

There's a lot of old people that work who aren't really capable of work. They should be asked to give their jobs up for the young ones.



Linda McGlaughlin

**Ellen:** I don't agree that old people should be asked to give up jobs. Some old people, when they stop work, that's when they just collapse. Everyone should have the right to work.

I'm older — I brought up my kids before I went out to work. Now I've got a job I feel more independent. I feel I can go and buy things I want.

**Caroline:** Women have just as much right to work as men.

**Theresa:** I think the support we're getting will be what will help us to win.

**Linda:** It's not just our jobs — there's the whole working class. If we win or if Talbots had fought, it would really boost a lot of people up.

Somebody has to make

a stand otherwise Britain's just going to be a big scrap-heap.

**Caroline:** I think a lot of people have been shocked by us women doing it, but we never dreamed we'd get the support we have.

*Messages of support and donations to the National Union of Tailors & Garment Workers, 534 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow.*

South East Regional Council  
Trades Union Congress

public meeting

**Women's  
Employment and the  
Peoples' March for  
Jobs**

Tuesday 7 April, 7pm  
House of Commons  
speakers

Jo Richardson MP  
Pat Turner GMWU



By Celia Pugh

'THE ROYAL wedding could be robbed of a few headlines in July.' So speculates a recent article in the Financial Times, predicting closure of another major steel plant and thousands more redundancies when British Steel Corporation boss, Ian MacGregor reports on his corporate plan in the summer.

Plans for resistance were laid on 21 March at a steel solidarity conference organised by the Scunthorpe Steel Action Group. "Fightback or die" was the message of the conference, attended by 100 steel activists and their supporters from

## Scunthorpe steel conference Fightback or die

South Wales, Sheffield, Corby and Scunthorpe.

Workshops discussed the problems of organising this fightback. Throughout the country steelworkers are being frightened into submission by threats of liquidation and the refusal of national steel leaders to organise industrial action.

The conference agreed to 'commit ourselves to a campaign in the plants and at every level of the steel unions for national industrial action against closures and redundancies'.

Shop floor bulletins, like those already produced by Llanwern, Port Talbot and Scunthorpe action groups are to be utilis-

ed to mobilise this opposition and a follow up conference was agreed to coordinate these efforts across the country.

Unity and solidarity were also taken up — workshops were held, on women's action for solidarity and the place of community action. A resolution from young people at the conference stressed the

importance of involving youth and apprentices in the fight for jobs.

Backing a resolution calling on the Triple Alliance 'to act now', Sam Thompson, Doncaster area agent, brought greetings from the Yorkshire Area of NUM.

Joe Whelan, general secretary of the Nottinghamshire NUM complained, 'The Tories are not there by the strength of their policies but by the weakness of the TUC. The TUC have to organise a campaign of at least a series of one day general strikes to get rid of the Tories.'

Unemployment was not the only issue steelworkers and miners should unite around. 'The most

crucial issue facing the whole of humanity is the fight against the war mongering of Thatcher and Reagan'.

Policies needed in the fightback were also discussed as well as solidarity for the workers occupying Plansee Tooling in Rotherham. Support for the defence of a steel union member, Peter Johnson, from Scunthorpe ISTC was also raised. He has been victimised by his union officials for campaigning in his workplace against the inaction of union leaders.

For further information about these attempts to mobilise for action in the steel industry, contact Scunthorpe action group, Penny Jackson, 6 Dale St, Scunthorpe, South Humberside.



REVOLUTION 16 now out. Just 10p. Contact REVOLUTION at PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

# THE HUNGER STRIKER WHO'S STANDING FOR PARLIAMENT

**BOBBY SANDS**, one of the hunger strikers in the H Blocks at Long Kesh jail, is to stand in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election which takes place on 9 April. Bernadette McAliskey has already announced that she will withdraw from the election and that 'it will be an honour' to sign Sands' election forms.

Bobby Sands' candidature will give an opportunity for the nationalist population in the constituency to unite around a single campaign.

His hunger strike, against the refusal of the authorities to give any concessions on the prisoners' demand for political status, started on 1 March. Below we publish an account of Bobby Sands' life and political work reprinted from a broadsheet produced by central London Troops Out Movement. It shows the real Bobby Sands — not a 'terrorist' or 'gunman', but a political militant fighting for justice.

