

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

Hunger striker  
stands for  
Parliament  
BACK PAGE

## POLISH BUREAUCRATS

## FIGHT FOR LIFE

Monday March 30.

With 10,000 Warsaw Pact troops conducting ostentatious moves in the south of the country and on the Baltic coast; with an increasingly menacing barrage of propaganda from Stalinist regimes in Moscow and Eastern Europe; and with a runaway economic crisis driving them steadily further into debt, the Polish Stalinist regime is being forced into an all-out confrontation with the massed strength of the working class.

Since the shipyard workers of Gdansk triggered a nationwide upsurge of working class militancy last summer an almost continuous tide of struggle has eroded the very fabric of police dictatorship upon which the

Warsaw bureaucrats depend for the preservation of their political power and material privileges.

Time and again they have retreated in the face of strikes or threatened strike action. The results have been devastating.

\*Thousands of Stalinist bureaucrats have been purged from well-paid posts in the government, party and the state machinery—often as a result of specific demands by strikers for their removal.

\*Those who retain their jobs have come under tight scrutiny from workers angry at their privileged pay and conditions, their luxurious holiday homes, and special shops.

\*The rigid censorship of the media and repression of political opposition has broken down: the government has even been forced to agree to the publication of a weekly paper by Solidarity.

\*Strikes have forced the



Walesa in negotiations last August

release of political dissidents from police custody: a Solidarity defence guard has been established to protect leading members of the reformist KOR grouping from arrest.

\*Official monuments have been erected to the victims of previous police violence.

\*Strikes have forced the dismissal of plant managers and even begun to challenge basic management decisions—such as the purchase of inferior Rumanian log-cutting machinery.

\*Working hours have been cut back—running directly counter to bureaucratic attempts to streamline the economy at the expense of thousands of jobs.

\*The radicalisation embodied in the emergence of Solidarity as a 10-million-strong union has flowed over into the Polish Communist Party—a third of whose three million members are also in Solidarity. There are insistent demands that the Communist Party reconvene its congress and hold new leadership elections—which could only result in the wholesale removal of diehard Stalinist bureaucrats.

In every respect the concessions they have made in the last nine months have weakened the Polish regime while increasing the self-confidence and militancy of the working class, raising its political consciousness and establishing the first tentative moves towards

workers' control of the hitherto bureaucratically controlled economy.

So powerful and uninterrupted has been the forward movement of the Polish workers that the Kania regime has been unable to find any secure means of drawing Lech Walesa and the Solidarity leadership into the bureaucratic machinery.

### Eruption

At each point that Walesa has looked set firmly against strike action there has been a fresh eruption of struggle that has forced him and other Solidarity leaders back onto the offensive.

Last Friday's 4-hour general strike was testimony to the unparalleled strength of the movement that has now developed, and therefore the scale of the challenge to the bureaucracy.

The strike was total: the only exceptions were services judged to be essential by the Solidarity leadership.

If the Polish Stalinists do not soon take a stand they face an irreversible weakening of the very fabric of bureaucratic dictatorship.

And breathing over their shoulders in this crucial test of determination are the Kremlin leaders and their fellow Stalinist bureaucrats all over Eastern Europe.

They know only too well that if the Polish bureaucracy finally loses its grip, then the tide of struggle will flow rapidly beyond the Polish borders to challenge the power and privileges of every Stalinist bureaucrat.

This message was spelt out to Polish party chief Kania in no uncertain terms by Brezhnev at the recent Soviet party congress.

And since that point Kania has shifted somewhat from his previous conciliationist course. Leading KOR dissident Jacek Kuron has been arrested and charged; Polish party leaders have gone onto a political offensive against Solidarity and its demands; and, in what appears very much like a deliberate provocation, Solidarity and peasant leaders were beaten up by police in Bydgoszcz after being evicted from a council meeting.

### Endorsed

As protests mounted against this police violence, the Politburo went out of its way to endorse the police action. The Solidarity leadership was put on the spot—and, under mass pressure, called the warning strike for Friday.

The union's three demands are far less wide-reaching than the charter of economic and political demands which were

conceded late last summer in a last ditch bid to prevent the Gdansk strike wave becoming an all-out general strike.

They are seeking the punishment of the officials responsible for the beating; an amnesty for political dissidents; and the recognition of an independent farmers' union.

But instead of conceding even part of these demands the Politburo and the Central Committee reaffirmed its tough stance yesterday as the Tuesday strike deadline drew closer.

### Martial law

It is rumoured that the bureaucracy has drawn up plans to sit out a 30-day General Strike, using martial law restrictions against mass mobilisations on the streets.

With food stocks in Poland reportedly as low as 12 days' supply, this could mean that the Warsaw bureaucrats are contemplating an attempt to literally starve Solidarity back to work.

This is the only way that they could hope to create the conditions to reimpose rigid police dictatorship and the authority of the party bureaucracy.

In this context, Soviet troops already in Poland could be used alongside Polish troops

Continued back page



Solidarity rally

# US MINERS ANSWER REAGAN

Reprinted from Labor News, paper of the Socialist League (DC) USA.

Washington, March 9: More than 10,000 miners converged on Washington D.C. to give Reagan a message: "We will strike as long as necessary to protect our black lung benefits," said one miner from Ohio, expressing the sentiment of the thousands of miners and other workers from throughout the country.

The rally and two day strike was called after Reagan's political advisor Brady declared that 88% of the miners on black lung benefits are really not entitled to them.

This slander against the tens

of thousands of miners and the threat by Reagan to gut the programme forced United Mine Workers President to call a mass rally in front of the UMWA hall and lead a march on the White House.

The rally, which brought miners from as far away as Kentucky and Illinois, was addressed by Church along with West Virginia Governor Jay Rockefeller and many trade union leaders.

The attempt by Church to include Rockefeller in the rally was an insult to every miner, since Rockefeller, along with the rest of the Democrats, is presently supporting the major budget cutting now going on in the Congress.

Also speaking at the rally was AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland. Kirkland won cheers from the miners by reporting that they had support from throughout the labour movement.

"Your brothers and sisters of the AFL-CIO are behind you all the way. This is an important one, but there will be other fights. Any man who would take benefits from miners would stop at nothing."

Kirkland, however, failed to call any rally or strike by the AFL-CIO to back up his words of support.

Also attending the rally were workers from other Washington area unions, including the Seafarers International Union, hos-

pital workers and transit workers.

Labor News interviewed many of the miners as they marched and rallied and received a vivid view of their feelings.

## Solidarity

Jack Justice, a miner in his early thirties from Mecklen County, West Virginia, thought "the other unions should join in solidarity."

Jim Miller, another miner from Mecklen County, said "I'm not concerned about myself, but my family when I die. My mother gets a black lung cheque from the death of my father and she would not be able to live without that cheque. How does Reagan know that 88% of the miners don't have black lung; he's never been down a mine in his life."

Miller's work mate, Craig (Big Foot) Corder warned that the companies "are going to try to scare the workers by saying that the black lung benefits will raise the price of coal and put miners out of work. Reagan has complete disregard for the workers and little people of this country."

Audley Cecil said "Most miners work till they die. They

don't even have a chance to pick up their benefits but their families get it and Reagan would end that."

Another miner said that they were striking and rallying for workers throughout the country. "We're doing this for everybody that will be affected by budget cuts. The black lung benefits cutback would also affect workers with asbestos problems. This is a human concern. An injury to one is an injury to all."

Along with placards and banners against the black lung budget cuts were banners against US intervention in El Salvador.

## El Salvador

The fact that the Reagan government's war plans in El Salvador now can be connected to the attack on American workers is extremely important and points the way to a political campaign against the Reagan government and the two capitalist parties.

This first step by the miners should be matched by the entire trade union movement with national strike action and a rally of millions in Washington.

Every worker and poor person will be directly hit by

the Reagan programme. Following on the forced wage cuts on the Chrysler workers, the government is now moving to blackmail railroad workers whose contract expires on April 1.

Reagan is proposing to shut down Conrail with the loss of 26,000 railroad jobs unless the unions make major concessions on wages.

At the same time, in the airline industry, the Carter and Reagan government, using deregulation, are seeking to force wage cuts down the throats of the airline workers.

Both Continental and PSA airlines used scab labour to break the latest strikes and recently the Continental workers voted to take a 10% wage cut.

The US labour movement has the power to completely paralyse the Reagan government if it mobilises its resources.

The miners, joined by the railroad workers, airline workers, teachers and federal government workers, can do to Reagan what the Welsh miners recently accomplished in Britain against Thatcher.

It is clear that the same decisive action is necessary today if Reagan is to be stopped.

# More repression in Euskadi

Spain still does not have a military dictatorship. But it was certainly the threat of another military coup—supported this time by all the top generals which has prompted the feeble government of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo to take another step to the right.

After the killing by ETA of another senior military officer in Pamplona, the government was, it seems, given an ultimatum by the army chiefs of staff.

As a result Calvo Sotelo has immensely increased the military role in Euskadi (the Basque country).

He has sent the navy to patrol off the Basque coast. And he has sent sections of the army to patrol the French border to prevent the escape of ETA terrorists.

The military have also been given a bigger role within the repressive apparatus of the state.

At the same time the police have seized and are holding in prison at least 50 leading radical Basque nationalists including members of the Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity) coalition who are elected municipal councillors.

All this has been done with scarcely a murmur (except of implied support) from the leaders of the main workers' parties and so far also very little reaction from the working masses or nationalist parties in Euskadi.

These new repressive measures and increased militarisation of Euskadi—and the agreement to slow down the steps towards greater autonomy in the regions—may have pacified the power-hunger of the military for a time.

## Crisis

But the Basque people have shown for years their hatred of Francoist repression and their willingness to struggle against it.

It was the outburst of resistance provoked by the trial of Basque militants in Burgos at the beginning of the 1970s which set off the wave of opposition which projected Francoism into a massive crisis of political authority.

Throughout the 1970s it was the campaign for the release of Basque political prisoners which led to huge and threatening mobilisations against the repression.

There are still Basque nationalist prisoners and only a week before the recent coup attempt Euskadi saw its biggest general strike and street demonstration ever in protest against the police murder of Jose Arregui, an ETA suspect.

