

# Socialist Organiser

## Join the LABOUR PARTY

Write to 150 Walworth Rd, London SE17 1JT



ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

by Cheung Siu Ming

"BRISTOL yesterday, Brixton today" — one of the many slogans daubed on walls summed up what last weekend's battle was all about.

It was not a race riot. It was a battle between the people of Brixton and the police, as countless witnesses, white and black, have said.

Anyone in Brixton could testify to the massive and provocative police presence in the area over the four days before Friday night's flare-up.

Lambeth council leader Ted Knight described the police as "almost an army of occupation". And the cops' own code name for the operation speaks for itself: "Swamp 81".

Only recently, a working party set up by Lam-

beth council produced a report on police/community relations. It makes frightening reading. Amongst other things, it describes how between 1975 and 1979 there were six attacks by the SPG on the area, involving road blocks, early morning raids and random street checks.

Bill Bowring, one of the Labour councillors who served on the working party, told SO: "The report reflected fairly the view of people who felt they were living under a

state of seige."

That the situation should have exploded into violence was almost inevitable. And when it did, the police lashed out with a vengeance. They were out to prove they ruled the streets.

The Brixton community closed ranks and defended itself. Councillor Stewart Lansley told LBC Radio: "At 2pm on Saturday at Goldharbour Lane I counted no less than 20 police. There was a very heavy police presence. When I returned at

5pm, police with riot shields were facing local residents barricading themselves in Railton Road. I tried to persuade them to have a lower police presence and to withdraw. When we actually went into Railton Road, they made it clear that if the police withdrew they would have dispersed."

On Saturday night 250 SPG, some with guns, swept into the local estates and ordered all the residents into their homes. People who stayed out of doors after that

risked being arrested and beaten up. And even indoors it wasn't safe, as the police began storming into private houses, attacking families and arresting people in their own homes.

But local youth — mainly black, but some white — fought back, and by Monday night police injuries were estimated at 150. For a change the cops were getting a taste of their own medicine.

In an area of high unemployment, neglect and poverty, "Swamp 81" proved to be the last straw. The youth were right to fight back.

Home Secretary Whitelaw has announced an "inquiry" into the Brixton events, to be chaired by Lord Scarman. Almost certainly, this "inquiry" will attempt to pin the blame for the violence on militant blacks and 'outside agitators'. It might even make a token nod in the direction of unemployment and bad conditions.

But we can be sure of one thing — it won't be looking into the real cause of the violence, the racist provocations of the police.

The labour movement, in conjunction with organisations of the black community, must set up its own inquiry into the police. And in the meantime — get the cops out of Brixton.

# BRIXTON

## Organise labour movement patrols

BRIXTON did not experience race riots last Saturday and Sunday (11th-12th). White youths fought the police side by side with blacks. For the most part, white people went unmolested.

It was an explosion of anger against the police — and against the rotting and decaying capitalist system they defend and personify to the youth. It was a revolt against the racist 'forces of law and order', who stalk the streets of Brixton, wielding the 'sus' laws like a club — and wielding ordinary clubs too — in a running war with black youth.

Last year Lambeth council commissioned a report on police/community rela-

tions which painted an alarming picture of the relations of the police to black youth in the area. Nothing was done about it. In these affairs nothing ever is.

The police are a law unto themselves. They retain the anti-democratic right to be their own prosecutor, jury and judge, as well as being the accused, in any investigations into charges of gratuitous violence, frame-up, or racism, against themselves.

When Blair Peach was beaten to death, the internal police inquiry failed to catch the policeman who murdered him in clear view of several people. Naturally.

The police and the media talk of 'black para-

nola', and say the problem is one of bad communications. But it is the black people of Brixton who are the proper judges of their own experience with the police.

The police say that last Saturday they were merely tending a wounded black youth, and rioting started when other youths objected. If it is true, it shows most vividly what the real state of police/community relations is.

The labour movement must accept the verdict of the black community on the police, and act on it, before there are more explosions.

The need for the labour movement to assume full responsibility in this

situation is extremely urgent.

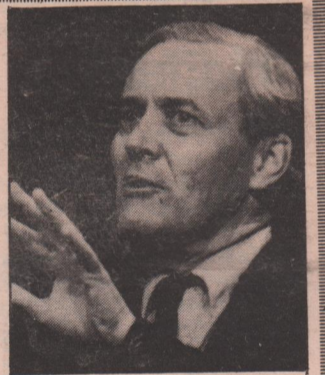
Socialist Organiser proposes to the Lambeth labour movement:

- The police should be immediately withdrawn from Brixton.

- Black-white labour movement patrols should be set up as community self-policing under the control of the labour movement. Special provision may have to be made to allow the fullest involvement by black community groups.

- The Lambeth labour movement should immediately take steps to start such patrols. They are needed now, and not least against the racist thugs in blue uniforms.

# COPS OUT OF BRIXTON



Laurie Sparham (IFL)

## Benn challenges Healey

TONY BENN told *Socialist Organiser*:

The candidacy is about policy. It is about conference policy. It is about the credibility of the Party: do we mean what we say, and will we do it if we're elected?

The campaign should be conducted over the next six months around conference policies, and not around the personalities of the candidates. I hope that every constituency party and affiliated union will discuss these policy issues, and that within the trade union movement the conferences that are meeting will insist on the right to determine the way the votes are cast at the electoral college themselves, to avoid the possibility that this might be settled in private meetings at the top.

Now that the Social Democrats have left us, the question is, what sort of a Labour Party are we going to be? And there can be only one possible answer: we must be a party that campaigns at every level — including the Parliamentary level — for the socialist policies agreed at conference.



**IF YOU  
MUST  
RIOT—  
WEAR  
BLUE**



IT NOW seems almost certain that no action will be taken on the 29 complaints against the police arising out of the Southall riot, when thousands of police, with the SPG in the forefront, rampaged through Southall, terrorising the local population, driving vans at fleeing crowds, and smashing up houses and injuring hundreds.

With two-thirds of the cases investigated and no prosecutions, the rest are just waiting for the rubber stamp. After the whitewash of Blair Peach's murder, and considering it is the police themselves who investigate complaints against the police, nobody should be surprised that they've let themselves off yet again.

Still, even the Home Office is getting a little concerned. Their Research Unit found that a significant minority of complaints against the police were not investigated as thoroughly as might have been expected (?), and that rather too frequently police shrugged off complainants' injuries as self-inflicted.

The moral: if you must have a riot, try to wear blue. If you can't manage that, do try to refrain from beating yourself to death with a police truncheon.

## Hattersley — we were racist!

**SPEAKING TO** the Standing Committee looking at the Nationality Bill, Roy Hattersley confessed he now believed the Labour government was wrong to pass the 1968 Immigration Act. This deprived East African Asian British passport holders of

the automatic right to enter this country, at a time when the Kenyan, and later Ugandan, governments were hounding them out of their countries.

It introduced the notorious quota system and paved the way for further racist legislation.

Hattersley now feels it was wrong to go back on the promise made to these people that they would enjoy the same rights as other British passport holders and fears that 'the promise was broken because the people to whom it was given were black'.

Even this belated admission, and the promise to repeal the Act when Labour gets back into government, is a step towards cutting through the crap that racist laws can be an aid to 'good race relations'.

How about going the whole hog, Roy, and committing the Labour leaders to repeal ALL racist laws, and to campaign now against all the state racism and harassment that the Act ushered in?

## Getting away with murder

**BARRY PROSSER** was kicked and beaten to death in a special cell in the hospital wing of Winson Green prison. He was 32 and left a wife and two children. He had a history of mental illness, and had been remanded to the prison awaiting reports.

"I do not believe that the injuries I found could, by any

stretch of the imagination, be included in the bracket of reasonable force", said the Home Office pathologist. Indeed not. Prosser died from a blow which burst his stomach and oesophagus.

His bare feet had been stamped on. There were bruises on his eyes, cheeks, chest, groin, anus, hips, elbows, hands and legs. That doesn't leave much of him untouched.

There is evidence of a systematic cover-up of his murderer[s]. The prison medical officer who certified him dead saw no evidence of injuries or anything unusual! He did notice blood spattered on the cell wall.

TWELVE prison officers were called into Prosser's cell to help administer a sedative. This extraordinary occurrence was not noted in the prison occurrence book. There was no record of any violence in the book for that night.

Barry Prosser lay dying for between six and twelve hours. He was covered from head to toe in bruises, his stomach burst open, and there was nothing to report!

Two of Prosser's fellow inmates working as cleaners in the hospital wing report seeing three warders enter his cell, hearing him cry out, and then seeing them emerge red-faced with comments such as 'He was a fucker to put down', 'he was a tough 'un'. Both claim they were warned to say nothing. All the prisoners in that area of the jail were moved out after the incident.

A senior prison officer was accused of murder, but the case was dismissed. It seems that, as with murder in police custody, as long as the officers stick together and refuse to point the finger at one of their own, and as long as they have the power to intimidate prisoners, they will literally be able to get away with murder.

## 'No rates rises' plays into Tories' hands

I WAS disappointed/angry at the negative attitude taken by Joe Baxter in his article about Lothian Region.

The Lothian Region Labour Party called the special conference he refers to, to investigate the feasibility of a 'no rates rise' position, given its consequences.

The party was conscious of the fact that the controlling Labour group on the Regional Council had succeeded in providing some of the highest levels of services in the country. It has held bus fares at the same level since 1977, increased the number of home helps, and kept class sizes down. It has done so despite Government and local opposition, but has been forced to fund the services by raising rates — as central government financial support was steadily cut.

A 'no rates rises' position, amongst other things, would mean that the council would rapidly run out of money to pay wages of employees. Because of this,

and before embarking on such a policy, it was decided to look at trade union support for such a policy.

Delegates at the conference made it extremely clear that there was no support for such a policy, and that taking it up would mean conflict with trade unions. Also, that it would play into the hands of the Tories to take such action without the support of the local labour movement.

The conference therefore decided to campaign against the Tory government and its policies, throughout trade unions, tenants' groups, Labour Parties, etc.

I find it depressing that Joe Baxter is unwilling to join this campaign and instead continues only to attack it. As another delegate at the special conference, I have accepted the mood of the meeting and am working hard to widen support for the left-wing council, against the myths spread by the media.

VAL WOODWARD,  
Edinburgh.

## INSULTS AND JIBES?

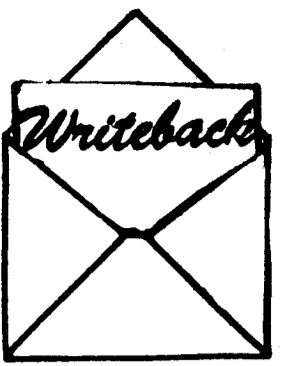
AFTER READING John McLroy's article *The SWP and the Labour Party*, SO 37, we were annoyed by a few unnecessary and inaccurate remarks in an article which in general argues a very strong case for all revolutionary socialists to be active Labour Party members — an argument we wholeheartedly agree with.