BOBBY SANDS' birthday, 9 March, was the ninth day of his hunger strike. He was 27 years old. First arrested when he was 18, he has spent only six months in freedom in the last eight years.

While he had the chance, Bobby was a sportsman, keen reader and trade unionist. In the H Block he became a writer and poet. Above all he is a dedicated Republican socialist.

Bobby was born in Rathcoole, a predominantly Protestant district north of Belfast. He was keen on sports, winning a lot of medals, and ran for Protestant clubs. When he was 16 years old, he started work as an apprentice coach builder and joined the National Union of Vehicle Builders and the ATGWU.

The 'troubles' were to change his life. Late one night a dustbin was hurled through the Sands' front window and shots were fired into the house. They left, moving in 1972 to Twinbrook, a nationalist estate on the outskirts of West Belfast.

Soon, Bobby was threatened at gunpoint at work, and told he would be shot if he continued working there.

He joined the Republican Movement. In a remarkable semi-autobiographical article smuggled out of the H Blocks and published in Republican News he wrote, 'I had seen too many homes wrecked, fathers and sons arrested, neighbours hurt, friends murdered. Too much gas, shootings, and blood, most of it our own people's. At eighteen and a half I joined the Provos...'

'My life now centred round sleepless nights and standbys, dodging the Brits and calming nerves to go out on operations. But the people stood by us.'

The people not only opened the doors of their homes to us to lend a hand, but they opened their hearts to us. I learned that without the people we could not survive and I knew that I owed them everything.'

In October 1972 he was arrested. Four handguns were found in a house he was staying in and he was charged with possession. Although the guns were in poor condition he was sentenced in early 1973 to five years.

He spent the next three years in the cages of Long Kesh with the 'special category' prisoners. Here he taught himself Irish, which he was later to teach to other blanket men in the H Blocks.

## IRISH HUNGER STRIKER

# BOBBY SANDS

■ Age 27

■ Union: National Union of Vehicle Builders and ATGWU

■ 'On the blanket' since 1977

■ Began hunger strike on 1st March



# DON'T LET HIM DIE!

## SUPPORT THE PRISONERS 5 DEMANDS

1. The right for the men to wear their own clothes
2. The right to refrain from prison work
3. The right to free association
4. The right to organise recreational and educational facilities and receive one visit, letter and parcel per week
5. Restoration of full remission of sentences

Released in 1976, Bobby returned to his family in Twinbrook. Here he became a community activist, while remaining involved with the Republican Movement.

Danny Morrison, editor of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* and friend of Bobby's, says, 'Twinbrook is really punished by Lisburn Borough Council because it's a Catholic estate. They refuse to empty the bins and they won't provide amenities for it.'

Bobby was involved in the Tenants' Association trying to collect money for a youth club for the area. He is a very political, radical person.'

Six brief months later Bobby was arrested again. There had been a bomb attack on the Balmoral Fur-

niture Company at Dunmurry, on the western outskirts of Belfast, followed by gun battle in which two men were wounded.

Bobby was in a car near the scene with three other young men. The RUC captured them and found a revolver in the car.

The six arrested men were taken to Castlereagh and given a very brutal interrogation lasting six days. All later made complaints against the RUC. Bobby later smuggled a statement to the Association for Legal Justice:

'He was swinging his foot between my legs and kicking me in the privates... I fell twice, only to be hauled to my feet in the same position again. The same person was chopping me on the back of the

neck, the individual blows heavy and continuous, about 20 to 30 times; I am not sure as the other detective was punching me in the stomach and yelling questions. I don't even remember falling...' And so it went on.

Bobby volunteered to lead the new hunger strike. 'He would see it as a microcosm of the way the Brits are treating Ireland historically and presently', says Danny.

'He definitely believes that people will have to die to win political status. But he knows that if he dies, through his death what will happen is that there will be so much anger stored up in the Irish people that it will fuel the struggle for the next ten years.'

'But it will be really sad if it comes to that. We must not let this happen.'



# Railworkers counter Weighell's witch-hunt

## Lambeth teachers appeal suspensions

By Carol Regan  
Two weeks ago delegates to a special conference on salaries were told that a seven per cent wage rise had to be accepted because the membership were not prepared to fight.