## Social conflict

It is hardly possible that Madrid's new attacks on Basque national rights can pacify the army without fomenting even more determined resistance from one of the most highly politically conscious working classes in Europe.

So for the Calvo Sotelo government the price of not handing over political power to the generals is to take action to stoke up even further the fires of social conflict.

And the next stage of this process can only be the declaration of a state of emergency and martial law in Euskadi.

The hopeless weakness of the "democratic" bourgeoisie and the criminal failure of the CP and Socialist leaders to do anything but hide behind the "democratic" King, has not avoided a military coup; it is simply leading to military coup by stages.



Angry US miners

# Gary Thornton: comrade and class fighter

On Thursday March 25, at 6.00 in the morning, Comrade Gary Thornton, chairman of the Leicester District Branch of the Workers Socialist League, died. He was 19.

His death, two days before the Third Annual Conference of the Socialist Youth League, was a massive blow to all those who knew him and in particular, to those who had worked with him for a socialist future.

Gary came into politics whilst still at school. From involvement in the fight to keep the fascists off the streets of Leicester, he moved on to an understanding of the need to overthrow the whole capitalist system through a workers' revolution.

Such a step demanded the difficult choice for any youth of abandoning the round of parties and pubs for the hard world of political life. Gary made that choice without hesitation and committed himself to the struggle for a Trotskyist party.

He became a founder member of the Socialist Youth



Gary Thornton

League in Leicester, building it together with his friends and comrades, into a significant force amongst youth. At school he organised the students into the National Union of School Students, organised a strike against the cuts and was elected to the NUSS National Committee.

In October 1979 Gary joined the Workers Socialist League, becoming an Area Committee member eight months later.

Quiet and unassuming, he was loved and respected by all those comrades who worked with him for his courage, honesty and determination.

Gary never flinched from facing problems. He was always in the front line in the fight to smash fascism regardless of the dangers. Always there when the time came to stand up and be counted.

Above all he believed that what was needed was a mass revolutionary movement with real roots in the working class. To that end he argued unceasingly the need to turn out to new layers of youth, women workers and all those brought into struggle against the bosses.

At the time of his death he was preparing to stand for election as a shop steward in the National Union of Railwaymen, and was enthusiastic about the new opportunities his work in the unions gave him.

His death is a blow that we in the movement will come to terms with only slowly. Certainly he will never be forgotten.

In tribute to his memory, the Socialist Youth League have launched a special fund to

produce a commemorative pamphlet on 'The Fight Against Racism and Fascism', a struggle that was particularly dear to Gary's heart.

## Sympathy

To his parents, Alan and Peggy, we in the WSL extend our deepest sympathy in their loss. To his companion, Bethan and her daughter Melissa we offer not only our sincere sympathy but our support as a comrade and a class fighter.

Gary died a Trotskyist. We salute his memory.

\*The memorial fund, launched at the SYL 3rd Annual Conference has so far raised £100, including donations from Barricade and Revolution Youth who were present at the conference as observers. If any Socialist Press readers would like to contribute, donations should be sent to the SYL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX, marked for the Gary Thornton Memorial Fund.

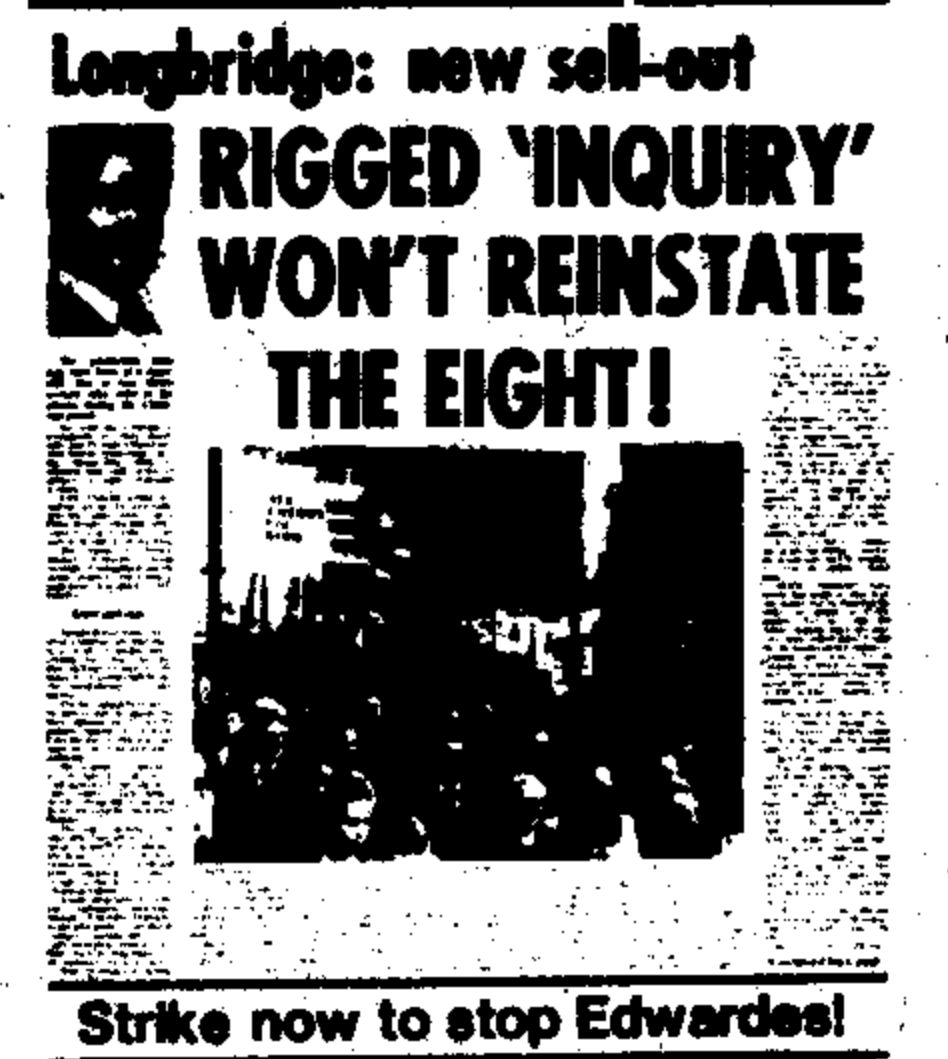
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Strike now to stop Edwardes!

## DEMONSTRATION

US Hands off El Salvador!  
Saturday 4 April  
Assemble 2.00 pm.  
The Plain, Oxford

followed by Rally  
Evening social  
Called by Oxford  
Latin America  
Committee

# TURKEY: THE SAVAGE FACE OF MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

We reprint below our summary of a lengthy interview with a member of the Turkish group KURTULUS (Liberation), on a recent visit to Britain.

How do you characterise the present regime in Turkey?

It is necessary first to outline the pre-coup period.

In Turkey, unlike bourgeois 'democratic' republics in which the highest body is Parliament, the state was overseen by the National Security Committee—consisting of the military chiefs and senior government ministers with executive and legislative powers.

The organs of the state relating to economic affairs have always been controlled by the monopoly capitalists (and also by landowners but less effectively) and their bureaucrats.

A good example of these bureaucrats is Turgot Ozal. He was formally head of the economic affairs council, general co-ordinator in Demirel's government (though not an MP), director of the Metal Industry Employers' Union and a member of the Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen.

Today he is head of the 'industrial and technological council' of General Evren's junta and a state minister.

The power bloc of the ruling classes is an alliance of the monopoly capitalists and the major semi-feudal and capitalist landowners.

Naturally the monopoly capitalists are the dominant group.

The oligarchic character of the state is determined primarily by the nature of the bloc and its relations with the labouring masses and also other fractions of the bourgeois class (middle strata).

The process which prepared the September 12 coup arose from the domination of Turkish industry by the monopolies and finance capital.

From 1973 to 1980 the monopoly capitalists overcame their crisis firstly through the RPP and then the Justice Party, using martial law and prohibition of strikes, forcing the work-



Turkish troops

ing class to work for relatively low wages (from 1966 to 1980 the decline in real wages was almost 60%).

The labouring masses saw through reformist illusions in the RPP government, especially

its inconsistent policy towards fascism.

Ecevit's line of 'we are against the left as well as the right' gave way to the rapid expansion of fascist terror organisations.

maras.

This was welcomed by the fascists whose tactics had been to force the government to declare martial law and then use the army—in which the fascists are extensively organised—against socialists and democrats.

The frustration of the reformists' hopes, the inability of the weak socialist movement to pose a concrete alternative and fascist attacks created a good atmosphere for a coup.

Internationally following the Iranian revolution and uprising of the Kurdish people, NATO wanted stable relations with their dependents in the Near East, and a strong government in Turkey.

The attitude of the middle class was one of the most important elements in the pre-coup situation.

If the struggle of the labouring masses is not able to present them with an alternative to their crisis, they can be drawn behind counter-revolutionary ideologies, either fascism or the official ideology of the Turkish bourgeoisie (e.g. Kemalism).

The use of this Kemalist ideology by the military leaders

became a key factor for gaining the consent of the masses.

The junta's attitude towards the fascist terrorists has to be seen in this context; they must give the impression that the junta is a supra-class institution.

The weakness of the socialist organisations, their inability to develop strong relations with the masses and the weakness of the revolutionary tradition on the one hand and the weakness of the fascist organisation and its immaturity to handle and direct the state, make military dictatorship the most appropriate solution.

In addition the stabilisation period of fascist dictatorship could create even more turbulence in society and the economy.

Consequently the new form of the state could only be military dictatorship.

What form does the repression take?

The junta is careful about how it implements its policies; it balances between coercion and consent. In front of the masses it has a paternalist and 'above classes' appearance, but at the same time it shows it has the bayonet under its coat.

The abolition of parliament and political parties appeared for the masses an end to the impasse of Republican Peoples Party and Justice Party rule. This is true, but only from the standpoint of monopoly capital.

In contrast to this appearance of general tolerance it takes a very sharp, irreconcilable attitude to petty bourgeois left groupings and fascist terrorists who had been alienated from popular support.

This was shown by the junta's move to reintroduce hangings of both left and right.

Despite this, the attack on the left cannot be equated to the treatment of the fascist party, and its supplementary organisations; there is a qualitative difference.

The fascist movement has been taken under control and its ultra-right wings have been clipped, but the repression against the left is aimed at its physical annihilation and liquidation.