After talking about SWP 'scoring cheap points off socialists of a different persuasion' he does exactly

that in referring to the relative sizes of SWP and the Labour Party as 'makes the SWP look like a pigmy shrew', and again as a 'flea to an elephant'. He derides the SWP's work at Gardeners, when we are sure the workers there were appreciative of their considerable hard work and ability to mobilise active support.

He completely ignores SWP's ability to mobilise large contingents of its members at all major demonstration and its active commitment to the Right to Work campaign and ANL.

The idea that no opposition to the leadership is allowed is quite false. Members may form opposition caucuses up to annual conference, put their disagreements to the vote, and if they lose, accept the majority verdict until the next conference. This may not be a model of internal democracy, but it most certainly conflicts with



**Write back to Socialist  
Organiser, c/o 214  
Sickert Court, London  
N1 2SY.**

## Correction

On page 2 of SO 38 there appeared an obituary for Gary Thornton, a member of the Workers' Socialist League in Leicester. Due to a misunderstanding, this was incorrectly attributed to Peter Flach, a local 'Socialist Press' supporter, who was wrongly described as being a member of the WSL National Committee.

The misunderstanding arose because comrade Flach kindly handed the obituary over to SO. The statement, which was actually signed, "on behalf of the WSL NC", was then mistakenly attributed to him. In fact, as he has asked us to point out, he is simply a supporter of the policies of 'Socialist Press', and henceforth an extremely reluctant errand boy.

comrade McLroy's portrayal of the SWP.

If the article is intended to persuade SWP members to re-think and join the Labour Party either individually or en masse, we feel that cheap insults and snide jibes are not the way.

While the general direction of SO is correct, these occasional unnecessary petty snipes show that certain of our supporters still have to shake off a crude 'Trotskyism' which they seem to have inherited over the past years. If SO is to be a non-sectarian grouping, we hope all future writers will bear these observations in mind.

OLIVER MAURER  
JOHN CUNNINGHAM,  
Sheffield.

by Les Hearn

AT A TIME when many of the more stringent restrictions on genetic engineering are being lifted, two cases have recently come to light of flagrant breaches of these regulations.

In the first, Dr Ian Kennedy (a former lecturer of mine), working in California, cloned particles of Semliki Forest virus (a cause of disease in mice) whose use was specifically forbidden. (Cloning is the technique of making exact copies of genetic material other than by the ordinary mechanisms of reproduction).

Kennedy claimed it was an accidental contamination of a vial containing another virus, but has been censured by a board of inquiry of the US National Institute of Health.

In another case, a scientist has inserted genes for healthy haemoglobin into sufferers from thalassaemia, a blood disease in which the haemoglobin is defective, contrary to safety regulations excluding experiments on humans.

Neither case seems to have had any serious consequences. The thalassaemia victims don't seem to have been cured, but neither have they been obviously harmed, while Semliki Forest virus is only harmful to mice.

But with the constant pressure to be first, to succeed where others have failed,



that characterises capitalist science, this sort of behaviour by careless or unscrupulous researchers will continue and eventually a disaster will occur.

Suppose a virus causing cancer in humans had 'accidentally' been cloned and had then 'escaped'.

Inserting copies of healthy human genes into sufferers from genetic diseases may eventually cure many debilitating disorders, but this, too, carries risks — a gene for, say, haemoglobin has various features such as start and stop signals and sties for various feedback mechanisms to operate.

Leaving out any of these could lead to either no haemoglobin or too much being produced, or else the haemoglobin molecule could be joined onto the protein produced by the next gene to make a nonsense protein.

The competition for scarce government grants or for tight markets will mean a higher chance of a serious 'accident'.

## What's it all about?

SOCIALISTS are not opposed in principle to censuses, but we do ask — how are the questions posed, how is the information collected, who controls the information, and what is it used for?

Steven Jay Gould [an evolutionist, among other things, who has been denounced as a 'Marxist' in a recent debate on the mechanism of evolution — 'more' of that when I've found out what the long words mean] writes in last week's *New Scientist* about

the 1840 US census, which included a count of the mentally ill or defective, broken down by race and state, a seemingly neutral statistic.

The census found that in the free states of the North, 1 in 162 blacks was insane, while in the slave-holding South, only 1 in 1558 was insane. This result was immediately seized upon — 'slavery, if not the natural state of Black people, must have a remarkably beneficial effect upon them. It must exert a wonderful influence upon the development of moral faculties and the intellectual powers'.

Some people, while not questioning the results, were however unhappy at the extent of the difference between the free and the enslaved. Upon closer examination of the raw data, they found that in 25 towns of the free North, there was not a single sound-minded Black, while in 135 other towns the number of insane Blacks was greater than the total number of Blacks!

In some cases ALL mental patients had been entered on the forms as Black. In spite of exposure of the fraudulent figures, they were defended by the government and used as justification for slavery right up to the Civil War.

Do such things happen these days? Not quite to such an extreme degree, but small errors can creep in which have noticeable effects.

For example, in the US it has been shown that any census always undercounts the poor, particularly poor Blacks, Hispanics and other disadvantaged minority groups, and it seems quite likely that a similar undercounting occurs in Britain.

Because of this, where government grants and resources are allocated on a per capita basis, poor areas will receive less than their rightful share. Thus a seemingly neutral census can have highly political implications.

THE LATEST problem to crop up at the stricken nuclear power plant at Three Mile Island is radioactive rat shit! The average pellet contains about half as much radioactivity as a chest X-ray, and it is thought to arise from rats drinking contaminated water in the containment building.

This may not seem very serious, but if you live near Windscale and your cat gets cancer, I would advise you to consult a lawyer.



COVENTRY S.O. supporters recently launched a monthly *Activist Bulletin* for the local Labour Party and trade union movement.

The first issue — April — ran to 400 copies, which have already been snapped up. Aimed at featuring local issues, it included interviews with Cllr John Hughs (District Party chairperson, and one of the 12 rebels recently expelled from the City Council Labour Group), Les Bennett [a tenants' leader], and Marilyn Perkins [NUPE senior steward, school meals].

While editorial control is with SO supporters, the Bulletin provides an open forum for the local labour movement. Response has been enthusiastic, with other Party activists taking copies to distribute and promising articles for the May bulletin. The 3-sided [A4] first issue looks like being well beaten by the next one!

MOSS SIDE LABOUR SAYS

# Investigate the cops

by Pete Keenlyside

THE PEOPLE of Moss Side have long viewed the local police station with suspicion. It is even built to look intimidating, with reflecting windows at ground floor level, and the reputation of the police in it hovers somewhere between Nazi storm-troopers and the Kray brothers.

They don't go much for community relations experiments here — they prefer van loads from the Tactical Aid Group (Manchester's SPG) and alsatians, supplemented by the odd charging horse.

Members of our local branch Labour Party weren't therefore exactly surprised to learn from the *New Statesman* that the inmates had been building up a nice little collection of 'unauthorised weapons' — a few hatchets, coshes and knives. Or that there was a large amount of cannabis around the place. After all, police pay doesn't go very far these days, does it?

But what the allegations did do was to trigger off a discussion at the branch meeting about the role of the police. One member told of how the police tried to force their way into her home to look for her son. When they eventually did get him, they refused his mother access to him and threatened that if he didn't sign a confession he would be taken to the torture room.

He signed, despite the fact that he is barely literate and almost certainly couldn't read what he was supposed to have confessed to.

Then there was the incident of a lad from one of the local sound systems who was arrested for carrying a stick. His mates followed him to the station and threatened that if he wasn't released they would take the place apart. They got what they wanted!

The function of the police in Moss Side is to try and

screw the lid down on what is potentially an explosive situation. Unemployment among black youth is well over 50% and the situation is getting worse all the time.

Rarely a week goes by without some incident taking place. Tensions are building up and sooner or later the whole thing will explode. And when it does it'll make Bristol look like a Social Democrats' wine-tasting session.

Moss Side Labour Party doesn't think that the answer lies in bringing in more police, in using more repression. Quite the opposite. We think the police are part of the problem and that things will only get better when the conditions are changed, when people have got decent jobs and decent housing.

The problem, though, is that the police are a law to themselves. They are only responsible to the chief constable, and he is the notorious James Anderton. He, of course, doesn't seem responsible to anyone.



There is one way that the Labour movement can attempt to control the activities of the police. That's by showing everyone what they're up to and by mobilising against it. That's why we in Moss Side are calling for a public inquiry into the goings-on at the local police station.

And if this is turned down, as it probably will be, then we've called on the City Labour Party to conduct its own workers' inquiry, bringing in trade unions as well as local community and ethnic groups. This will give us a chance to show to the police that it's not only unemployed black youth who don't like what they're doing, but the whole community.



**BRIXTON'S THUGS IN BLUE**

PHOTO: ANDREW WARD (REPORT)

"Four of them just came in here and they started to kick everything. I fell down between the telephone table and the bar. They just hit me and kicked me everywhere".

That's how 50 year old Halvin Swaby described what happened to him when police burst into his home in Ratray Road, Brixton on Saturday night. And that was only the start. Mr. Swaby, who had only left hospital after heart treatment two weeks before, told the *'Guardian'* how the police then hit him with an 18-inch wooden baton and a half brick, breaking his arm.

While he was being beaten, two of his sons were arrested in the hallway. The cops then went upstairs, breaking a bannister and kicking in the door of a bedroom.

Not content with that, the police returned the next night and again stormed into the house, this time in very large numbers. "About 50 came in," said Mr. Swaby's daughter, Dorothy. "You thin I'm exaggerating but I'm not."

"All I heard was someone crashing downstairs. That was Calvin (Mr. Swaby's third son).

They'd dragged him out of bed. He shouted 'Mum!' and she said 'Leave him alone'. A policeman said 'Shut your mouth, you effing black bastard'. They had his hair and his arm behind his back and they dragged him down the street."

The Swaby case is just one of many such stories from Brixton, unusual only in that it got into the bourgeois press.

At the defence committee meeting on Monday night, speakers described how youths had been forced to lie with their faces to the ground while they were beaten about the head with riot shields. Another young black, who had been trampled by a police horse and had suspected internal injuries, was dragged from hospital by police.

Many of those who appeared at Camberwell magistrates court on Monday showed obvious signs of police abuse — cuts, bruises, swollen faces, broken jaws and limbs.

Commissioner McNee is right when he blames "outside troublemakers" for the violence. Those "outside troublemakers" were his own blue-uniformed thugs.

by Jim Denham

"MOUNTBATTEN had a map on the wall of his office showing how it could be done. Harold and I used to stand in the State Room at no.10 and work out where they would put the guns. We reckoned they would site them in the Horse Guards".

It might seem incredible that anyone in the ruling class should have seriously considered a military coup against the Wilson Government in 1968. But apparently Marcia and Harold had good reason to keep a weather eye out for machine guns in the Horse Guards.

Despite the comic-opera aspect of many of the recent revelations, it is now quite clear that powerful ruling-class figures were seriously thinking in terms of a military coup in 1968.