In a period of massive attacks on education, when the NUT membership should be involved in a national campaign of action, the bureaucrats can only see fit to launch a witch hunt against the left in the union.

The appeals committee, which consists of executive members, will consider on 2 April the 'justness' of the 'sentences' given to the Lambeth officers for refusing to obey an instruction from the NUT's general secretary, Fred Jarvis. No one is in any doubt about the outcome of the appeal.

## Support

It is essential that the campaign in support of the suspended Lambeth officers is taken up by all sectors of the trade union and labour movement. Such support would show that teachers prepared to take action against Thatcher's policies would not be isolated. Rather it is the NUT leadership that is out of step.

This support is growing. Dennis Skinner MP, Battersea Labour Party, Southampton Trades Council and the executive committee of Enfield NUT have recently expressed their solidarity with the suspended Lambeth officers.

Teachers must ensure a large turnout to the lobby of the NUT executive on Saturday 4 April, at 8.20am, Hamilton House. A benefit to raise money for the campaign is being held on Friday 10 April at the City University, Northampton Square, EC1.

Socialist Challenge supporters in the NUT regret the tragic death of Jamie Currie in a road accident on 25 March. Jamie was a leading NUT activist in Lambeth and a member of the Gay Teachers group. Socialist Challenge sends condolences to his family and friends.

**SAVE jobs and schools CUT class size**

By Geoff Hensby, Secretary, Paddington No1 Branch, NUR

**SIDNEY Weighell, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, has publicly called for the expulsion of the Militant group from the Labour Party.**

'Getting rid of them must be carried out with the greatest urgency in order to make us a credible party with the electorate,' he said. 'We have to make sure these cuckoos don't push us out of the nest.'

The decisions of the Wembley conference has given a big boost of confidence to our membership and Weighell feels threatened by this. His opposition to the success of the left is not rejected among NUR members.

It's no wonder Weighell feels challenged by the moves to democratise the Labour Party. The general secretary stays in office for life — whatever the membership think of him. We have to begin to change all that.

The trade unions have now been given a major voice in the Labour Party, and that's correct. It's the result of many years of hard work inside the party.

But we mustn't be complacent. The right wing is plotting to reverse the Wembley decisions. Weighell's witch-hunt shows what they're up to.

The defence of the gains inside the Labour Party should particularly be taken up in the trade unions. More union branches must affiliate to the party and union members must be delegated to general committees.

We're encouraging this in the



Sidney Weighell, NUR general secretary for life

NUR, to maintain and push forward the decisions of Wembley.

My branch sent a letter of congratulations to 13 members of our national executive when they issued a statement dissociating themselves from attacks on Tony Benn by Sidney Weighell.

We held a meeting last week with Tony Benn to campaign for Labour in the forthcoming elections. By a strange co-incidence Weighell addressed an NUR district council meeting on the same topic three hours before.

John Cogger from the executive said at our meeting that it was a 'shame our beloved secretary is not here so he can stand up and be counted on some of the things he's said about Benn and the developments in the Labour Party.' The audience agreed with him.

Benn, unfortunately, avoided questions on the need for industrial action to kick out the Tories and defend jobs.

John Cogger said that what was needed was not another 14 May day of action, but a major strike to defend jobs and pay.

What we're seeing in the Labour Party is the development of policies which respond more to the needs of working people. Workers don't suddenly become Tory. In the last general election, they couldn't see the difference between Thatcher and Callaghan.

There is no fundamental difference between Owen and Hattersley — they just disagree on the tactics of how to push back the gains made by the left.

Michael Foot is now leading the campaign of the right. In the last Labour government he defended the steel closures, as Thatcher does today. He's not a left.

The Labour Party cannot ultimately solve the problems of this system, but the developments currently taking place within the party will play a key role in the movement towards a socialist society.

## Paddington No1 Branch NUR

Public Meeting  
**Defend our Railways: Build the Triple Alliance**

Wednesday 8 April 7.15pm  
Ruskin Hall, Church St (off Acton High St), Acton, London W3

Speakers: J Cogger NUR executive (London region); Neil Milligan (SE regional organiser, ASLEF); Vice-president Kent NUM; Port Talbot ISTC; LP speaker.