The best example of this is the 'pair of horns' operation, which was aimed at hunting down and wiping out these groups.

During curfews, bodies have been found in rivers and on wasteland. Soldiers were provided with lists of names by fascist informers and the killings carried out in that way.

The army tried to organise general searches of city areas but were forced to drop this. Still there are continuous searches in towns and on travel between them.

In Kurdistan this is more vicious. Machine gun towers have been built surrounding some towns. The Kurdish villages are being terrorised.

The junta makes big propaganda against the organisations being suppressed, using TV, etc., and getting members of groups to make public confessions.

One other practice of the dictatorship has been to attempt to liquidate trade union activities. For example, collective bargaining has been linked to an arbitration committee of employers, technocrats, the state and workers' representatives from Turk-Is.

Every sphere of society is attempted to be controlled,

with military appointments being made to all important institutions. This shows the generals are planning to stay for a prolonged period. Turgot Ozal, the junta's economic expert, has introduced a five year programme.

What about the situation in the factories?

It is impossible to answer accurately. Isolated accounts are not adequate in establishing the exact situation. However it seems the socialists have been isolated in large numbers from the factories.

The junta approaches the working class very cautiously and makes repeated promises. Even General Evren has addressed workers in the southern industrial towns of Adana and Mersin.

The junta is scared of the working class. Immediately after the coup we found out that in 50 factories the workers spontaneously introduced go-slows as a class reaction.

The government censored all news on this. When the action was over they moved against the shop stewards, members of DISK, arrested and tortured them.

They successfully separated the DISK leadership from the working class.

How are political prisoners treated?

The method used against communist prisoners is not their physical liquidation but to morally and ideologically systematically break their spirit.

They force revolutionaries to sing the national anthem, to make friends with fascists, into a position where they lose their self-respect.

Beatings up and tortures have been successfully used against some of the younger prisoners but not those with experience.

Four of our friends were put into solitary confinement, beaten up regularly every day and hospitalised.

The authorities were frightened they would die and were forced to stop. The junta claims the youth have been corrupted by 'foreign' ideologies and need to be re-educated in Kemalism, so there are continuous lectures and classes on this in the prisons.

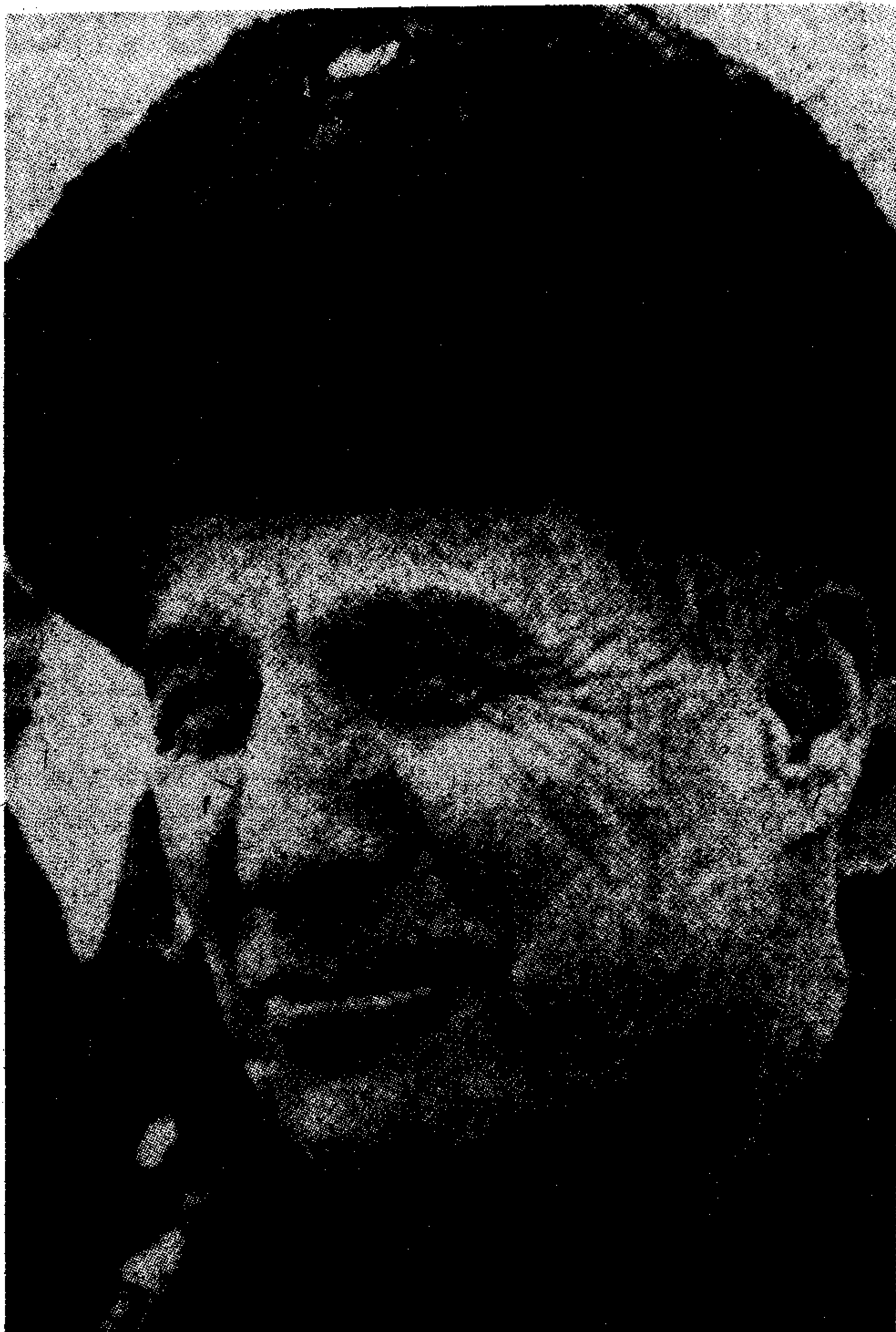
Of course, torture has been widespread in Turkey for years but the junta has introduced new methods.

One of them is for married or engaged couples to be stripped and interrogated together and both male and female to be raped during this ordeal.

Those prisoners who refuse to speak are tried in phoney courts where they are tried, sentenced to death and even brought to the scaffold where the rope breaks at the last moment.

Another new method is to take such prisoners with others who pretend to be in the same position to waste ground where the false prisoner is 'shot' with blank bullets and the real prisoner made to talk under fear of the same treatment.

Today the relations from outside with those who are imprisoned is extremely weak and it is not possible to get the full picture.



General Evren

## TURKEY SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign has just produced its first 'Information Bulletin, on Turkey for the Labour and Trade Union Movement'.

It is available free of charge from the TSC, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

# BACK DUNDEE COUNCIL STAND AGAINST ZIONISM!

## OPEN LETTER

Bradford  
25 March 1981

Dear Comrades,

Over the past months Dundee has captured the press headlines as a result of the struggle carried out by Labour MP Ernie Ross, George Galloway, the Scottish Labour Party chairman, and local trade unionists on behalf of the dispossessed Palestinian people.

Last November a decision was taken on the Dundee Council to twin the town with Nablus in the West Bank, a town renowned for being a centre of Palestinian resistance to Zionist occupation.

Mr Bassam Shaqa, the Arab Mayor of Nablus, who recently lost his legs as the result of a Zionist car bomb attack, visited Dundee and presented the City with the flag of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the legitimate symbol of the Palestinian people.

Since the visit the Palestinian flag has flown over the Council chamber. This initiative has proved a powerful focus for the labour movement to raise the plight of the Palestinians in Britain.

Israel, as a country, relies totally upon imperialism for its economic existence and defensive capacity. Imperialist financial and military aid puts the backbone into Zionism and keeps afloat a colonial state despite over 130% inflation and massive defence budgets.

For many decades, Zionism, a world movement, has been effective in spreading lies about

its history and intentions in the Middle East.

Such lies have taken firm root in the organised British labour movement through organisations such as Poale Zion affiliated to and active in the British Labour Party. Leading Labour politicians such as Harold Wilson and Tony Benn have assisted the Zionists by, in some cases, giving left credentials to a racist, colonialist movement.

Labour Party members will remember Wilson for his support for the US government in Vietnam but politicians like Tony Benn have built left reputations often on the basis of verbal support for liberation movements and against repressive regimes such as the Pinochet junta in Chile.

The ability of the Zionists to win the more progressive wing of the Labour Party is a testament to the sophistication and cunning of their misrepresentations.

The most disgraceful argument from their bag of deception is the charge that to be anti-Zionist is to be anti-semitic. The stand taken by the Labour Party in Dundee has forced this argument onto the streets.

On Sunday March 22 four hundred supporters of the Zionist Board of Deputies of British Jews held a protest rally in Dundee to demand the removal of the Palestinian flag.

They also blamed anti-semitic slogans painted on synagogue walls in Dundee upon the twinning with Nablus—making

the disgraceful charge that Palestinians are responsible for stoking anti-semitism.

The real disgrace was that the demonstration was led by Greville Janner, a Labour MP.

Janner argued, "the desecration of the synagogue is connected with this (the flying of the flag) because when you twin a city with an organisation of terror and hang up its flag you are creating a climate of hatred."

Clearly anti-semitic filth daubed on synagogue walls is the work of local fascists, and as such has been tirelessly attacked and disowned by the PLO, who have launched an international press campaign against the recent resurgence of anti-semitic activity throughout Europe.

We challenge Janner to deny that the PLO has consistently attacked anti-semitism in the West. It is of course difficult to understand how anyone could equate the interests of fascist anti-semites with those of the PLO.

One wishes to drive Jews to Israel—whilst the other is opposed to increased Jewish immigration.

Janner displays a gymnastic ability so often found in the Zionist camp.

The purpose of this letter is to strongly urge that all socialists take this opportunity to raise the struggle of the Palestinians in their Labour Party wards, trades councils, and trade union branches.

The Zionist movement in Britain will turn all its attention to Dundee in an attempt to stamp out a focal point for the Palestinian resistance in this country.

The principled stand taken by the Dundee Trade Union Friends of Palestine and the Labour group must be defended and the gain extended.

The Labour Party has turned to the left as a result of a massive influx of new members and a grass roots desire for

socialist policies.