On May 8th, 1968, there was a meeting between Lord Mountbatten, Cecil King [then chairman of the International Publishing Corporation], Hugh Cudlipp [also of IPC], and Lord Zuckerman [chief scientific advisor to the Government, at which the possibility of overthrowing the Labour Government and installing a 'National Government' under Mountbatten was discussed.

The fact that the Queen had received 'more letters of complaint than about any previous administration' was of particular concern to

## Against Wilson: coup talk. Against Benn...?

Mountbatten. And King was worried about the possibility of a general strike and doubted Wilson's ability to deal with that contingency effectively enough.

Apparently, Zuckerman stormed out, crying "This is rank treachery... I will have nothing to do with it". But he didn't feel strongly enough about it to tell the public — or even Wilson!

And according to former MI5 head Sir Martin Furnival Jones, ANOTHER coup plot was being hatched at about the same time. At least one major-general, other military officers, and some senior civil servants, were involved.

Jones describes the plotters as 'a pretty loony crew', led by 'gin-sodden generals'. Loony and gin-sodden they may have been, but these were certainly people of power.

Jones says "MI5 investigated the plot and — presumably after having decided not to come in on the action —

reported the facts to the then Home Secretary, James Callaghan. But again, not even Wilson was told about it at the time.

When questioned recently by the Sunday Times, Callaghan commented, "Ah, that one... I have nothing to say about it..." And Margaret Thatcher has refused to give any serious answer to Labour MP Ted Leadbitter's attempts to raise the matter in Parliament.

But socialists need to think long and hard about Mountbatten, King, and the 'gin-sodden generals'. If such people were even discussing the possibility of overthrowing the Wilson government, what would they want to do about a Government that attempted to carry out any real anti-capitalist measures?

And being loony and gin-sodden is, after all, a matter of degree. Faced with a genuine left-wing govern-

## FUND

Many readers have made a fine effort for the Labour Movement Press Defence Fund, sending in over £600 in the last fortnight. We must keep that up.

But the regular Socialist Organiser fund has suffered.

If you read Socialist Organiser regularly, but have not contributed financially before, now is the time we need your help. Send money to SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Cheques payable to 'Socialist Organiser'.

ment, wouldn't a lot of other tycoons and generals become wild and intemperate?

As Cecil King said recently:

"I told him [Mountbatten] the time might come when he had a role to play. His connections with the Royal Family and the army would make him, I said, a key figure at some time in any future disturbance".

Mountbatten, of course, is no longer in a position to step into the breach, due to his unfortunate boating accident. But there are plenty of other highly-placed reactionaries with the necessary 'connections with the Royal Family and the army' who could fit the bill.

The conclusions we need to draw should be obvious.

## Scots TUC leaders face rough ride

by Ian McCalman

THIS YEAR'S Scottish TUC will focus on the strategy to be adopted in the fight against the Tory government.

While the T&G just call for a continuation of the TUC's present ineffective campaign, a number of trades councils are demanding a fighting policy. Cumberland and Moray TCs favour calling a general strike to bring down the Tories. Falkirk and Edinburgh TCs call for the establishment of unemployed workers' centres and unemployed workers' associations, which contrasts with the STUC's weak-kneed Scottish Convention on Unemployment.

In the debate on the cuts, the FBU are putting forward a resolution which "calls on the movement to discuss with the Labour Party at local and national level the possibility of a no cuts, no rate rises policy". The adoption of a principled position on the rate rises would be a major step forward for the Scottish

TUC.

A keynote resolution in the international discussion comes from Dundee TC, which calls for support for the Palestinians in their struggle for "an independent, sovereign state". USDAW's resolution on Poland welcomes the free trade unions, whilst hoping "that the warm and friendly relationship which has existed between the Polish trade union movement and the STUC" will continue. How the mover reconciles these two incompatibles will provide an absorbing balancing act.

The conference promises to be the occasion for some sharp criticism of the way in which the STUC leadership has conducted itself over the last year. Many militants are unimpressed by the undermining of the strike at Hunterston Marine Construction and the Convention on Unemployment. This conference may well witness the emergence of forces prepared to challenge the old guard and provide fighting policies and resolute leadership.

Let's win  
on  
May 7th....  
and then

by Jeremy Corbyn

THE GLC elections now being fought by Labour mark a real watershed in the politics of the labour movement.

Never before has a manifesto been so clearly and publicly the combined efforts of all sections of the Labour party, and never before has it been the subject of a special conference of the Party to vote section by section on the contents.

The achievements of the rank and file in London in organising for this and campaigning for it should not be underestimated, but more importantly, we must address ourselves to how the new GLC will operate and what sort of pressures it will find itself in and how it will react.

It is essential that from the very start on May 8th the Labour Group on the GLC adopt the principle of recorded votes so that Council members can be clearly accountable for their actions at the point where the real power actually lies.

Labour Group meetings must be made much more 'open', both in the sense that Party members can elect delegates to attend, but also that the Group produces records of their meetings for Party members, and that individual Councillors are able to properly report back to the Party that they represent and to the Regional Executive.

Neither the programme nor the opposition to the Government will be of any substance if the whole approach of the new Council is one of closed doors and 'trust us, we know best'. The new GLC must make an immediate impact on all people by both its actions and its stances on a whole range of issues and its dealings with its own Trade Unions.

Anyone who tries to make people believe that the GLC can implement its programme without a major confrontation with the Government is deliberately disarming our supporters at a time when millions are desperately looking to the Labour Party for a real lead against the Tories and for a socialist society.

There are many items of Labour's programme that will mean a confrontation with the Tory Government — housing — transport — finance — planning — employment. In every case the reason for the confrontation will be clear — the Labour Party proposals have been put forward in the interests of working people as a way of redistributing wealth and raising living standards.

The vital role that the Labour GLC can play is in leading the fight against the Tories by providing services for winning people and confronting the Government.

The Labour Group on the GLC must be a real force for the defence of working people and the defence of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party must be a force for the defence of working people and the defence of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party must be a force for the defence of working people and the defence of the Labour Party.

# Festival for Women's Rights against Tory Attacks

at Starcross School,  
Rising Hill Street, off  
Penton Street  
[Pentonville Road]  
London N1

MAY 9

am 11-12 12-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 pm

<b>IN THE HALL</b>	Women's Theatre Group play <b>Breaking Through</b> (about nuclear power)	JAM TODAY	Self-Defence display	TOUR DE FORCE
<b>FEATURE FILMS</b>	<b>Double Day:</b> the burdens of South American women	<b>Take it like a man, maam:</b> A comedy showing the absurdity of sex roles	<b>Blow for Blow:</b> about a textile workers' sit-in strike in France	<b>With Babies and Banners</b> — women at war with US auto bosses, 1936
<b>WOMEN AT WORK</b> E, F, D, W, V	<b>Positive Action for equality at work:</b> Anna Coote, Denny Fitzpatrick	<b>How to Fight for Jobs:</b> women from struggles at BPC, Lee Jeans, Longworth Hospital etc.	<b>Video by Women in Manual Trades</b>	<b>New Technology:</b> Tess Woodcraft and Sheila McKechnie
<b>UNION AND LABOUR PARTY CAUCUSES</b> E, W	<b>Women in the Labour Party:</b> Women's Fight-back, CLPD Women's Action Cttee	<b>Civil Service Women's Rights Group</b>	<b>Women in the NUT</b>	<b>Natfhe</b>  <b>NUPE</b>
<b>RACISM &amp; IMPERIALISM.</b> V, F, W	<b>Paddington Migrants' Group</b> on the Nationality Bill, with slide show	<b>Video of first OWAAD conference</b>	<b>Groups in solidarity with struggles in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Bolivia</b>	<b>How to fight the Home Office:</b> Anwar Ditta, Jaswinder Kaur, Nasreen Akhtar, Nasira Begum support groups <b>Ireland: the Armagh prisoners</b>
<b>CHILD CARE</b> E, F, W	<b>National Child Care Campaign</b>	<b>Fighting for Workplace Nurseries</b>		
<b>FERTILITY CONTROL</b> V, D, F, W	<b>NAC Video 'I Said We Had to be Careful'</b> (designed for younger audiences.)	<b>Contraception and the cuts</b>	<b>Dangerous contraception:</b> Depo Provera, Dalkon Shield, Pill Victims campaigns and ICASC	<b>National Abortion Campaign: next steps</b>
<b>WELFARE STATE</b> D, W, P	<b>Private Medicine NHS Fightback Campaign</b>	<b>The Family and Benefits.</b> Debate with Jean Coussins, Zoe Fairbairns, NCCL, Ann Oakley	<b>Who controls the Welfare State? In and Against the State</b>	<b>Rent Strikes, Council tenants' campaigns: tenants' orgs.</b> <b>Lancashire School Meals Campaign</b>
<b>NUCLEAR THREAT</b> P, F, D	<b>Play (see Hall)</b>		<b>The Nuclear Threat — Created by Men? Debate:</b> Sally Davison (CND), women's anti-nuclear groups	<b>Pat Arrowsmith, reads her poems</b> <b>FILM: THE WAR GAME</b>
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN</b> D, F, W	<b>Violence in the Home: the ideology behind it, the law, and how to help the victims.</b> Women's Aid	<b>What rape is really about: reps of Rape Crisis Centres</b>	<b>Self-Defence: see Hall</b>	<b>Debate on Pornography, Sex Shops, the Sainsbury Bill etc.</b>
<b>SEX ROLES AND SEXUALITY</b> W, F, P, E	<b>Why the Tories Want us to be Heterosexual.</b> Eileen Fairweather. Shocking Pink. Lesbian Groups. Fighting the Ageing Act. <b>PROSTITUTION: ECP, PROS &amp; PLAN</b>	<b>Monitoring and fighting Media sexism</b>	<b>Sex Stereo typing: Shocking Pink, CASSO, CISSY, Sheffield Women in Education</b>	<b>Lesbian Mothers and the Law: Rights of Women</b>

All Day

**EXHIBITIONS BY:**  
TUC, Spare Rib, Hackney Flashers Women in Manual Trades, Oxford City Nursery Campaign, Women in the NUT

**SHORT FILMS BY WOMEN, including:**  
Marion's Story; My Funny Valentine; It Isn't Your Imagination; The Invisible Woman; Women of the Rhonda; Soho; A Comedy in Six Unnatural Acts; Our Dear Sisters; Jobs for the Girls; Risky Business; Careless Love.

**THEATRE GROUPS** (times not scheduled yet):  
Bloomers (cabaret), Gemma, Spinsters, Lottie and Ada, Mrs. Worthington's Daughters (poetry), plays for children every hour by Cavalcade, and Women's Theatre Group (see Hall)

**KEY:**  
E = Exhibition  
F = Films  
D = Debate  
P = Play  
V = Video  
W = Workshop

**AFTER 5.0 CLOCK** *Early* Our Right to Work. Our Right to Independence. Our Right to Choose. Speakers from jobs struggles at BPC and Lee Jeans from the People's March. Marissa Casares Roach; Jo Richardson MP; Anwar Ditta — Fighting to win Female Paying Group and ending with a song from Bridget Keenan

All the events except those for children will be run by and for women: the day is intended as a celebration of women's struggles, achievements and victories. But men may come too.