# Round one to the miners

By Ken Capstick  
Parkhill NUM, Yorkshire

**ALTHOUGH Margaret Thatcher undoubtedly side-stepped a confrontation with the miners over the issue of pit closures, it is now important that the miners' union should assess the kind of victory that has been achieved, and if in the long run we have saved pits and jobs.**

The threat of a battle with the miners — and possibly the whole of the trade union movement — forced Thatcher to abandon what had been a basic principle of her government: non-involvement in an industrial dispute between employers and employees.

Her government had to intervene and negotiate with the miners.

The miners have driven a coach and horses through the Coal Industry Act by extracting £200m for further investment in the industry.

As a morale booster for the working class, we have injured the pride of a government that needed a victory over the miners as an essential part of its general attack on the trade union movement and working class living standards.

But the miners must not be given the impression that our victory is total. The Tories and the right-wing leadership of the union have been ambiguous about the future of the industry.

There has been no guarantee about pit

closures or job losses. It seems that the Coal Board and the government intend to return to the time-honoured practice of closing one pit at a time and thereby reducing to a minimum any opposition from the miners.

The union's aim of extracting a clear undertaking that pits would not close except on grounds of proven seam exhaustion has not been achieved. The government has told the NUM that pits will still have to close in a pattern consistent with 'economic reality'.

This position was borne out recently when, following a visit to Wakefield Manor Colliery, one of the pits on the Coal Board's hit list, Arthur Scargill argued that they should be given the go-ahead to work reserve coal in the Beeston seam that would extend the life of the pit by a possible 10 years.

The Board's reply was that Manor would still close and that the Beeston coal would be worked from nearby Bullcliffe Colliery where it could be extracted more cheaply.

The Beeston coal is situated in what would normally be Manor Colliery's area of take. If Manor closes it will be on economic grounds alone — and not because of proven seam exhaustion.

The miners must be made aware of the dangers that still confront us so that we can be ready for the next round in the struggle. The Tories are still in office with more wounds to lick and more scores to settle.

One lesson that must

be learnt is that accepting low wages will not save jobs and pits.

The union's leadership should prepare the rank and file for a struggle over wages later this year.

They must galvanise the solidarity of the miners to achieve the rewards we deserve and then use that unity to protect our pits, our industry and ultimately our jobs.

Reprinted from: 'Wakefield Issues', Wakefield labour movement paper

## Tories vs miners — round 2

**THE miners are to be offered massive redundancy pay, double that given to the steel workers. A miner aged 50 with 30 years' service would get a lump sum of £17,900 plus a pension for life. A miner of 55 could qualify for £42,000.**

There is no pretence on the part of the government about why these payments are being offered. Thatcher stated: 'The payments would help close uneconomic pits and so reduce the price of coal to industry — to the benefit of the country.'

Ken Capstick, of Parkhill NUM in Yorkshire, says: 'It's obvious that Thatcher's objective is to close pits and divide the miners' union.'

'It will certainly make round two of our fight to keep jobs harder.'

'It's especially important to explain to members why the Tories are doing this and to emphasise that no miner has the right to sell a job when there are young people who have never had a chance to work.'

## Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

**ABERDEEN:** SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring Colin, 574060.

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

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

**BRADFORD:** SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

**BRENT:** SC supporters sell at Willesden Junction every Thur at 4.30pm.

**BRIGHTON:** SC sales regularly every Sat outside Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.

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

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

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

**CHESTERFIELD:** SC supporters sell outside Boots, Marketplace, Saturdays 11.30am-12.30pm.

**COVENTRY:** SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

**DUNDEE:** SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.

**EALING:** SC supporters sell every Thursday, Ealing Broadway tube, 4.30-5.30pm.

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

**ENFIELD:** SC available from Nelsons Newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

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

**HACKNEY:** supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market E8.

**HAMILTON:** SC on sale 8-11 every Sat, outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton.

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

**HILLINGDON:** SC supporters sell every Friday, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; every Saturday 10.30-12.00 outside Woolworths, Uxbridge shopping centre.

**HUDDERSFIELD:** SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.

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

**LAMBETH:** SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.

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

**NEWCASTLE:** SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. For more info ring Phil or Pete on Newcastle 737507.