This left turn must be reflected in the policies of the Party against imperialist domination and aggression. Dundee's pro-Palestinian campaign led to the intervention of Alex Kitson at the annual conference of the Scottish Labour Party calling for the dropping of a Dundee resolution recognising the PLO as the sole representatives of the Palestinian people.

Kitson will be leading a Labour Party delegation to Israel shortly!

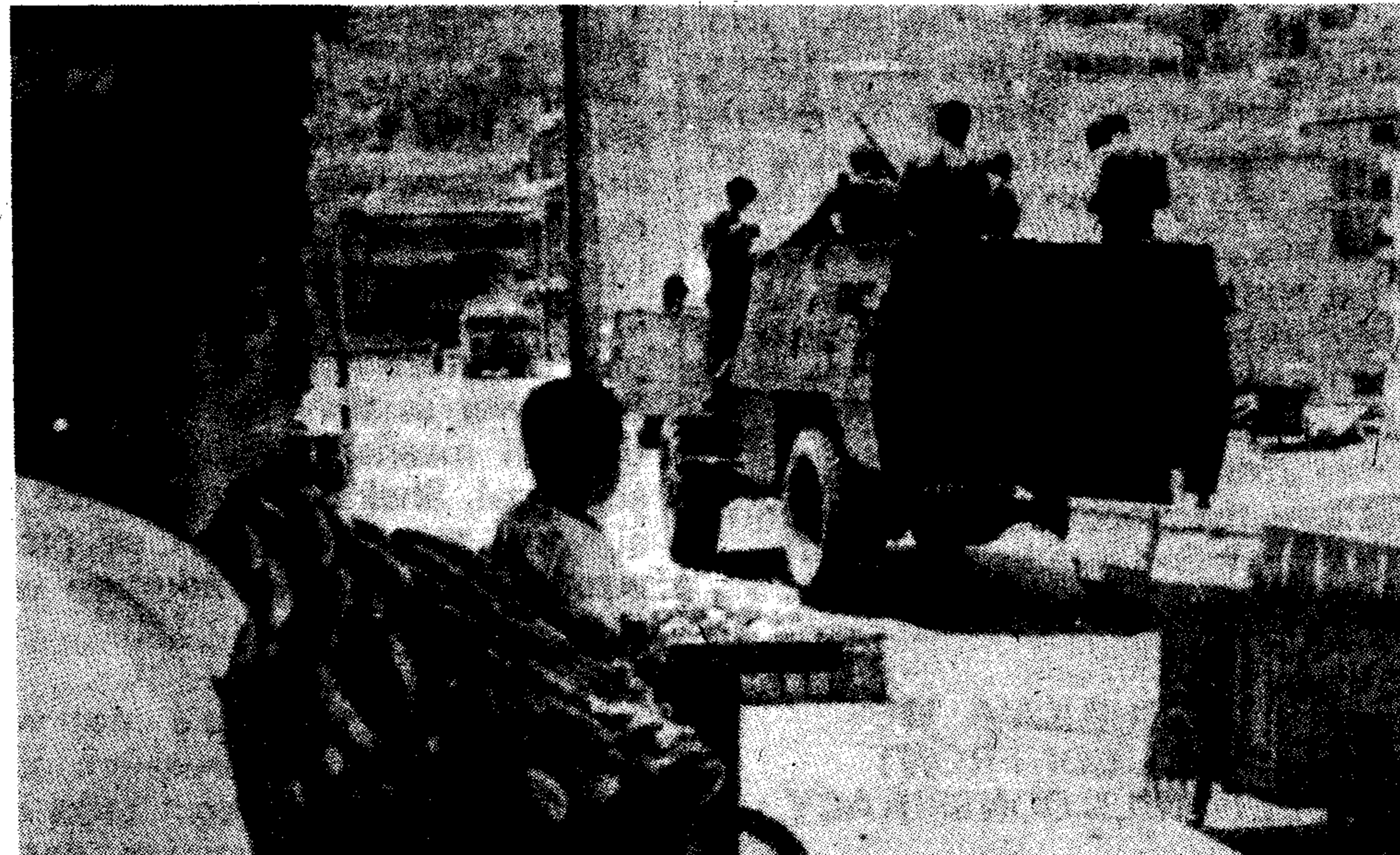
In conclusion we urge you to

take up the fight to drive Zionist racism out of the labour movement.

Letters and resolutions of support should be sent to Ernie Ross MP at the House of Commons and to George Galloway, 1 Ratteray Street, Dundee.

Defend the stand of the Dundee Labour Party for the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Yours in solidarity,  
Barry Turner  
(for the Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity)



Zionist military rule in the West Bank town of Nablus

## Council rejects Tory threat

Dundee has become the focus of two major political battles.

One is the issue of support for the PLO (see above). The other is over the refusal of the local Labour Council to sell off any of the city's housing stock.

Alone among the major authorities in Scotland, Dundee has defied the government and refused to proceed with the sale of council houses as demanded under the terms of Tory legislation.

Secretary of State George Younger has now issued an ultimatum—comply, or be dragged through the courts. He has given them 14 days to surrender or face substantial fines imposed by the Court of Session.

The principled stand taken by the Council obviously requires the fullest backing of

not only the trade union movement throughout Tayside but also the support of the trade union and labour movement throughout Scotland, especially the Labour-controlled regional and district councils in Strathclyde and Lothian.

At the centre of the rows is George Galloway, organiser of the Labour Party in Dundee and now chairman of the Labour Party in Scotland.

Galloway, a leading figure in the Labour Coordinating Committee, epitomises the break from the corrupt politics which disfigured Labourism in Dundee until fairly recently.

Insofar as he and his comrades in the local Labour Party and the Council remain firm to their principles on these two major issues they deserve the wholehearted support of every socialist.

## Step Forward in Glasgow Cuts Fight

A successful meeting to protest about cuts in the social services was held last Monday in the Springburn Area of Glasgow, with over 60 in attendance.

The meeting, organised by the Springburn Committee Against Cuts, was addressed by speakers from the EIS, the main Scottish teachers' union, the Scottish Tenants' Organisation and Glasgow Campaign Against the Cuts.

An enthusiastic debate ensued as to how to pursue the struggle to defend social services.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the meeting was the participation of groups engaged in ongoing campaigns. Alec Stirling, TGWU shop steward at Foresthall Home and Hospital, which is threatened with closure, spoke of the determination of the workforce to resist,

and his sentiments were echoed by Janie Harkness, speaking on behalf of the staff at Gilshochill Assessment Centre also threatened with shutdown.

Their bitterness concerning the uncaring attitude of the Labour controlled Regional Council was shared by a speaker from PANIC, the campaign to prevent the closure of nursery facilities in the Gorbals district.

Nor did she have much faith in her local Labour MP Frank McElhone who, she said, "opened his mouth, forgot to shut it and wished he had."

The main focus for the meeting was the impact of education cuts in the city and how they can be resisted.

Nigel Gardner, speaking on behalf of the EIS Local Association, emphasised how these cuts, although not always dramatic, were bringing about a progressive and serious deterioration of the service, with

# AMNESTY SETS FACE AGAINST WORKERS' STRUGGLES

By Peter McIntyre

Amnesty International has a reputation for ambiguous but perceptible progressiveness.

Its international reports are after all often the only detailed factual accounts of who is being imprisoned or killed around the world.

Because that work is

valuable, and because it is done by nobody else, and because it is widely publicised, the trade unions have trundled along humbly in its wake, espousing gratitude while some Trotskyists have vented criticisms.

Does not after all Amnesty International epitomise those layers of the petty bourgeoisie who are capable of being pulled along by the working class?

The answer is that the current temperature of that petty bourgeois section is one of virulent antagonism to the international working class.

Amnesty International therefore stands as an open and avowed obstacle to genuine internationalism.

Examples of this constantly break through the facade—the most flagrant being the refusal of Amnesty to accept H Block hunger strikers as 'prisoners of conscience'!

Indeed only those who have

not 'used or advocated violence' can be considered by Amnesty for official martyr status.

In El Salvador for example, someone who greets the junta's execution squads with a mild chastisement and a friendly smile can have their name posthumously enblazoned on the letters of several tens of thousand Amnesty supporters.

Beyond the pale

But anyone who fights for his/her life or who calls for the working class to be armed is beyond the pale.

Add to this the Amnesty rule which forbids national sections to accuse their own government—and you have the opposite of internationalism.

The British section of Amnesty International met in disarray in Nottingham two weeks ago.

Out of a two day conference

the whole of the first day was consumed with internal politics.

The executive elections were voted null and void, and the conference narrowly upheld the sacking of its director Cosmas Desmond.

Desmond—supposedly one of the progressives and a former prisoner of conscience—declared that he had felt more hostility from Amnesty's volunteers than in 14 years of harassment by the South African police (a hyperbole that probably cost him the vote).

The rest of the conference proceeded with barely suppressed hisses every time a speaker admitted being a member of a trade union.

Imports

The leader of the trade union committee told a committee session that he persuaded his union to back trade union rights overseas by explaining it would make imports more expensive.

'Trade union rights' was deleted from a resolution because 'it is covered by human rights'.