Tickets £3 or £1.50 unwaived, are available now. There are concessions for block bookings from outside London, and all tickets can be taken sale or return. Stalls (£2.50) are also available. Write to Festival Planning Group, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

There will be kids' events as well as an all-day creche, lunch included. There'll be good food [an indoor dining room, and an under-cover open air 'pavement café]. Special provision will be made for the disabled.

May 9th will be a day to rally forces, to share experiences, ideas and information, to protest against the Tories' attacks on women's rights — and to enjoy yourself.



AN IRANIAN woman  
 spoke in a recent visit to  
 London spoke to Mary  
 Corbinney of Socialist  
 Organiser about the posi-  
 tion of women in Iran  
 today, two years after the  
 revolution.

# WOMEN IN IRAN

BEFORE AND during the revolution, women were an important part of the movement for the overthrow of the Shah. They played an important role in the demonstrations, and although the media here tried to make out that all women were wearing the veil, this was not true.

A lot of women who went to demonstrations without the veil were however prepared to take a scarf, if it wasn't possible to participate without one. But for instance those women involved in the big civil servants' strike before the revolution didn't wear veils.

It was a fantastic experience for women to be out on the streets. The overthrow of the Shah meant freedom for women as well. In many factories there were strikes in which women and men fought and won demands for an eight hour day, increased wages, and better working conditions.

Before the revolution strike committees were set up in many factories, and these developed into workers' councils afterwards. In one particular thread-making factory in Teheran, the conditions were terrible.

Women had to stand for eight hours continuously; they were only allowed 15 minutes for breakfast, which consisted of a piece of bread and a boiled potato; the noise was incredible and the air was full of cotton, which the workers were forced to swallow. Many women died of TB.

During the revolution they went on strike for equal pay, a shorter working week, and increased wages. At a meeting of the workers to elect a committee the women argued that they should be represented. There were 700

workers in total, 150 of whom were women. The women gained two positions on a committee of eight.

But that was before the Islamic Republican Party moved into the factories and turned the workers' councils into foremen's councils.

Now workers are arguing that these committees should be dissolved and there should be fresh elections, and in most factories women are standing for election.

## Bourgeois

In most factories women have won the demand for workplace nurseries. Under the Shah women weren't able to go through these experiences of struggle, and this has been one tremendous achievement of the revolution.

The IRP have tried to impose the veil on women, and in 1980 they introduced a regulation saying that women who work should wear a scarf. But even today they can't enforce it.

In the civil service, for example, women may take a scarf to work in their bag and put it on in the office, but in such a way that their hair is showing. This defeats the purpose of the scarf, which is for women to hide their hair from men because it is considered to be sexually arousing.

In the summer of 1980, five or six hundred women

demonstrated outside Bani Sadr's office. Unfortunately the Left didn't organise for it because they consider the question of the veil to be a bourgeois issue.

Working women supported the protest but there were also a handful of ruling class women. At the moment the question of the veil is not a problem, but the Government will try to enforce it if they get a chance.

In addition the present regime is trying hard to adopt laws and regulations about women similar to those under the Shah. The problems of divorce, custody of children, marriage and inheritance that existed under the Shah still exist.

For example, on the question of 'temporary marriage': under the Shah there were areas of the city where prostitutes lived behind high walls guarded by police. The Islamic Republic has demolished these places and prostitution has been outlawed.

## 'Marriage'

Prostitutes seen on the streets were then executed. But under Islam a man may have four permanent and as many temporary wives as he likes, and now a 'marriage institution' has been set up.

Before, men used to go to prostitutes; now they contact this place run by

the government and arrange to marry a woman temporarily either for one hour, one day, or one week. The next day, the next hour, the next month, the woman is out on the street again.

Radical Muslims like Bani Sadr and Shariati argue that 'temporary marriage' is more 'progressive' because in the West there are free relations between men and women and temporary marriage is a bit like that!

## Kills

In reality, no woman will go through this unless she is economically in need. In an interview with an Islamic women's magazine, a woman worker said, 'Seven years ago, a man married me temporarily and I had a child. He never appeared after the child was born or gave me any money for the child'.

This happens to a lot of poor and working-class women. Temporary marriage is the same as prostitution. The Shah tried to lock prostitutes away as if they were a disease. This Government kills them or has institutionalised prostitution in the form of temporary marriage.

Another law passed by cabinet ministers and now going through Parliament to be approved is called 'Ghessas', or Islamic punishment. Several articles of this law concern women and are horrifying.

If a Moslem man kills a Moslem woman, he can pay the price of the blood of the woman to her family, which is half the price of the blood of a man, and escape punishment. The implication of this is that a woman's life is cheap, and if you are rich you can get away with murder.

Another article states that if someone murders a woman in a place which is all-female, e.g. a public baths, a girls' school, or an all-women factory, it cannot be proved — because a woman cannot be a witness.

## Fight

The Islamic government has brought down the age of marriage to 13, which means that although women have fought for equal pay and won it in some factories, working-class women won't have the opportunity to go to school.

Laws on divorce and custody of children favour men, and have not been changed since the regime of the Shah.

These are the issues to fight on: more than the veil or scarf. It's not a question of whether the Shah or Khomeini is worse. It's a question of the system — the capitalist system. Khomeini's government is the most reactionary form of capitalism



'The IRP have tried to impose the veil... but even today they can't enforce it'

After the revolution there were many women's organisations, with their own papers, fighting on different issues. They were successful in drawing attention to the fight for women's rights. An attempt was made by most of the women in the different left-wing organisations to set up a joint women's council, which organised big meetings attracting several thousands of women. It was even successful in involving working class women.

Unfortunately, most of these organisations, despite talking about women's issues, don't take them seriously. When the war with Iraq started, at the end of 1980, they argued that the most important issue was the war, and pulled the women comrades out from the women's council to concentrate on their different attitudes to the war.

There are now no real women's organisations.

Groups of women are continuing to fight, however, and trying to build something. Women, like any other oppressed section, need to organise themselves independently. Women, whether of the working class or other classes, have common ground in their experience of oppression, but it is only the working class that can fight to the end.

## Potential

The experience women have been through in the last few years cannot be taken away from them. It is common to hear in Iran today: 'We didn't make the revolution to get where we are now'. There is great potential for fighting this reactionary regime, and what we need is for revolutionaries to take the question of women as seriously as other issues.



'A fantastic experience for women to be out on the streets'

**HANDS OFF EL SALVADOR.** National demonstration, 12.30pm, Saturday 25 April, from Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, London.

**SUPPORT THE H-BLOCK PRISONERS.** Demonstration, Sunday 26th April, 1.30pm from Kilburn Square.

**IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY.** Easter Commemoration. Victory to the hunger strikers. 3pm, Sunday 4th April, from 'The Crown', Cricklewood, North West London.

**BARRICADE:** revolutionary youth paper. No. 7 out now: copies 10p plus postage from P.O. Box 135, London, N1 0DD.

**AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT:** national demonstration, Sunday 31 May, Assemble noon, at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park.

## Become a Socialist Organiser Supporter

To make **Socialist Organiser** a real campaigning paper that can organise the left in the movement, it needs its own organised activist support — and money.

Local supporters' groups have been established in most major towns to build a real base for the paper.

Supporters are being asked to undertake to sell a minimum of 6 papers an issue and to contribute at least £1 a month (20p for unwaged). So becoming a supporter helps build our circulation and gives the paper a firmer financial base.

If you like **Socialist Organiser**, think it's doing a good job, but realist that it can't possibly do enough unless you help, become a card-carrying supporter.

Fill in the form below and return to: **Socialist Organiser**, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY

I want more information / I wish to become a **Socialist Organiser** supporter

Name

Address

CLP

Trade union membership

# THE CHOICE OF POLAND'S WORKERS

LAST WEEK Moscow was clearly warning the Polish workers' movement that its patience was ending. The Russian press stepped up its attacks. Warsaw pact manoeuvres were continued.

Finally Brezhnev, speaking in Prague, delivered his highly ambiguous statement that "the Polish Communists will be able, one must suppose, to defend the cause of socialism".

In other words: we're not very happy at all with what is happening, but we're giving the Polish bureaucrats one more chance to see if they can really get tough with the rabble.

Within hours there was an official communiqué that the Warsaw Pact exercises had ended.

The manoeuvres had reinforced Moscow's military position on Poland's borders, depositing massive amounts of supplies. Yet invasion would still be a drastic step, possibly unleashing all sorts of repercussions not at all favourable for the Kremlin leadership. Resistance, whether military (including by the Polish army) or by strike action, economic sabotage, or go-slows in the factories, could bog down the Russian Army for a long time. A successful and quick outcome is not at all assured.

Add to this the international effects, and the reasons for Brezhnev's decision become obvious.

Yet the very apparatus which Brezhnev sees as the last hope of bringing the Polish workers' movement to heel — the 'Communist Party' — is itself in the throes of internal strife.

There is a split between 'liberals' and 'hardliners' in the leadership. But, above all, the 'disloyalty' of the CP's rank and file is extremely worrying for the bureaucrats. Many of the rank and file, especially the factory workers, are enthusiastic activists in Solidarnosc.

Kania's attempt at 'meeting the masses' last weekend — despite the mealy-mouthed reports in the *Morning Star* — were a fiasco. What the CP members are now demanding is not promises of reforms, but the power to implement social changes themselves. In this direction, they have won a significant victory. The coming el-

ections for the CP's congress on July 20th will be by secret ballot, with several contending lists of candidates.

The very idea that Solidarnosc voices will echo through the Congress of the CP must send a chill down the backs of the Kremlin leadership and enrage the hardliners. *Pravda* has ranted against the 'waverers' and those infected with 'indifference' within the CP.

Sections of the CP leadership have snapped immediately to attention on hearing Brezhnev's reprimands. General Jaruzelski, threatening to resign if his proposals were not accepted, pushed a law through the Polish Parliament (Diet) on Friday 10th April forbidding strikes for two months and imposing a wage freeze until the end of April.

His much-hailed 'social contract' of 90 days is in tatters after a narrowly-avoided General Strike on March 31st, and the General is now trying to legislate another social agreement. At the same time his 'economic reforms' will spell hunger and devastation for many Polish families — on top of the suffering that they have to bear at the present.

The 'reforms' foresee the choking off of investment in many sectors of the economy, the 'rationalisation' of the workforce in particular plants, and wholesale closures of others. The results? Unemployment of one million!

How the Stalinists will be able to square this with their trumpeting of how Eastern Europe avoids the evils of unemployment in the West, remains to be seen.

Other sectors of the top bureaucracy are even more ruthless and cynical. For people like Andrzej Zabinski a Politburo member and First Party Secretary of Katowice, speaking at a meeting (very appropriately) of policemen, the question was the maintenance of Party rule at all costs.