**NEWHAM:** SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.

**NEWPORT:** every Sat in town centre 11-12.30.

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

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

**PADDINGTON:** supporters sell at Portobello Rd market every Sat at 12 noon.

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

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

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

**TEESSIDE:** SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newbrough, Linthorpe Road, and Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.

**WEMBLEY:** SC sales Fri 6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

**WOLVERHAMPTON:** SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; an Saturday near Beatles town centre from 11am-2pm.

Is your town or city mentioned above? If not, send in details to this sales column.

## SC Events

**ROCK** against Giscard! Any readers interested in going to the LCR Fête in Paris on the weekend of 11/12 April write for details to SCD (Fête), PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

**CAUCUS** for all Socialist Challenge supporters involved in London regional CND activity, Thursday 2 April National Centre 7.30pm.

## International Marxist Group notices

**NATIONAL LESBIAN/GAY** Fraction: 2 May National centre 11 am. All cdes welcome even if not active around this question at the minute. Main item will be perspectives document which involves orientation to labour and womens movement. Pooled fare. Childcare can be provided if there is advance notice, and also accommodation. Ring Jamie on 01-63-2249.

**INTERNATIONAL** Irish fraction London 4 April. IMG & Revo branches invited to send representatives. Followed by social for Socialist Republic. Phone Penny 01-359 8371 for details.

## Revolution Youth notices

**MEMBERSHIP CARDS:** Cards now available for members of Revolution Youth. All branches should place orders with national office.

**YCND** or other anti-Cruise work. UCL Students Union, Gower St, nr Euston Station, From 11am.

**MISSILES:** national fraction Sun 5 April. All NY members involved in

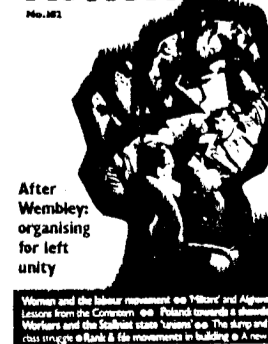
## What's Left

**RATES** for What's Left. 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat, prior to publication. Payment in advance.

**Exclusive John Lennon poster!** Now in tasteless dayglo — please specify green or red paper. Just £1. Bulk orders (over 5) are post free, otherwise, send 30p p&p. Orders and money to: The Other Printshop, c/o Po Box 50, London N1 2XP.

**Grand Spring Raffle.** Tickets are 50p per book (5 chances) or 10p each. If you want your counterfoils (not necessary as proof of purchase should you win), enclose stamped sae or add 15p for p&p. Cheques/postal orders payable to Hackney Book Group, 24 St Agnes Close, London E9. Draw on 2 May.

## WORKERS' ACTION



Workers and the labour movement on 11th and 12th April. Lessons from the Congress. 60 Poland towards a socialist Workers and the Socialist states. Warsaw. The stamp and the struggle for Bank & Co movements in building a new...

**Workers' Action** now out in magazine format 62p including postage from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD. Subscriptions: £3 for five issues, £5 for ten.



# Socialist Challenge

## Birmingham firebomb attack



# Police and media cover up right wing connection

LAST Friday, the Birmingham bookshop of the Socialist Workers Party was gutted by fire when a man drove his car in front of the doorway, soaked the car in petrol, set fire to it, and threw an ignited five gallon drum of petrol into the shop door.

The body of Heather Bridge was later found in the car boot.

I was delivering Socialist Challenge to the bookshop on Friday afternoon. At about 4.15pm seven of us in the shop heard the explosion as the petrol bomb was thrown.

One of the SWP members attempted to push the door open, but it was blocked by the car used in the attack, which we could see was ablaze.

### Security

I tried to ring the fire brigade but couldn't get through. Then the front window exploded, setting fire to the books in the shop. One of the SWP members tried to use the fire extinguisher, but it was useless — the petrol had taken hold.

The shop rapidly filled with smoke. We ran upstairs and managed to get out of a first floor window onto an adjoining roof.

I shouted to people from the roof to get the police and the fire brigade. While I managed to scramble down a 20 foot wall, the others were rescued by the fire brigade.