"Neutral"

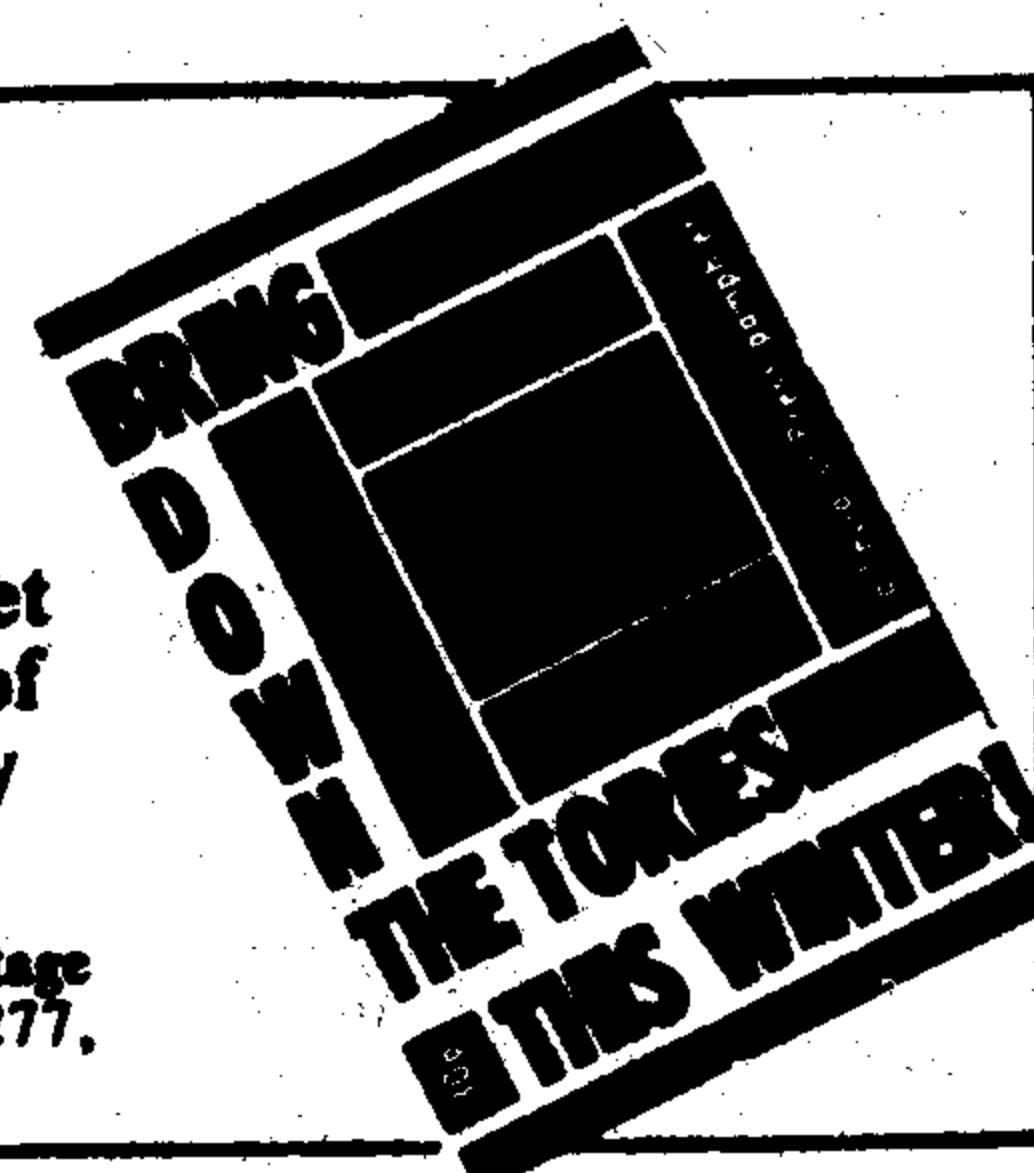
Most of all the words 'impartial' or 'neutral' smattered the text of every statement like confetti.

The working class of course cannot afford this luxury and Amnesty International by adopting this stance can only offer increasing aid and comfort to its enemies.

Our policies

Socialist Press pamphlet outlining programme of action against the Tory offensive.

Price 45p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.



# 1930s: UNEMPLOYMENT FIGHT MARCHES DOWN

## BLIND ALLEY

Part 2 By Colin Morrow

The response of the labour movement to the mass unemployment of the 1930s is probably known by most workers.

While both the TUC and the Labour Party stood back wringing their hands in anguish, the National Unemployed Workers Movement took to the streets, mobilising hundreds of thousands.

Wal Hannington, one of its leaders, jailed many times for his militant organising of the unemployed, spelled out many times the way in which unemployment was used to smash the solidarity of the working class, drive down wages and demoralise workers.

For example, criticising the various 'voluntary' labour schemes and work camps of the time he pointed out:

### Hunger March

"1. That it distracts the unemployed from organised struggle against the government for better standards and conditions;

2. That it encourages the idea of work without wages, and thereby undermines the spirit of trade unionism.

3. That it helps the government to escape its responsibilities for providing work under normal conditions for the unemployed;

4. That it encourages the idea that unemployment is a subject for charity; and

5. That to the extent that it keeps the unemployed quiet and free from militant leadership it assists the government in carrying through new attacks upon their standards and rights."

So far so good. But for Hannington, a member of the Communist Party, and the leadership of the NUWM the answer remained confined to protest.

So the Hunger March of 1932, which brought 100,000 onto the streets, was organised to present a petition to parliament demanding the abolition of the means test.

And it was followed by . . . more Hunger Marches, more petitions and more protests—all designed to win concessions and reforms from a capitalist class who were prepared (as they did in Germany) to plunge into the deepest barbarism to solve the crisis of their bankrupt system.

His failure to begin from an understanding of the capitalist



Unemployed men on Waterloo Bridge

crisis and the inability of capital to solve it *except* at the expense of the working class led Hannington to say:

"I am convinced that very much can be done, even whilst capitalism remains, effectively to mitigate the problem by relieving the distress and providing employment."

Thus, Hannington the CP member became an advocate of . . . trading estates!

Like the modern TUC, with its ludicrous 'Forward Into the '80s' campaign and the Labour 'left' with its Alternative Economic Strategy, Hannington saw 'solutions' in terms of a better

organised capitalism. Later, he thought, would come socialism.

In this way, the massive movement of the unemployed of the 1930s was reduced to a pressure group rather than becoming, in alliance with the employed, a challenge to the whole existence of the bourgeois state and its parasitic ruling class.

A number of absolutely correct demands were raised by the NUWM: for trade union rates for *all* work; for spending on a programme of *useful* public works to genuinely employ the unemployed; for the abolition

of the work camps and the ending of the means test.

But they were all made into mere pleas for mercy, because they were *separated* from a parallel struggle for workers' management and control of industry.

In massive industries like steel and ship-building, the fight for workers' control was posed time and time again (notably at the Palmers shipyard on the Tyne which was closed by government edict and barred from production for 30 years).

But the absence of a revolutionary workers leadership—which could unite workers behind class demands which began from the *immediate* needs of those workers—opened the door to defeat.

It was such defeated groups of workers who then became the ragged veterans of the Jarrow March.

Today we need to learn from such experiences. Already we can see the first steps through the YOPs and Manpower Services schemes towards unpaid, unorganised labour. And, as in the 1930s, the TUC has collaborated with these first attacks.

At the same time, in the interest of capitalist 'viability', union leaders have sold hundreds of thousands of jobs down the river.

But unlike the 1930s, the working class today has not suffered a massive historic defeat comparable to that of 1926.

The willingness of workers to fight if given even a meagre lead has been demonstrated time and time again—the steel strike being just one example.

What is required this time, however, is not protests but a programme which *challenges* the rights of the bosses to drive workers onto the dole, slash their living standards and increase exploitation.

That means fighting for every last job; it means demanding the opening to workers' committees of the books of those firms who scream the need for 'viability'; it means exposing the profiteering of bankers, suppliers and contractors; and it means ending the secrecy of the employers' dealings and exposing the bankruptcy of their rotten profit system.

It means fighting closure with occupations to prevent the break up of plant and the transfer of equipment, and campaigning for supporting strikes and demanding the union leaders organise support for those in occupation.

### YOPS

It means organising workers' control of supplies and distribution within industries where closures and redundancies are threatened while fighting in the individual workplace for work-sharing on full pay.

At the same time, in order to unite employed and unemployed we have to begin to build the mass organisation of the unemployed, forcing unions like the TGWU and GMWU to give the unemployed full trade union rights.

The YOPs and MSC schemes must be unionised as the basis for a co-ordinated fight of all layers of the labour movement for full trade union rates on such schemes coupled with the demand that the TUC immediately take up that fight and outlaw the rogue profiteers who use YOPs schemes as cheap sources of labour.

### Public Works

Labour councils should be called on to make a stand against unemployment by *extending* direct labour organisations and initiating programmes of useful public works in defiance of the Tory

barons of big business.

Unemployed workers, whether through unemployed workers' unions or through their own trade union branches must be involved in every struggle to defend jobs.

In that way a real unity of employed and unemployed in struggle can be forged. Unemployed workers unions can play a vital role in defeating schemes for voluntary redundancies because they present in real, harsh terms the realities of the alternatives.

Finally, if we are to learn the crucial lesson of the 1930s it is necessary to say here and now, *capitalism has nothing to offer the working class.*

There are *no* reforms left in the bag to hand out. Capitalism in crisis can only attack the working class, and capitalism is a system of crisis.

Therefore, the task in each struggle to drive back the attacks of the ruling class is to prepare the way for the building of genuine organs of workers' control and power.

### State Power

Factory committees and local councils of action which unite all sections of the labour movement can become the spearhead of the struggle to defend the independent interests of the working class by challenging the right of the bosses to retain state power.

For, ultimately, what unites the employed and unemployed is the fight for a workers government, a government based directly on the organisations of the working class.

But for that we need a programme not protests. Item 1 on that programme should be the bringing down of this Tory government.



# CHILDCARE: ONLY TROTSKYISTS OFFER NECESSARY POLICIES

Final part of a series of articles by nursery campaigner Anne McKinley.

Previous articles in this series have underlined the inadequacy of nursery provision in capitalist countries of Europe.

But the problem of securing adequate social facilities to lift the burden of childcare from the shoulders of women is also a major issue in the deformed workers' states and in the Soviet Union itself.

#### The Soviet Union

Providing care for the under 5s and the legislation of equality between the sexes is an economic and political issue.

Lenin stated in 1919.

"Verbally, bourgeois democracy promises equality and freedom. In fact bourgeois republics however advanced—have not given women, who constitute half of humanity, full equality with men before the law, nor have they freed them from the yoke and oppression of men.

Bourgeois democracy is the democracy of pompous phrases, of solemn words, of bombastic promises, grandiose slogans about liberty and equality, but in practice, all of this hides the lack of freedom and inequality of women, the lack of freedom and inequality of workers and the exploited."

At this time, only the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had managed to lay the real basis for the emancipation of women, repealing all repressive legislation, granting freedoms, facilitating divorce and attempting to socialise a series of enslaving domestic tasks—from the washing of clothes to the education and care of children.