How? Work with the more pliable members of Solidarnosc to get rid of the KOR (Workers Self-Defence Committee) activists. Draw the Solidarnosc leadership into close collaboration in running the economy on the bureaucracy's



Troops on Warsaw Pact manoeuvres

terms, by making them responsible for pushing through redundancies, etc.

And in the meantime corrupt them totally with the luxuries and lifestyles which are part and parcel of bureaucratic privilege.

As quoted in a Southern Poland Solidarnosc paper: "We can already see it among them. Easy access to money, taxi rides to Gdansk, telephone conversations, contacts with the secretary of the provincial Party committee, with the deputy premier... They begin to get extravagant with money... so this is a correct policy".

And the clear aim: the independent workers' movement "must be simply slowly broken up".

Though not ed in the would like. leadership of is clearly fees ures towards commodation inist bureauc

The last-cellation of general strike by Walesa. anance of 'a 70 agreement. huge outcry ion movement.

At issue was the text of the which did in demn the att nosc membe goszcz and future democ responsible attack (and

## Way forward after Wembley

TONY BANKS discusses the next steps for Labour democracy.

THE VOTE at Wembley on 24 January in favour of an electoral college for the leader was no overwhelming victory, nor does it mean the Labour Party is heading firmly in a socialist direction.

The Conference decision was achieved through hard work at rank and file level and not a little luck. The open invitation to reverse the decision made by Michael Foot at the end has inevitably been taken up by the Parliamentary Labour Party and several unions. This means our immediate task must be to defend the January decision.

Although the Constituency Labour Parties have to submit a number of resolutions before time is found for a debate, just one from a right-wing union executive will usually guarantee the re-opening of any issue. So there are no prizes for guessing that the electoral college proportions, and possibly the principle itself, will be on the Conference agenda at Brighton.

It really is a remarkable fact that the Left has to win at least twice on every issue at Conference before the result is accepted.

Clearly one of the best ways to defend the college is to set its machinery in motion.

In the deputy leadership contest we can expect the media to concentrate on personalities, but with a proper campaign we can force the issues through. Such issues must include:

- the restoration of full employment,
  - support for Conference decisions,
  - social ownership of industry,
  - withdrawal from the EC,
  - unilateral nuclear disarmament,
  - the extension of democratic accountability throughout the Movement.
- The Party must be given the opportunity to find out the views of its potential leaders on these and other key issues of the day.
- The campaign for democracy in our Party should also demand the rank and file

thoroughly disillusioned by years of betrayal by Labour's right-wing leadership. An interesting footnote to this was provided recently by Harold Wilson when he announced his retirement and said he had achieved all his life's ambitions. From this we must assume that socialism was not one of them.

Despite near-hysterical opposition in the media and elsewhere, our campaign has continued to gather strength and is actually now changing the face of the Party. Sections of the Right are beginning to move out, seeking power without accountability elsewhere, and gradually the Party is reasserting its socialist origins, from which it has been diverted by those who equate socialism with the rate of their own personal advancement.

Our next task is to extend the campaign throughout the movement. Accountability of leadership, which is at the very heart of socialism, cannot be confined to the Party, it is just as vital within the unions. (But, while the concept is of general application, the way it operates will vary from union to union).

This demands individual campaigns within unions, with no question of outside imposition, although all activists in the movement have a clear duty to render whatever assistance is required of them.

### Issue

An obvious and immediate target is democratisation of the block vote. The issue here is not the principle, but rather the way in which the block vote is exercised. When a General Secretary holds up the card, we have a right to know if it is being used in reflection or defiance of the wishes of the union's membership. It is, therefore, the practice and not the principle that must be examined critically.

Leading on from this there is, in my opinion, a need to alter the voting proportions in Conference. At present the constituencies are grossly underrepresented in terms of their signifi-

cance within the Party and this is giving rise to much resentment within the CLPs.

I believe a voting distribution in Conference of 60:40 as between affiliated organisations and the constituencies to be fair.

Giving the CLP delegates a much more powerful voice in policy decisions will also help to stimulate greater union participation at the local constituency level, where at the moment it is often sadly lacking. At present there is little incentive for trade union activists to get closely involved in constituency parties whose role is still perceived to be that of election-winning organisations rather than serious initiators of Party policy.

### Detract

In the long run, it seems desirable to get away from national affiliations in favour of channelling them through the constituency parties. This would not detract from the significance of national union centres in their relations with a Labour government, but it would revitalise the Party-union relationship at the local level.

In a redistribution of voting strength at Conference, the situation would be very different from the present electoral college principle for the election of leader. Giving the PLP 30% of votes was an undesirable proposal, but probably necessary to secure support for the change. The same does not apply to policy determination.

In this area the function of the PLP must be to carry out conference decisions and not to decide them. People do not join the Labour Party merely to provide a comfortable existence for MPs, nor to be told by them what policies we will be allowed to have.

The difficulties posed by trying to change the system while at the same time running it are obvious. But if there is to be a Parliamentary road to socialism, then that is the major obstacle we must overcome.



'Hands off Polish workers' was the slogan of a London labour movement demonstration on 12th April



# FOR WORKERS



yet corrupt-  
ay Zabinski  
he national  
Solidarnosc  
g the press-  
political ac-  
with the Stal-  
y.  
minute can-  
he planned  
of March 31  
d his accept-  
satisfactory'  
provoked a  
thin the un-

not so much  
agreement,  
plicitly con-  
k on Solidar-  
s in Byd-  
low for the  
n of officials  
the militia  
ey were de-

moted) — as the way it was carried out.

Walesa was openly accused of manipulating the movement. At a meeting of Solidarnosc's supreme body, the National Commission, in Gdansk, on April 1st, not only Walesa but the union's advisors or 'experts' (the 'Catholic mafia') were accused of timidity and 'fear of the tanks'. Militants declared that Walesa had no right to make a decision which constitutionally only the National Commission as a whole was empowered to make.

For many militants, like one of the three wounded Solidarnosc members at Bydgoszcz, this was a return to the pre-1970 situation.

For others, like Karol Modzelewski, the Solidarnosc organiser in Wroclaw with a 20-year record of anti-Stalinist political activity, this meant resignation from positions as union organisers. Others attacked Walesa and Gdansk as having a 'monopoly' of power and decision-making in the union. But Anna Walentynowicz, one of the leaders of the Lenin Shipyard strike last August, had her mandate as delegate removed by her fellow-workers, because they disapproved of her criticisms of the way the general strike was called off.

The pioneers of the present Polish workers' movement, the Gdansk workers, having by their exemplary action raised all the

oppressed workers, students and farmers to their feet and instilled in them the will to fight the bureaucracy, now seem to be falling behind the rest of the movement.

The attitude of Gdansk Solidarnosc no doubt has much to do with Walesa's huge personal standing there. His closeness to the leaders of the Catholic Church naturally tends to push him in the direction of compromise or the 'small step strategy', as he prefers to call it.

Yet clearly, if after months of economic hardship, lengthening and proliferating queues, and constant threat of invasion and civil war, the organised millions of Solidarnosc are continuing to push for further change, Walesa's call for a halt to headlong confrontations will begin to open up further the simmering conflict within the union's ranks.

With the bureaucracy's avowed policy of incorporating the Solidarnosc 'moderates', Jaruzelski's economic 'reforms', and the 'get tough now' message delivered in no uncertain terms by Moscow, 'compromise' means losing what has been won. Pushing forwards means consciously preparing for a showdown and a military clash.

That is the choice facing the Polish masses.

Alexis Carras

# LEE JEANS WOMEN SHOW THE WAY

by Dave Milliken

THE LEE Jeans factory occupation goes from strength to strength.

Two of the workers visited Edinburgh on April 8th to speak to rallies organised as part of the TUC Week of Action, and they spoke to *Socialist Organiser*.

Liz Dyer is 20. She had worked for Lee Jeans for four years, and was offered £100 redundancy pay. Catherine Millar, also 20, started at Lees in September when she was about to be made redundant from the wool mill she worked in. She was offered no redundancy pay.

Liz explained: 'It was during January we were told the factory was to close on April 30th.'

'There was a meeting of the 240 workers on 4th February. Our shop stewards said we had two choices — take the money and run, or fight. There was no way we were taking the money. The decision to occupy was unanimous.'

'Unemployment in Greenock is very high. There's hardly any factories open, never mind taking on workers, so if we accepted the redundancies most of us wouldn't get other jobs.'

'We're not interested in more redundancy money, we're not negotiating on that basis. How long would redundancy pay last? What we want is our jobs. That's what our fight is all about.'

A well-attended meeting in Falkirk Town Hall on Monday 6th, called to promote the campaign against unemployment in the central region of Scotland, heard Bridie Billingham from the Lee Jeans occupation.

Bridie explained how the multinational employers had deliberately run down the factory, with the aim of transferring production to their factory in Northern Ireland.

The workers had rejected all the management's blackmail attempts, and had publicly burned a batch of letters from the company. No threats or bribes would induce the workforce to surrender.

'We are not in the business of selling jobs', said Bridie.

The collection at the meeting raised over £60 for the Lee Jeans fighting fund.

A salutary warning note was struck by Jim Denham, victimised ex-shop steward from BL Longbridge. He contrasted the past reputation of strong trade union organisation in BL with the series of defeats inflicted since Edwardes took over: 57,000 jobs gone, numerous factories closed, and militants victimised.

'High unemployment', warned Jim, 'threatens us all, even those in factories with a reputation for militancy and strong organisation'.

The meeting was another step forward in the campaign in the central region against unemployment. Already there has been a successful demonstration in Stirling and the formation of an unemployed workers' association there. Centres for the unemployed are being set up in Alloa, Grangemouth, and Stirling.

Ian McCalman

'The Talbot Linwood works is just up the road from us. Unemployment in the Paisley area is as bad as in Greenock, and we thought that they'd fight as well.'

'It's going to be even harder for them to get jobs, with 4800 all losing their jobs at once. Also, if women can fight, we reckoned that men would take up the battle. So their decision not to occupy was a disappointment.'

'In many ways, though, it's made us even more determined to win. We know that if we show the way, others might follow.'

'The support we've had from the labour movement has been wonderful. If it

wasn't for this, we'd have had it long ago. We've had help with transport and contacts, never mind the fantastic sums of money that's been raised.'