The fire-bombing was a deliberate attempt to kill



The burned-out car

us. The car was stationed in such a position as to block our means of escape.

When I was interviewed by BBC television and radio I made the point — which they cut out — that this was part of a series of

STUART RICHARDSON was in the bookshop at the time of the attack and told Socialist Challenge what happened.

attacks and provocations by fascists in the past few weeks in this area.

First an Asian, Karra-ment Hussein, was shot through the neck with a cross bow. Last Thursday a member of the SWP had a

brick thrown through his window.

I think it's time the labour and black movements face up to the need for organised self-defence from these right wing thugs. The violence won't go away.

# Escalation needed!

By Phil Dexter (CPSA Newcastle)

THE government last Monday began suspending tax officials involved in industrial action in pursuit of the civil service unions' claim for a fifteen per cent pay award.

Collectors in charge were suspended on

Monday, together with more senior officials who refused to hand on suspension notices. Unfortunately, the only action so far taken by the Inland Revenue Staff Federation (IRSF) has been to officially place those suspended on strike.

The civil service unions' day of action on Wednesday, 1 April, is in pursuit of their continuing struggle for a 15 per cent pay award. Wednesday was the day by which the agreement between the government and the civil service unions was due to have been signed.

### Action

Unfortunately the Council of Civil Services Unions (CCSU) left it to individual unions to determine what they want to do on that day — no clear lead was given.

This lack of a clear lead has been used by the Inland Revenue Staff Federation to back out of any definite action — they are urging their members merely to donate half a day's pay to union funds. This backing down from action has been taken under the threat of mass suspensions of inland revenue staff who were taking industrial action.

1 April will undoubtedly be a watershed in the fight for the civil servants claim. If action is allowed to peter out, then we can be sure that the fight will go down to rapid defeat.

### Effect

The best way for the CCSU to escalate action would be to continually hit the airports and ports, which would have an immense effect on the economy. Hitting these sectors also avoids any action which would harm social security or unemployment benefit claimants.

But apart from hitting the ports and airports, a much greater degree of involvement of the whole membership is needed. Now is the time for the struggle to be escalated, if it is not to end in defeat.

## Bumper week for Fund Drive

THE last fortnight has been a great one for our fund drive, bringing in £1070.40p including £372 from our Brent supporters alone. But with only two months to go we're a long way from meeting our targets.

Local supporters have only raised £3372 of their £20,000 target. This leaves us needing £2000 a week to raise from now until the end of the fund drive.

Our thanks this week to:	
RA Hurcombe	£1.00
Port Talbot supporters	21.00
Tim Greenwood	2.00
A Lockhart	60.00
Anon	100.00
York	5.00
Manchester	8.80
Leeds	10.00
Brent	372.00
Bristol	14.60
Nottingham	54.00
Lambeth	100.00
Manchester	25.00
Outer West London	200.00
Huddersfield	5.00
Bolton	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1070.40</b>
<b>Cumulative total</b>	<b>£17839.28</b>

## National estate sales day 2 May!

By Nick Robin

SOCIALIST Challenge may not yet be the mass circulation daily we'd like it to be. But according to our local Socialist Challenge organisers who met two weeks ago it's headed in the right direction.

Reports from across the country suggest that our sales drive to win at least 500 new readers for the paper by May will be successful.

To reach this target, our supporters have organised a special sales day for 2 May, to coincide with the run-up to the local elections. Our message will be that the local elections are a big opportunity to give a strategic boot to the Tories — hit them in the locals!

Our message for the campaign — Vote Labour and fight for socialist policies. We want hundreds of our supporters to go out to the council estates on 2 May. Please send us your local targets and a list of estates and times where the paper will be sold.

At the meeting of Socialist Challenge organisers it was agreed that im-

provements have been made in every department of the paper.

Pete from Manchester argued: 'We have made the paper more attractive to workers fighting back against the hated Tory government and especially to militants in the Labour Party and the anti-missiles movement.'

Another supporter, Jean from London, pointed out: 'The way Socialist Challenge built up to the labour movement missiles conference shows exactly how a socialist newspaper should be used — as an organiser.'

Our next meeting will discuss the results of the sales day and writing for the paper — how to make more of you, the eyes and ears of the paper. Drop us a line to let us know how the paper can be improved!