Nevertheless women suffered the same fate as the rest of the working class under the Stalinist counter-revolution. In the 1935 Constitution a series of laws favourable to women disappear-



Nursery in the USSR

ed and in general Stalinism sought to reaffirm the family unit as the basic unit of society—with the attendant oppression of women in the home.

Soviet women today do enjoy complete legal equality. 85% of them go out to work and equal opportunities in education and jobs are far advanced. And yet women remain oppressed, because the responsibility for child care and other domestic tasks remain firmly on the shoulders of individual women.

The social policy in Russia is not aimed at relieving women of this burden but at making it heavier—by encouraging women to have more children.

Instead of providing more nurseries, providing longer maternity and paternity leave, and building communal dining halls and laundries to make child rearing a joy, women with large families are simply given a medal in recognition of the unnecessary drudgery and soul destroying oppression they are enduring!

#### Hungary

Since 1967 a 'mother's wage' has been provided. According to official statements it arose from 'concern' that illness was more common among children in nurseries than among those full time at home.

But in reality it was designed to boost a flagging birthrate. It is paid to women with children under 3—provided they stay at home, and it is equivalent to about one-eighth of the average monthly wage.

There are three reasons for this allowance:

1. The fall in the birthrate;
2. The fear of the growth of unemployment amongst young women if they seek work outside the home;
3. The high costs of creating and maintaining state run child care centres.

In current nursery provision there is only room for 10% of Hungarian children under 3.

The allowance penalises those mothers who prefer or are obliged to continue their work but are unable to find a place for their children in a child care centre.

Provisions like these reinforce the traditional sexual division of labour.

#### Cuba

Prior to the Cuban revolution in 1959 most Cuban women were unemployed and illiterate.

If they had to work the primary occupations open to them were those of domestic servant and prostitute. The only role expected of them was that of wife and mother.

In the 20 years since the 'revolution' the image and role of women has to all intents and purposes changed radically.

Retraining programmes were set up for women to learn skills

such as child care, sewing and clerical work.

The principle of equal pay for equal work became law, and compulsory education was established for all Cuban children.

As more and more women entered the workforce, a serious problem became glaringly apparent. Because of the strain of the 'second shift' of childcare and housework, women began dropping out of work each year.

In 1975 a Family Code was enacted into law which stipulates the "total equality" of men and women in all aspects of life beginning with the family unit.

But the emphasis is on shared responsibility within an individual family unit—equal oppression—instead of providing more childcare facilities to remove the second shift from both parents.

The Family Code does not take into account one parent families.

#### Trotskyist Programme

The policies put forward by Trotskyists in nursery and child care campaigns are based on a political programme put forward by Trotsky in 1938 at the founding conference of the Fourth International.

It is not enough however simply to offer women the demands of the Transitional Programme. We have to relate to the particular needs of women if we are to win them to the struggle of the working class.

The fight for the maintenance and extension of rights is inseparable from the fight against capitalism and for the victory of the working class.

Capitalism far from guaranteeing democratic rights will engage in increasing attacks upon them like the attacks on child care provision at present. We must link our demands for future extended child care provision to the fight to defend what we already have.

The policy of occupying threatened services or workplaces—like nurseries—against closure by the capitalist class is a demand that does this; it shows workers and users of the service in practice the need both to defend nurseries and to assert workers control.

#### Occupations

Ask anyone before an occupation of a nursery/hospital whether they think that the working class can actually run things themselves and one would probably receive a negative answer.

When one has no other choice but to occupy a threatened facility it's amazing how much workers will contribute and control that facility the way it should be run.

In the same way, the policy of opening the books of County Councils, Area Health Authorities and any factory or workplace where the capitalist class says it has to close or there cannot be a wage rise because there is no money available challenges their 'right' to solve problems at our expense.

The WSL does not say open the books in order to prove there is money available. Some capitalists will be anxious to prove to workers their bankruptcy and the need for workers to go without and not the exploiters.

Whereas we say open the books to show the need for nationalisation of the economy and for workers control.

The open the books demand on county councils and AHAs is to point to where the money goes to—firms who supply books and materials, drug companies like La Roche who make huge profits and the need for these firms to be nationalised.

Every serious demand now raised by women in the struggle against the oppression must bring them into conflict with the official labour bureaucracy.

The demands and aspirations of women have always been neglected by trade union and Labour leaders, who have based themselves on the most conservative and privileged layers of the workers' movement.

Now these demands are cast aside entirely by bureaucrats determined if necessary to sacrifice the interests of the whole working class sooner than mobilise independent mass action for the overthrow of the crisis ridden capitalist system.

The struggle in defence of jobs, wages or conditions; the struggle to stop the Tory spending cuts; the struggle to create the material conditions for lifting the burden of domestic labour from the shoulders of individual women in the home; all require the turn to the building of a revolutionary socialist leadership in the working class—in which women must play their full part.

While recognising that only socialism will create the material conditions that make the emancipation of women a possibility this process is by no means automatic.

The reactionary ideology that both justifies and intensifies women's oppression is much older and capitalism and will live on after its overthrow—unless communists lead a conscious campaign to stamp it out.

In a planned economy it will become possible to provide communal facilities to supercede the work done by women's domestic labour with high quality but cheap dining halls and laundries as well as comprehensive free child care provision.

There is no guarantee that the economy will be planned in this way, unless there are women and men communists in the leadership of the revolutionary party that believe that these facilities are a priority to relieve the burden on women and grant them genuine social rather than purely formal equality.

#### NURSERIES — HOW & WHY TO FIGHT FOR THEM

"The aim is to force the state to run the services we need. Many unions — NUPE, NALGO, NUT, etc., cover all sectors in the social and educational services, and their union officials must be forced to act in support of policies already accepted against the cuts..."

So states this vital booklet 60p plus 15p p&p from NCCC, c/o Surrey Docks Child Care Project, Dockland Settlement, Redriff Rd, London SE16.



# NEW ATTACK ON BL

By Bill Peters

## STEWARDS MOVEMENT

British Leyland management have launched what is effectively a new strategy to break up and neutralise the shop stewards movement in their plants.

These proposals involve the establishment of a National

Joint Negotiating Committee comprising of 23 members—one national officer from each of the eleven unions in BL and 12 others appointed by the executives of the various unions, most of which will be full time officials.

The document includes a

new discipline procedure which gives BL the right of summary dismissal for what they choose to define as "gross industrial misconduct".

But politically the most damaging aspect of the document is that it becomes a part of BL workers' contract of

employment—a move which effectively means that it is legally binding.

Since it contains a new disputes procedure, this is also tantamount to a no strike clause since if a worker went on unofficial strike or otherwise broke the disputes procedure

that worker would be in breach of his or her contract of employment.

Whilst the document is presented as a "Discussion Document" submitted by management it was in fact the subject of a secret meeting between BL and the national officers of the major unions early in March.

Almost certainly there had been discussions earlier than that.

Ken Cure, right wing Executive Councilman of the AUEW responsible for BL met AUEW convenors last Thursday to discuss the document.

convenors.

The meeting reaffirmed its existing policy of a JNC comprised of elected delegates from the plants on the basis of one delegate per 1,000 workers.

This is a policy which arose after mass meetings condemned the existing undemocratic JNC structure following the sell-out of last year's wage review.

A meeting of the BL Shop Stewards Combine Committee held last Saturday joined the TGWU convenors in totally rejecting the document.

This does not mean that Edwardes will back off. If there is tacit behind-the-scenes agreement with the national officers he will exploit it to the full.

BL workers could soon be faced with the imposition of the document by BL or a recommendation for its acceptance by national officials—or both.

### Combine Committee revived

A meeting took place last Saturday of the BL Combine Shop Stewards Committee.

During the period of "Workers Participation" in BL it used to meet in working hours, and drew convenors from almost all plants throughout BL Cars and the heavy vehicle divisions.

It met on a Saturday this time because Michael Edwardes has threatened to sack any steward or convenor who attends a combine committee

meeting inside working hours.

Combine Committee chairman Jack Adams has been disciplined—being given a final warning from BL—for attending one of the two meetings the once-active committee has held over the past two years.

After some discussion, the meeting took the important decision to reactivate the committee and to meet on Saturdays once every two months.

This will provide a forum for BL stewards which has not existed since "participation" was pushed through by the Communist Party in 1976.

redundancy and factory closures.

In Beans Industries, for example—a part of the BL combine producing components—the workforce has been decimated by compulsory redundancies carried out on a selective basis.

Management selected most of the militants, nearly all of the shop stewards plus the convenor for the sack. They have all gone without resistance.

Compulsory redundancies have taken place at Drews Lane amongst indirect workers without resistance and now management are preparing for compulsory redundancy amongst directs.

At SU Carurettors, the convenor was sacked for attending a trade union meeting and then reinstated without recognition as a trade union representative.

In heavy vehicles it is even worse. Most plants are on one day a week and the trading position is worsening all the time.

The projected market for heavy lorries this year is 51,000 units—a year's work for only one plant.

Compulsory redundancy has taken place at the biggest plant in Leyland, Lancashire, but at the Albion works management backed off after a mass meeting voted to resist compulsory redundancy.

Finally the meeting discussed the victimisations in Longbridge in January.

#### Victimised

Jim Denham, one of the victimised stewards, spoke about the victimisations and proposed that the Combine convene a conference of BL stewards to discuss the increasing victimisations in BL and the response to them.

Jack Adams, from the chair—who had been very reluctant to allow Denham to speak—refused to allow any motions or proposals on the issue, ruling that they will have to be put on the agenda of the next meeting.