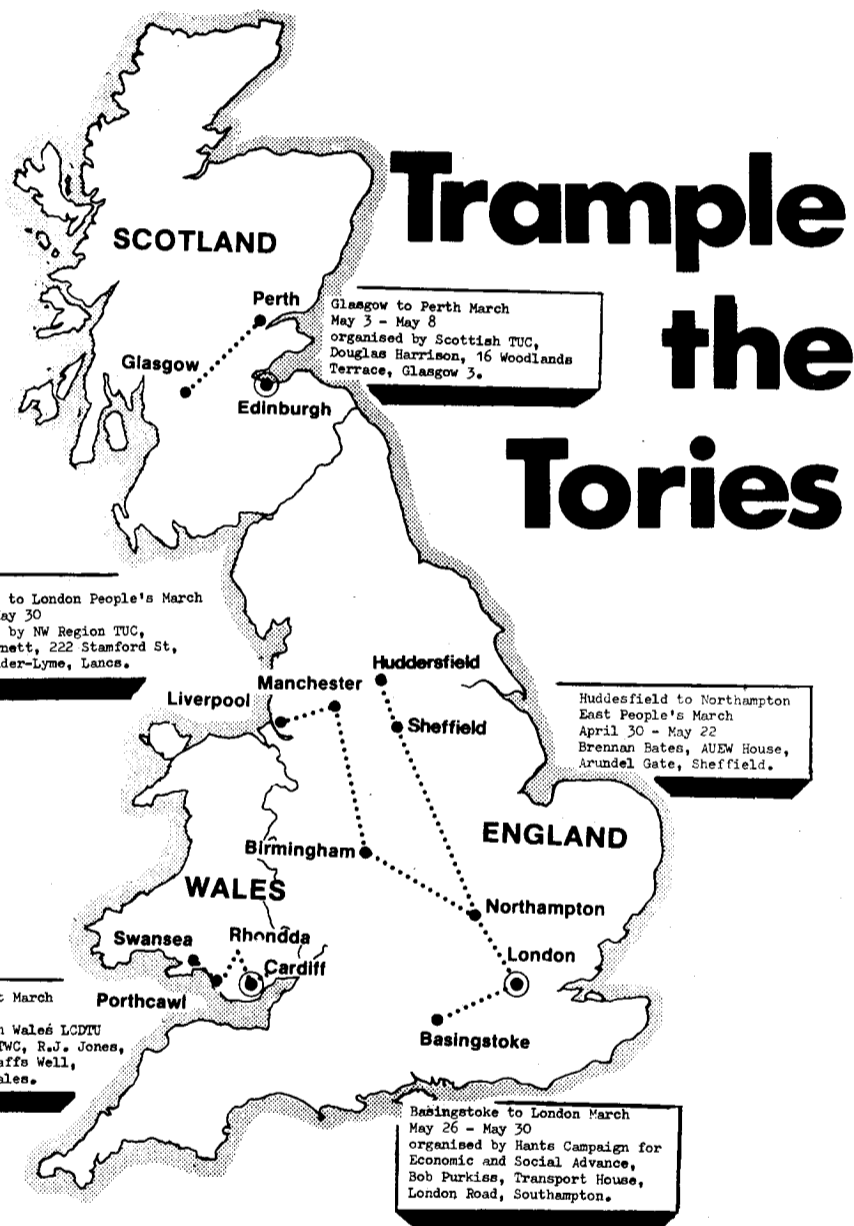
'Our own union [the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers] have been great as well. They came down from Glasgow right at the beginning and said that we didn't have a chance, but as soon as they saw our reaction and determination, they knew that we'd all stick together.'

'The union keeps us informed of what's happening regularly, although at the moment they can't even get the management to negotiate with us. We'll just have to force them to.'

The demands of the workers are minimal. They suggested work-sharing with loss of pay at the very beginning of the dispute. There was no history of militancy at the factory, and it must have surprised management that for once the workforce had had enough.

They would still settle for work-sharing, but the dispute is beginning to gain wider publicity than, say, the Gardners occupation did last year. We can only hope it will show the way for other workers.

Donations and messages of support to: Treasurer, Lee Jeans Strike Fund, c/o T&GWU, 4 Brougham St., Greenock. (Phone: 26237. 11am-12 and 3-4pm)



## Will their voice be heard on the march?

by Jim Denham

DESPITE the obstacles being placed in their way by the organisers of the 'People's March for Jobs', Labour Parties and union branches throughout the country are organising to make the march a focus for a militant fight against unemployment and the Tory government.

How an unemployed worker actually gets on the march remains unclear. The organisers appear to want organisations to sponsor 'a marcher', the actual person to be chosen by the local organising

committee after careful vetting. But many labour movement bodies are nominating and sponsoring their own marchers, and presenting the organisers with a 'fait accompli'.

At the same time Labour Party members and supporters of the 'Right to Work' campaign have been leafletting dole queues in many areas, encouraging unemployed workers to join the march as it passes through their town.

The march will culminate in a mass rally in London on Sunday 31st May — so even if you can't get anyone onto the march itself, make sure your Lab-

our Party or union branch sends a delegation to the rally.

The organisers may want the march to be a 'respectable' affair, limiting itself to demands that will be acceptable to the CBI and the Church. But socialists throughout the land are determined that the 'People's March' will become a 'workers' march' against unemployment, against the Tories, and for a militant fightback like that of the Gardners occupation, the miners' strike, and the present struggles at Lee Jeans in Greenock and Ansell's in Birmingham.

# Union grass roots must decide

by John McIlroy

THE MORNING after Tony Benn declared his intention to take on Denis Healey, as the newspapers reported trade union leader after trade union leader asking him to withdraw in the interests of a united fight against the Tories, I decided to speak to a group of shop stewards from Greater Manchester who are directly involved in fighting Tory policies in the workplaces, and get their views.

'Benn is absolutely right to stand'. That was the view of Tommy Hart, TGWU senior steward at Axsco Chemicals, Littleborough, and a delegate from TGWU 704 to Heywood and Royton GMC.

'Healey is one hundred per cent opposed to party policy. We have to put him on the spot and use this election campaign to hammer home that what he stands for are the discredited policies of the 1974-79 government. Personalities are important, and if we leave him there as Deputy Leader, then he'll fight like hell to sabotage our programme again.

'There is a basic antagonism in this party between the right and the left, and it is no good running away from it. Shore, Healey and even Michael Foot realise that.

## Claim

'Benn's campaign is going to lead to divisions and "blood-letting", they claim, but their campaign to reverse Wembley and kick out the "wreckers" — what's that going to do?

'Benn's shown great courage and I hope to Christ he sticks it out'.

What about the statements made by Moss Evans and Alex Kitson, asking Benn to stand down?

'They do not necessarily speak for the TGWU rank and file on this one. We have to fight to ensure that issues like this are decided by the grass roots, not by the personal opinions of individual union leaders or leading committees, by extending and developing democracy within the TGWU. We have to ensure that Benn speaks directly to the membership of as many union conferences as possible in the coming months'.

## Ear

'Benn is wrong to stand', claims Billy Hines, AUEW convenor at General Engineering, Radcliff, a member of Eccles CLP and prospective Parliamentary candidate for Gloucester. 'I've been a strong supporter of Benn since I started getting involved in the Party around the '79 election, but I think it's basically wrong just now. The left needs to consolidate and this decision may alienate the many ordinary constituency activists whose ear we have at the moment.

'You have to relate to the way they think and the influences that affect them. We've got Social Democrat supporters in my factory, and if I called a mass meeting next week Benn would get very few votes'.

But if you call on Benn to withdraw, aren't you simply joining the right

wing chorus and in reality endorsing Healey and his policies?

'Don't get me wrong. If next week Benn is still determined to stand, then I'll be out there doing all I can to support him.

'A final point. The disarray in the Tribune group hasn't helped. Should the Left have some wider forum which can take decisions on whether candidates should stand in parliamentary elections rather than the MPs taking them themselves?'

John White, GMWU shop steward at ICI and GMC Macclesfield CLP, believes that the tactical arguments for not standing just don't hold water. 'If there is a non-aggression pact between Left and Right, then you could've fooled me. Healey and CO. and the right wing are on the offensive. Foot promised to accept Wembley and then went back on his word. The best form of defence is attack'.

Phil Davies, a FTAT con-

venor who is in the process of affiliating his branch to Farnworth CLP, has no doubts. 'The Schreiber shop committee support Tony Benn's decision to stand 100%. The only people who have any reason to be frightened are the right wing.

'I'll be arguing for Benn next week down at the picket line at Royal Pride where our members are striking for recognition. I'll also be raising the issue as a FTAT national executive

member at our meeting next week'.

What did Phil think about the programme on which Benn was standing? 'What I've read in the press is adequate to draw the line with Healey. "Thirty-five hour week now" makes more sense to me than "end unemployment", and withdrawal from NATO makes the only sense there is out of a "non-nuclear defence strategy". But we can work out our differences on the left while

uniting behind Benn to fight the Right'.

Paul Kennedy, Bakers' Union branch secretary at Manor Bakeries, Wythenshawe, and Regional Committee member and active in Stretford CLP, was also clear where he stood. 'I hope our union will get right behind Benn's candidacy.

'The chorus of abuse — and that's all it is — is basically anti-democratic.



## WHAT LABOUR ACTIVISTS SAY

### Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

by Vladimir Derer

SOME LABOUR Party leaders are trying to prevent a contest for the office of Deputy Leader taking place under the provisions of the newly-created electoral college at conference this September.

Labour Party members will also have seen reports that even if there is a contest, because a number of senior trade union leaders have promised the Parliamentary leaders of the Party that the block votes of their unions will be cast in favour of Denis Healey the outcome is already predetermined.

The rank and file demanded the setting up of the electoral college because firstly,

they wanted the Leader and Deputy Leader to be chosen by all sections of the Party, and secondly, because they wanted the Leader and the Deputy Leader to be accountable to the Party through annual re-election.

A contest is essential if this second provision is to be effective. Unlike under totalitarian regimes, in a democracy an election implies choice, as practised under the present Party rules. Regular annual contests for the Party's two top offices are completely consistent with the way other members of the National Executive are elected. No-one has ever suggested that contest in these elections is in any way divisive. There's no good reason why the office of De-

puty Leader should be treated differently.

This is why at its April meeting the Executive Committee of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy welcomed Tony Benn's decision to stand for the office of Deputy Leader this September.

The Party did not set up the electoral college in order not to have an election. Only in an Orwellian world would one have an elaborate machinery for making nominations in order not to make them, for holding annual elections in order not to hold them, for recording of votes when these can be cast for only one candidate. But this is what is being widely advocated.

Whatever reservations we may have about the way Tony Benn's candidature was announced, none of them apply to its timing. A number of trade unions are having their annual biennial conferences in the immediate future. It gives them the opportunity to consult their members on how THEIR vote should be cast. But trade unionists can hardly express their preferences if they do not know who the candidates are going to be.

For the above reasons, CLPD calls on its supporters:

• To make sure that their CLP exercises its right to nominate for the Deputy Leadership. Nomination papers will shortly be circulated by Labour Party

headquarters to ALL affiliated organisations.

• To pass resolutions through trade union branches calling on the union leaders to consult with the members, preferably at their annual conference, as to how their union's vote should be cast.

CLPD takes the view that one of the best ways of defending the Wembley decision, which some Labour Party leaders are working to overturn, is to make sure that the electoral college is used. We believe that any attempt to fix the outcome in advance can only bring discredit to the labour movement.

CLPD calls on its supporters to work for a free and fair election, that is, for a genuine election.

### Reg Race MP

by Reg Race MP

TONY BENN's challenge to Dennis Healey as deputy leader of the Labour Party should be supported by all committed socialists.

He is standing on the basis of support for conference decisions. The statement issued in support of his candidature says clearly that the first priority of the next Labour Government must be to ensure the return to full employment by implementing the Alternative Economic Strategy.

Priority no.2 is to support and strengthen the rights of women, to defend the

Trades Unions, and to democratise society. Priority no.3 is to expand the public and social services to meet need and to create jobs.

Priority no.4 is to secure the withdrawal of Britain from the EEC; and priority no.5 is to adopt a non-nuclear defence strategy for Britain and to secure the removal of all American nuclear bases from Britain.

Such a political programme should have our united support. And we should also support Tony Benn because he is deeply committed to the democratisation of the Labour Party and to defence of the Wembley conference decision

on the shape of the electoral college.

There are those in the PLP who have argued that Mr Benn should not stand in the electoral college, and should leave the way open for an unopposed return for Dennis Healey. Such an argument cannot be right.

Dennis Healey was a prime supporter of the last Labour Government's deflationary policy; introduced £8 billion of public expenditure cuts; imposed the 5% wages policy which undermined the Trade Unions and their members; and has recently been mentioned as a possible next

Secretary General of NATO.

Indeed, the chairman of the Conservative Party, Lord Thorneycroft, has described Mr Healey as the leader the Labour Party should have.

With these credentials and that endorsement, we cannot possibly hold back and give him a free run.

There are even some people in the Tribune Group who have mistakenly argued that no election should take place, in the interests of 'party unity'. But there has been precious little evidence that Mr Healey is holding back his right wing views in the int-

erests of this unity.

We can only ensure that the next Labour Government carries out conference decisions and socialist policies if we have, in leadership positions within the party, people who are 100% committed to support party policy.

A major campaign will be mounted to support Tony Benn's fight for the deputy leadership. Party members in constituencies and trade unions should ensure that their organisations nominate, and vote for, Tony Benn in the electoral college this coming October.

### Rank and File Mobilising Committee

In a press release, the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy welcomes Tony Benn's decision to contest the election for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party.

'The election will provide an opportunity for party members and affiliated trade unions to reaffirm support for the policies to which the party is committed. It will also help to confirm the validity of the electoral college agreed at Wembley in January.

'We are disturbed by reports that the outcome of the election has already been determined, because a number of senior Trade Union leaders have promised the parliamentary lead-

ership that the votes of their unions will be cast in favour of the status quo. We believe that behind-the-scenes deals of this kind can only bring discredit upon the Labour Movement.

WE CALL FOR A FREE ELECTION. We call on all Trade Union members to ensure that they are consulted as to how the votes of their unions are cast. We call for an open and honest discussion at constituency level between local parties and their MPs on this issue.

'We call upon all supporters of democratic reform of the Labour Party to play a full part in utilising and defending the Wembley decision, and to make sure

that this election is conducted in a manner which reflects credit on the Labour Movement.

'To this end we shall be conducting a vigorous campaign'.

Mobilising Committee secretary Jon Lansman adds: THE MOBILISING Committee, in its platform agreed after the Wembley conference, is committed to campaign for the election to offices in the Party of people committed to Conference policies. This is intended to refer not just to those officers elected by the new electoral college, but to all Party officers, including the National Executive and the Conference Arrangements committee.

Tony Benn's announcement of his willingness to

accept nomination for the Deputy Leadership therefore has obvious implications for the Mobilising Committee. In a contest with Healey, we must campaign for Benn, just as we must campaign for Norman Atkinson, whose position as Party Treasurer is threatened by the AUEW's determination to switch its votes to Eric Varley.

But there are limits to the RFMC's role in Benn's camp. It is not possible for the RFMC to support Benn's platform except on the grounds that it consists of Party policy — a weakness of the RFMC's inability to provide unity on policy issues. It is for this reason that we have decided to direct our campaign towards the goal of 'free elections'.

There is little doubt that if trade union block votes were cast in line with the

wishes of the rank and file, Benn would win, despite the political complexion of the PLP. If, in addition, CLPs made their views known to their MPs prior to reselection proceedings, he would win an overwhelming victory.

This election is therefore a watershed in two respects. Firstly, it will expose the need for greater democracy in the unions more clearly than perhaps any other issue in recent years. And furthermore it will highlight once more the divisions between the PLP and the Party at large.

There is no time to be lost in ensuring that your union's votes are not cast without your involvement; that your MP is made aware of your wishes; and that your CLP does not just vote for Benn, but also nominates him.



# Why Benn must win

PHOTO: TESSA HOWLAND (IFL)

»»

Who's frightened of elections? We fought to get this democratic mechanism, for heaven's sake — let's use it. If some people think an election causes problems, why don't they get Denis Healey to withdraw?

In fact there wouldn't have been a need for an election now if Healey hadn't defied the party by not waiting for the new method decided at Wembley.

At the grass roots — certainly among those in the rank and file who have turned to the Labour Party in the last period — it seems a little different from the view at the top. There is a fund of good will for socialist policies in the unions that must be tapped. We must take the Benn campaign into the unions at shop steward committee, branch, district, regional and national level.

One point to remember is that in this election the vote of every MP, union and constituency party will be recorded. We have to draw on not only the existing experience of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee but also, although conditions are different, the experience of Bevan's campaigns for the Treasurership in the '50s.

## Hardest

We also have to draw together the Benn election with defence of the Left on the NEC and defence of the Wembley decisions. We should do so in the context of showing that we and not Healey, Foot and Shore are at all times the hardest fighters against the Tories, and that we have no intention of returning them at the next election to present their faded, tattered act just one more time.

If we are successful and lucky, by that time many of the present Right may have joined the Social Democrats. For example, Healey is separated from these people by purely tactical differences.

However, if we are realistic we shall realise that within the unions we shall meet the firmest resistance from those custodians of the undemocratic decision-making process who have waxed fat on the midnight telephone calls and the smoke-filled rooms.

This should not deter us. Unless we democratise the trade unions from top to bottom, any greater democracy within the Labour Party will be limited and in the end meaningless.

## Scots miners' leader backs Benn

by Ian McCalman

GEORGE BOULTON, Vice-President of the Scottish area of the National Union of Mineworkers, speaking in Falkirk on Monday 6th, launched a scathing attack on Terry Duffy, Alex Kitson, and those other union leaders who have set out to sabotage Tony Benn's campaign for deputy leadership of the Labour Party.

"The personal role of Benn is not the issue", said Boulton, "but what he represents in terms of the demands of the rank and file for the implementation of socialist policies".

Boulton also called for the overthrow of the Tory Government by mass working class action, and recalled the defeats inflicted upon Heath by the miners in 1972 and '74.

by John Bloxam and John O'Mahony

THE FIGHT for democratic accountability in the Labour Party will in the next six months unavoidably take the form of a campaign to get Tony Benn elected as deputy leader of the Party. The fate of Benn's candidacy will be the test and measure of what real democratic advances we have made and can consolidate.

Therefore, indirectly, it will be a test for whether the next Labour government will be merely a continuation of the last one, or can be made to be something radically different.

## Dilute

'Lefts' like Dame Judith Hart and the editor of *Tribune* have been quick to tell Benn that he is not the only one who believes in Party policies. The difference between Benn (and his backers) and the majority of the Tribune Left is that Benn is prepared to fight for the policies and to fight to deprive opponents like Healey of key positions from which to sabotage them. It is the difference between serious politics and mere left fakery.

What is at stake is whether we mean business about democratic accountability, or are prepared to let the trade union barons, the softer *Tribune* 'Lefts', Labour Solidarity, and Michael Foot amend, dilute, and finally smother the decisions of Blackpool and Wembley.

Under the hypocritical catch-cri of 'Unity Against the Tories', their campaign to emasculate the decisions of Blackpool and Wembley has been gaining ground and momentum. They have already shown what they really think of democracy by trying to stitch up October's Brighton conference in advance through backroom deals between trade union bureaucrats — which is to spit in the face of the party and the rank and file of the trade unions.

## Fudge

Benn's dramatic decision to stand for deputy leader in defiance of the blackmailing appeals for 'unity' is a tremendous blow to the organisers of the drift towards fudge and compromise and a bureaucratic carve-up against the Left at Brighton. It sounds the alarm and gives a focus for a drive to rally the labour movement — including the rank and file of the unions — to defend the decisions of Blackpool and Wembley, and to begin to make them work by electing Party officers who believe in Party policy as something to be fought for and implemented.

Eric Heffer, a man with real left credentials, shows the measure of the Left's drift (and yearning for the old ways). Commenting on Benn's candidacy, and referring to Healey, he said: "Nor must we be misled into thinking that any one individual is in such total disagreement with Party policy that he must be regarded as an enemy".

This in the light of all the bitter experience of what happens to Labour policies in the hands of leaders and MPs who



The 50,000 who marched in Glasgow need a leadership that will fight for Party policy

disagree with them, and in the light of the attempts to sew up Brighton now!

Even though they pay lip service to the Party policy which Benn stands for, it's for sure that the pro-Healey 'left' will not change anything. Theirs is the traditional Labour Left politics of mere words, empty phrases, feeble gestures, and untimely compromises, which has allowed the Right and their capitalist backers to beat the Left time and time again.

They are trying to cut the decisions for democratisation down to the level of such wretched politics. But it was the consequences of those politics, during the life of the last Labour government, that the labour movement revolted against, to fight for democratic accountability.

The most important divide now is between those who are determined to radically change the way we function, and those who are willing for Labour to go on as it has for decades.

## Bind

Out of office, Labour tries to renew its appeal to its hard-core working-class supporters, turns pink with 'socialist' rhetoric, adopts radical — sometimes very radical — policies at Conference, and, muttering 'Never Again' about the past, proclaims itself to have been born again.

But — before Blackpool and Wembley — neither the socialist rhetoric nor the Conference decisions had any binding force over individuals or the Party. The 'realities of Government', the 'need for compromise', and the fact that real power is vested in the owners of industry and in

the civilian and military state bureaucracy, all served to separate the Labour Cabinet and the Parliamentary Labour Party from their promises and from Party policies. (They could sometimes serve as an alibi afterwards, too).

Re-selection and accountability can mean an end to this system, which has demoralised and disgusted generations of Labour activists. In this situation, Benn stands for deeds to defend Blackpool and Wembley, and his candidacy is an attempt to make accountability work now.

## Central

If he wins, it will be a blow to those who would assassinate Blackpool and Wembley by stealth. If he loses, it will be a measure of just how far we have yet to go to win real change in the Labour Party. For if the electoral college votes for a Deputy Leader who vigorously opposes Party policy, it votes against the whole spirit of democracy and accountability.

Healey — who, apart from being a right-winger and a monetarist, is also a witch-hunter and an advocate of a purge of the Marxist Left — has not abandoned the goal and the hope of finally emerging as Party leader.