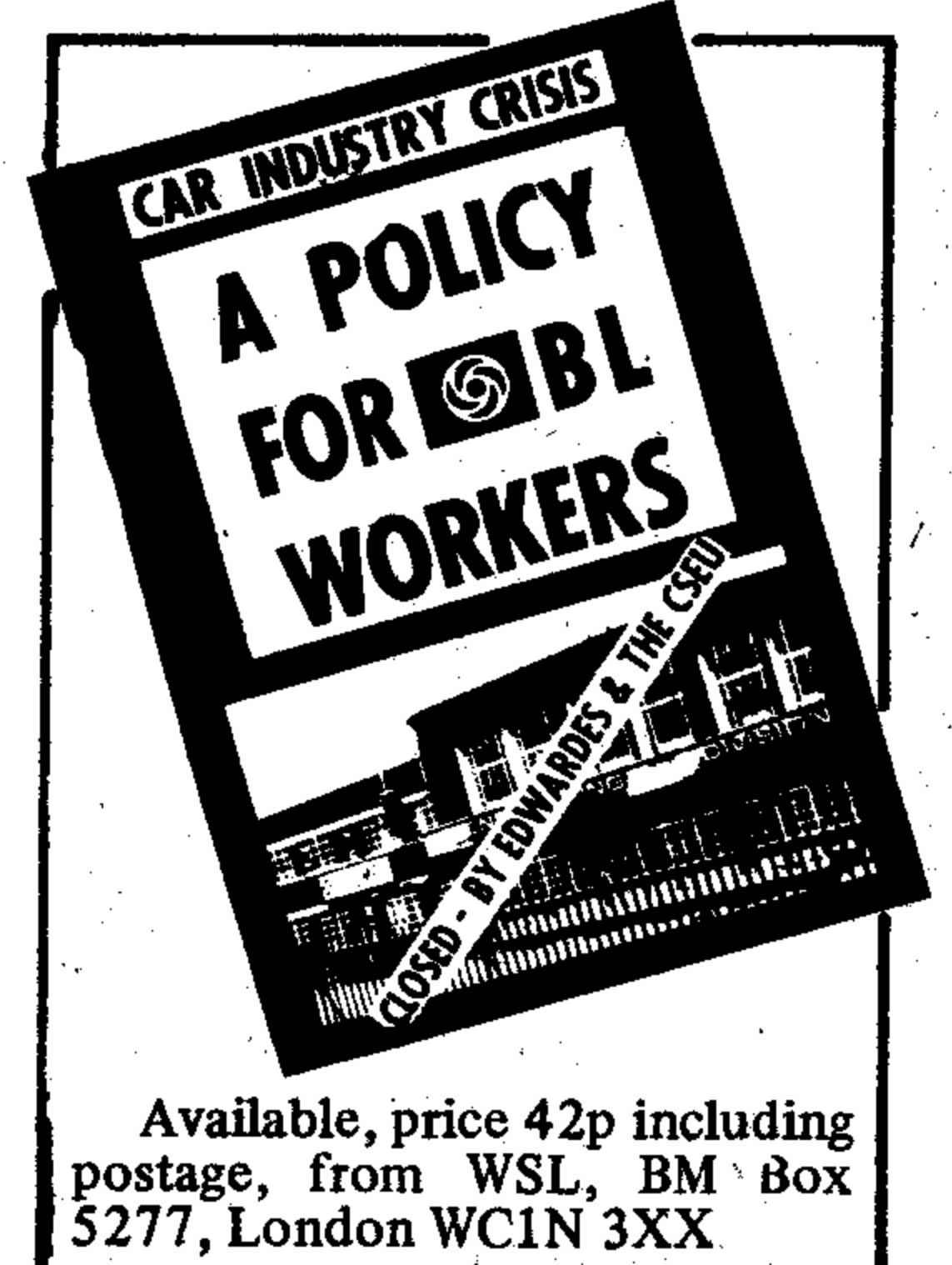
#### Denied involvement

He refused to take a vote on it, saying he simply "wanted to get the flavour of the meeting" which is another way of saying that he will decide what the meeting thought.

He admitted that there had been some amendments as a result of trade union involvement but denied trade union involvement in its drafting.

He said that BL had requested that the document be published as a joint document, but they had refused. But the management approach suggests that there had been enough trade union involvement and agreement to make it a viable proposition.

When Automotive national officer Grenville Hawley met the TGWU convenors, however, there was a vote, and the document was unanimously rejected after pressure from the



### PERGAMON STRIKE

The four-week strike by nine NUJ members at Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press headquarters in Oxford continues solid.

Last week saw the first issue of a strike bulletin, distributed on the gates to the large number of staff still working.

The bulletin, which carefully answered a management-sponsored open letter to the local press, won an immediate response.

Staff came out at lunchtime to discuss with pickets and new recruitment was reported by both APEX and NGA chapels inside Pergamon.

The strikers have also circulated an appeal for support to Labour Parties nationally, in an effort to bring additional pressure to bear on Maxwell, the millionaire Labourite who pays wages and conditions that come almost bottom of the league in the field of journals production.

Strikers will also be campaigning for broader NUJ support at the union's conference in Norwich.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to the strike committee, c/o 5, Union Street, Oxford.



The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle  
The founding programmatic document of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee.

Available, price 80p including postage, from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

#### Destruction

Reports from the individual plants more than confirmed the near destruction of the previously strong shop floor movement through the effective policy of "participation" followed up by a management offensive.

57,000 jobs have gone in BL since Edwardes took over, mostly through voluntary

### Dock strike spreads northwards

The determined pay strike by 1900 dockworkers continues to paralyse all ship movement in Southampton.

And the act of the Docks Board management in transforming the dispute into a total lock-out has not intimidated the workforce one iota.

Indeed the call by dock stewards for wider labour movement support is fast gathering momentum.

Last week saw action from five militant South Wales ports—Barry, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Port Talbot—as these workers backed their colleagues with a series of 24-hour strikes.

All ships diverted to nearby Portsmouth have also been declared 'black' by stevedore and transport union stewards while NUR members are refusing to offload at the container terminals.

#### Pledged to act

Hull and Liverpool stewards are also pledged to action in the event of TGWU leaders giving the strike official status while flying pickets were canvassing for support at Ipswich and other eastern ports.

However union bureaucrats at national level are already seeking ways to sabotage the dispute and retard workers' attempts to mobilise for an all-out confrontation with the employer.

Even as Docks Board officials brazenly announced plans to axe 250 dockers' jobs, regional secretary John Ashman (TGWU) was accepting overtures from ACAS for 'meaningful talks' on Monday next.

The strike is now in its most crucial phase. The workforce must reject any compromise hatched between union leaders and BTDB employers.

#### Defend industry

Further, they must demand that TGWU and NUR leaders defend this nationalised industry against any rationalisation programme outlined in the government's Transport Bill.

The transfer of BTDB assets into the new British Ports Company offers workers no respite from attacks on their jobs or working agreements.

The hiving off of two unprofitable dry docks has merely been the prelude to further run-down and selling out to private profiteers.

The only way to guarantee even existing conditions is to force this struggle into every section of BTDB under the following programme:

- \*No sackings or redundancies—work sharing on full pay!
- \*No closures—open BTDB books to elected union committees!
- \*Renationalise BTDB under workers control!
- \*Prepare a general strike to kick out the Tories!

### Threatened nursery occupied

On Friday 27 March, parents and supporters of Beal Street Play Centre occupied the building.

The parents and supporters timed their entry to the play centre to coincide with the finish of the children's farewell party at 3.55 p.m.

The play centre staff were given a notice that it was a legal occupation and notices were posted on the doors and windows.

The matron immediately rang up County Hall. Staff continued with their usual duties until the last children had been collected and then left.

During this time the local policeman popped by, read the notice, and said, "That's fine, good luck".

At about 5.15 the Director of Social Services, Brian Rice, arrived.

He was not allowed into the building and had to speak to the parents on the door step.

He was worried about "damage to the equipment", and said that someone should be in the building at all times in case of vandalism!

He was reassured on both points. He then said that he would have to inform the press that the mentally handicapped group would now be unable to use the building.

He was informed that this would not be the case since all the groups that previously used the building would be more than welcome to continue to do so.

On the Saturday two councillors came to offer support. Nearly 100 people came to visit the occupation in the first two days and support is growing.

Parents and supporters are determined to stick it out.

They are asking that the County Council reverse their decision and continue to fund the play centre or, if this fails, ask the city council to take it over.

There is to be a public meeting at the play centre on Thursday 2 April at 7.00 p.m. and on Saturday an open day is planned in the afternoon to attract support.

Please send messages of support and donations to Beal Street Action Committee, c/o 1, Pegasus Close, Leicester.



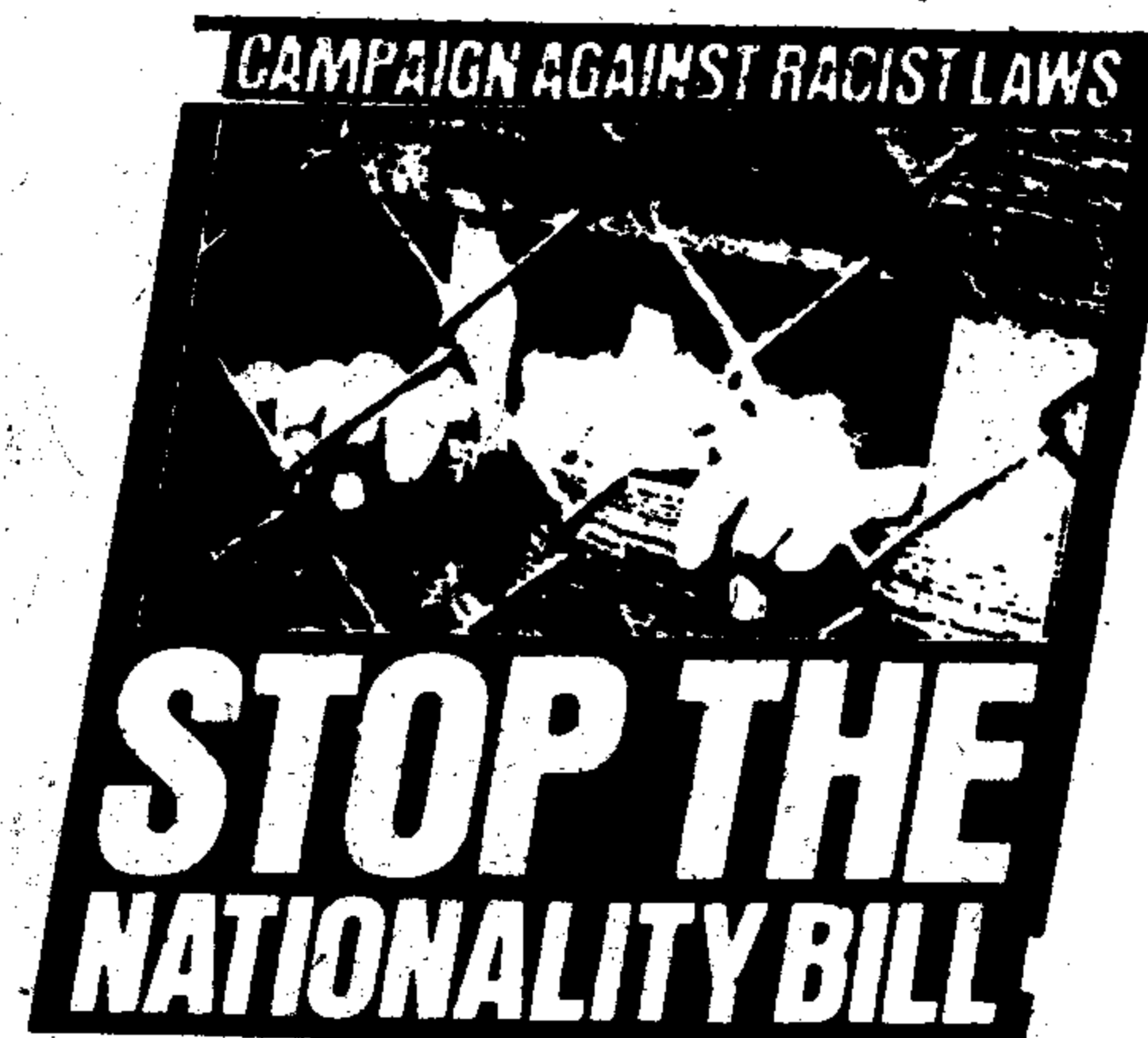
Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

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Send to: WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

# SOCIALIST PRESS



Demonstrate  
Against  
Immigration  
Laws  
Hyde, Park,  
London  
1 p.m. Sunday  
5 April

## Hunger striker stands for Parliament

In a brilliant move to highlight the five-week old hunger strike at the Long Kesh concentration camp in the North of Ireland, republican prisoner of war Bobby Sands is to stand as a candidate in the April 9 by-election in Fermanagh/South Tyrone.

While he continues his fast in the prison hospital in Long Kesh, a united campaign will be waged on his behalf by supporters of the National H Block/Armagh Committee.

### Withdrawn

To promote that campaign, other nationalist candidates withdrew from the fight for the seat, left vacant by the death of Frank Maguire.

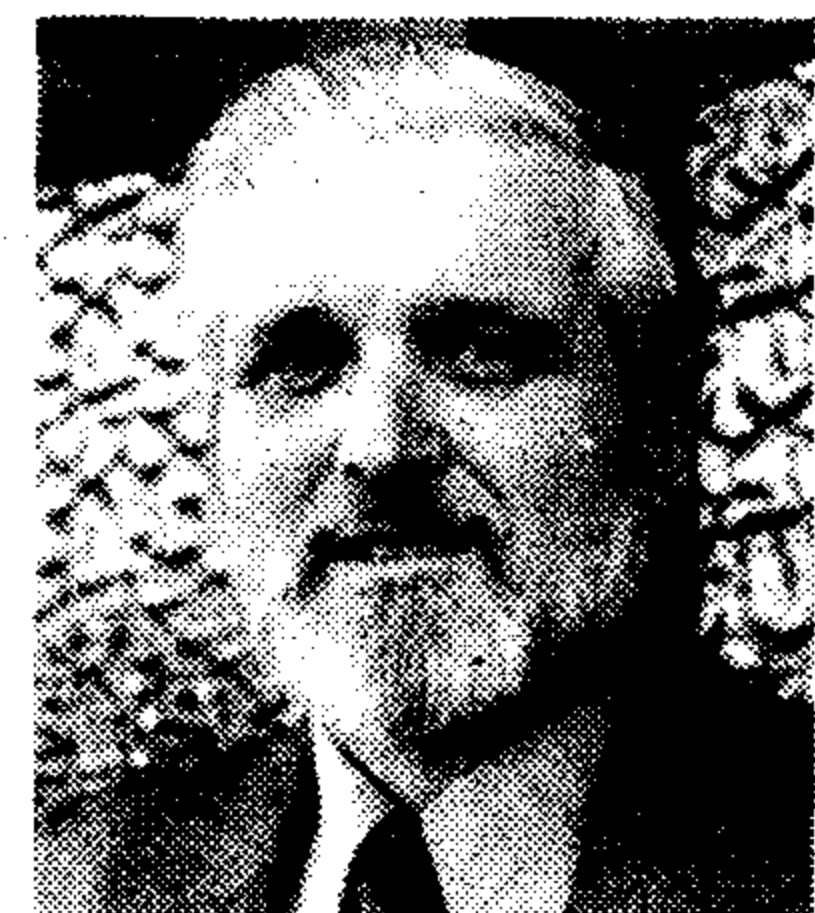
His brother Noel withdrew at the last moment, calling on his supporters to lend their backing to Bobby Sands.

And Bernadette McAliskey, still recovering from a Loyalist assassination attempt, also withdrew in favour of Sands, who is running not as a Sinn Fein candidate but specifically on a "Smash H Block and Armagh Jail" platform.

Despite the fact that the Unionist opposition have also



McAliskey



Noel Maguire

achieved the rare feat of standing a single candidate—Harry West—Sands seems certain to win the seat—and thus ironically become an elected MP while on the point of death in a military prison hospital.

Nothing could more clearly expose the hypocrisy of British-style "democracy" in the six counties and the lies of those

who claim that the republican fighters are simply isolated individual criminals without popular support.

This campaign offers a further opportunity to break the conspiracy of silence on the hunger strikes in the British and Irish mass media, and step up the struggle for the prisoners' demand: the restoration of political status for republican prisoners.

It should be taken up as part of the fight within the British and Irish labour movement for political and material solidarity with the hunger strikers.

Bernadette McAliskey told a Belfast radio interviewer that:

"If a hunger striker emerges as a candidate in the by-election not only would I, without question, immediately withdraw from the election, I would consider it an honour as a voter in this area to sign the nomination form and I would work the shirt off my back for that prisoner and the other prisoners he is representing."

### Obligation

It is high time that socialists in Britain began equally to grasp their obligation to devote the necessary political energy and resources into mobilising solidarity action with the republican prisoners.

While the British media remains consciously silent on the issue, and the Labour and trade union leaders preserve their guilty silence and bi-partisan policy with the Tories on Ireland the Irish prisoners are mounting a crucial challenge to British imperialism and the Thatcher government.

In fighting the attempts of the British imperialists to brand them as "criminals" and demanding proper recognition as prisoners of war, the republican prisoners are waging a struggle which British workers must support.

### Defeat Tories

Bobby Sands and the other 'H' Block hunger strikers have put their lives on the line in the fight against Thatcher. They have insisted that they will not give in unless the Tory government first concedes.

It is up to us in the British labour movement to do everything in our power to assist that struggle—as part of the fight to weaken and defeat British imperialism.

\*Victory to the hunger strikers! Political status now! Vote Bobby Sands!

\*Troops out of Ireland now! Self determination for the Irish people!



Bobby Sands

## Firebomb attack: POLAND a stark warning

The firebomb attack on the SWP's socialist and trade union bookshop in Digbeth, Birmingham, underlines the upsurge of right wing violence in recent months.

The use of a car to block the exit to the building makes it clear that the attack was politically motivated. The man immediately questioned by police is believed to be a member of the National Front.

Police linked the firebombing with the firing of a cross-bow bolt in a racist attack on Karamat Hussein in broad daylight in Birmingham.

But fascist violence is on the increase in Britain, adopting a pattern more similar to the activities of fascist groups in Europe.

### Convictions

There has been a recent flurry of convictions of British Movement and NF thugs on charges that range from murder, through arson, to the possession of an armory of firearms.

Even the police have been forced to recognise the turn by the fascists towards terrorist tactics.



NF youth in Brixton mobilised by the fascists in this period of acute social and economic crisis.

The labour movement must be on its guard. Workers' defence squads must be established as and where necessary to combat racist and fascist violence.

And a fight must be waged within the labour movement for policies to combat the Tory offensive on jobs, housing and social services: it is the conditions of poverty, homelessness, frustration and oppression which provide the fertile breeding ground for the fascists.

not for a full-scale invasion but simply to help repress street demonstrations and riots, and to assist in the arrest of selected militants.

Such measures would stem from desperation but the Polish bureaucrats have few other options open to them. If they back off now, Solidarity will gain still further in strength and prestige: and an outright Soviet invasion, with its immense political and economic problems would increasingly emerge as the only way to crush the militancy of the Polish masses.

The one factor that could assist the Polish Stalinists in such a confrontation is the political limitations of the Solidarity leadership.

Though clearly divided between more moderate and more militant elements, Solidarity has never set its sights at anything other than more or less reforms within the existing system.

Solidarity has never attempted to remove or replace the government, and though its strike committees have repeatedly acted effectively as a rival power to that of the State, this has never been formally recognised or developed.

Whether or not this week develops into the decisive week of struggle in Poland, it is necessary that this political weakness is combatted in the next period by the construction of a leadership in Solidar-

ity committed both to the defence of the nationalised property relations in Poland and to the political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy that has plunged the economy into such chaos.

### Challenge

This means the development of the power of the working class through the construction of workers' councils to challenge the power of the Stalinists at factory, area and national level; and it means preparing to defend these organisations against state violence through the development of armed workers' defence squads.

## Special Fund

The continuing high levels of inflation and our decision to peg the price of *Socialist Press* at 20p is exacting a high toll on our finances.

Clearly we don't want to cut back on any areas of our work. We think it is essential to maintain our women's paper and our financial assistance to the Socialist Youth League and its paper *Red Youth*.

And we certainly don't wish to cut back any further on *Socialist Press*. So we have to have more money. And that is

why we have decided to launch a £2,500 Special Fund to be raised during the next four months with the completion date of Sunday 19 July—the first day of the WSL Summer School.

But to tide us over our immediate financial commitments we need to have the first £750 of this fund in by Friday 10 April.

Members and supporters of the Workers Socialist League will be pledging money to this fund during the next few days.

So we would like to appeal to readers of *Socialist Press*.

If you appreciate the coverage of working class struggles and the political direction given by *Socialist Press*, now is your chance to help us continue that work.

Send us a donation, however large or small—once a month if you like!

Our address is:  
Socialist Press Special Fund  
BM Box 5277  
London WC1N 3XX