The Labour Party policies that Benn is standing on are limited, and some of them are (we believe) mistaken (the Alternative Economic Strategy, for example). The central question of the moment, however, is accountability — the right of the Labour Party and the labour movement to democratically determine its own policies and not to be forever cheated by conniving politicians

and huckstering bureaucrats.

For *Socialist Organiser*, this outweighs what we think of Benn's platform. We support Benn because we support accountability and oppose the drive to reverse or gut the decisions of Blackpool and Wembley. If those decisions are reversed or gutted, it won't then matter, any more than it did in 1974, what policies Labour has.

In any case, the labour movement will only move to consistent class-struggle politics by way of its own experiences of the limitations of Benn's present platform. Victory for Benn will speed this process; defeat will hinder it and slow it down.

The odds against Benn are heavy. Not too many MPs will voluntarily vote for Benn. The constituencies probably will, but the key area will be the unions.

## Union

Everything depends on whether we can rouse the rank and file of the unions at the forthcoming conferences to mandate their Labour Party delegations to vote for Benn. It means taking the fight for Labour democracy into the unions.

In turn that must mean that union democracy will itself become an issue.

Democracy in the labour movement is, of course, indivisible. Though major trade union machines have helped — for their own reasons — to deliver the decisions of Blackpool and Wembley, a truly democratic Labour Party is impossible if its dominant union component is not also itself democratised.

Benn's candidacy brings

this issue to the fore sharply and clearly. The necessary election campaign in the unions also offers a possibility to rally the rank and file to stop the trade union leaders' planned purge of the NEC, which would lead to the movement being saddled with a NEC majority actively working against accountability and against the development of what we must do if we are to be a real alternative to the demolition-squad Tories.

These are the reasons *Socialist Organiser* will campaign for Benn, despite our differences with him. Politics is not only about words, programmes, and ideas — it is also about deeds, and in the last analysis it is the deeds that matter. Benn's candidacy is most timely: the stung alarm of the Press, the Right and the soft Left is the proof of that.

• We must immediately attempt to convince our CLPs to vote for Benn and, should a Left candidate (Heffer, for example) stand to spoil Benn's campaign, to stick with Benn as the serious left wing candidate.

• We must raise insistently with our MPs the importance of having a deputy leader who will fight for party policies.

• Through the branches of the unions whose conferences are coming up this summer, we must put down emergency resolutions proposing that both Healey and Benn be invited to address the conference, and that delegates should then vote to cast the union's block vote for one of them. And branches should also send resolutions to their Executives asking them to help make such a procedure possible.



# Rent strikes start

THOUSANDS of tenants in Cambuslang, Glasgow, are withholding their rent rise — and thousands more elsewhere in Glasgow, though, according to the Scottish Tenants' Organisation, the struggle is strongest in Cambuslang.

It has become clear that it is vital to organise at the rent office. Some Cambuslang tenants have already been harassed at the office by council staff being 'unpleasant' and taking names and addresses of those who refuse to pay the increase.

Pickets are needed to leaflet and to give support to people who get cold feet. And, as one tenant commented, 'Communication is vital. We have an awful lot of apathy and fear to fight. We can't be half-hearted about it. What we need is a total

rent strike'.

More active support is also needed from the local Labour Party, which has refused to take a stand on the rent strike, saying only that it supports the aims of the tenants' association. The local Trades Council and Community Council, the Claimants' Union and NALGO, have all given support, with NALGO refusing to process eviction notices.

Fear is also a problem for the rent strike in Basingstoke, Hampshire. A threatening letter issued by the Tory borough council with the new rent cards has cut down the initial numbers withholding the increase to 700 — far fewer than the potential indicated in many large meetings before the increase came in.

But the Basingstoke Rents

Action Committee structure is generally holding together, and a new broadsheet is going out, answering the Council's letter and listing rent strike contacts.

On Thursday 9th, the Borough Council planning committee was brought to a standstill for 40 minutes as tenants demanded answers from Tory councillors on the 66½% increase. Eventually the tenants were ejected by the police.

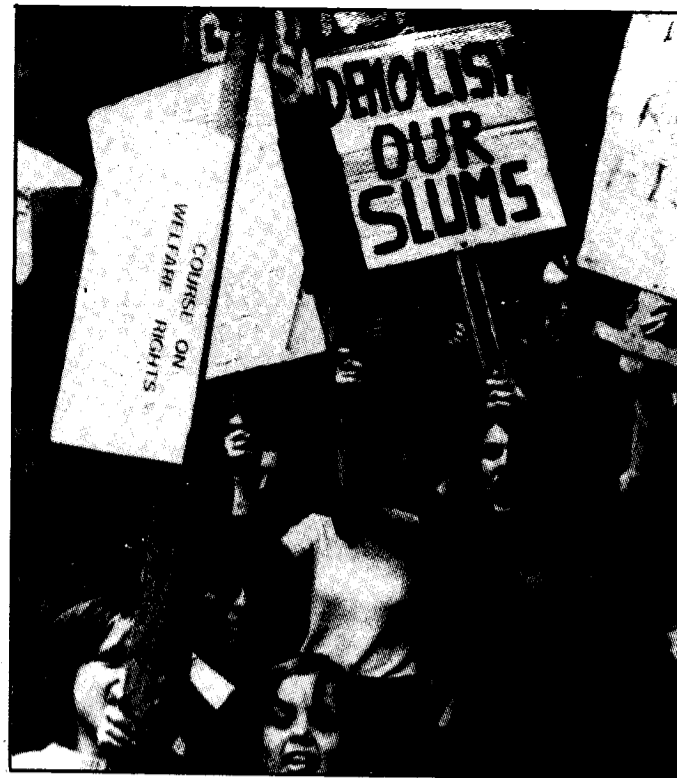
In Coventry, the partial rent strike has been in operation since last February. The policy of the ruling Labour Group was to introduce rent and rate rises for their 28,000 tenants in three stages this year. The first rent increase of £2.50-plus has been followed by an April increase, with another to come later in the year.

Up to 1,000 tenants have been withholding the increase. The Council has responded by taking them all off the transfer list.

This punitive policy has been roundly condemned inside and outside the Labour Party. But it is still in force, new warning letters have gone out, and it is only a matter of weeks before the council will begin evictions.

Weak coordination between different tenants' associations has been a problem: some TAs linking their refusal to pay with the backlog of repairs, and some not. But the tenants' anger can and must be organised rapidly now, to stop the threat of evictions.

★ Reports from Ian McLeish, Alasdair Jamison, and Richard Paine.



## Plansee stays solid

by Rob Dawber

THE FIGHT to defend 120 jobs at Plansee engineering in Rotherham has now entered its sixth week.

An occupation ended three weeks ago when management succeeded in getting an injunction against 'all occupants of the factory'. (Actual names are no longer needed). But the workers are still on strike.

Originally the workers came out on official strike over wages and conditions. On 11th March, Plansee sent letter to all the employees, saying they were sacked because of the strike. The fight became a fight for jobs.

The pay and conditions dispute started after management rejected the 10-point wage claim, which included a £20 across the board rise. They offered instead no increase and 12 named redundancies.

AUEW shop steward Ed

Morris told *Socialist Organiser*:

'There were no union officials on the list, but you could see a reason for all of the 12. Three were long-term sick, one was gay, two were women who had been talking loudly recently about equal pay, one was a woman on maternity leave'.

A three-day strike followed, but was ended by AUEW district secretary George Caborn for the purpose of negotiations. These resulted in an offer of 7% — after a five month pay freeze.

Meanwhile the progress towards a 35 hour week which had been agreed during the last national engineering dispute was reneged on by the new management that took over last January. They said that no such agreement had been made with them!

Strike action started immediately, and two days later the sacking notices were received.

The struggle was not completely solid at first, as some staff continued working. When the occupation took place, two of these (one ASTMS and one AUEW) were outside, taking names for management of those in occupation.

But once staff couldn't get in, they were persuaded to join the strike. They are still out now that there is no occupation.

Management say the factory has to close. Ed Morris replies: 'Right up to the dispute, new plant was going in all the time. There was no shortage of work. For me as a shop steward the amount of overtime was embarrassing.'

We're now fighting for our jobs back as they were before the dispute. We reckon there's about £800,000 of goods stuck inside the factory. We've managed to get some blacking at Plansee in Warrington — but that's been on and off.

'We've also had leaflets translated for Plansee factories in Austria'.

All this pressure has resulted in Plansee shifting their position. At a meeting with the union last Friday, talk of money came up. It's not redundancy money, because management say the workers are sacked, but clearly they want to buy off the strike.

No-one has received any strike pay yet, even though the dispute is official. But *Socialist Organiser* was told that support from the local labour movement, both financial and moral, has been very good, and has helped to keep the strike solid.

The danger now is that the vague talk of money could weaken the fight for jobs.

Donations and messages of support to: Plansee Strike Fund, c/o Len Gobier, 138 Greenhouse St, Walkley, Sheffield 6.

## Student conference: CP ~ Tory alliance wins, but only just

by Gareth Caley

DAVE Aaronovitch was re-elected as president of the National Union of Students at the recent conference in Blackpool. But only 16 votes saved him from being the first-ever sitting president to be beaten when standing for a second term.

Of the Tory candidate's 59 votes, 54 transferred directly to Aaronovitch — a Communist Party member — to enable him to defeat the Labour Students' Helen Connor. The Tories clearly prefer the policies of the CP which, together with the Liberals in the 'Left Alliance', argues for focusing NUS on student issues and rejecting wider political concerns.

Despite breaking from its previous support to the Left Alliance, the National Organisation of Labour Students only succeeded in offering alternative bureaucratic solutions, with the usual amount of left posturing. The NOLS leaders still supported a Liberal against two Labour Party members, Hank Hastings [Independent Socialist]

and Sarah Veale [Socialist Students Alliance] for Vice-President [Welfare].

Since Hank got elected, it is obvious that many Labour students opposed the NOLS leadership's recommendations.

High points at the conference were few. Speakers from Deptford, Lee Jeans, and the National H-Blocks Committee received standing ovations and collected about £200 each. The welcome by the Tory mayor of Blackpool was removed and replaced by one from the President of the Trades Council. And an Irish student was elected to a European meeting of students on a platform of political status for H-Block and Armagh, and opposition to British imperialism. He ended his hustings speech by calling for support for the IRA.

But the left still needs to fight for a NUS which will take up political questions, rather than the elitist, inward-looking approach that the Left Alliance is promoting with Tory help.

## Coventry — the Left fights back

by Richard Paine

THE RIGHT wing is on the offensive in Coventry.

Following the reinstatement of ten councillors by the Labour Party National Executive Committee earlier in the year (after the Labour Group expelled them for voting against a school meals price rise), the same ten plus a further two have now been expelled again for voting against the Labour Council's cuts package.

The 12 rebels' stand was in line with Party policy at the time. But since then the right wing has succeeded in changing the District Party policy to support their actions. In one ward they abandoned any notion of Standing Orders, throwing the meeting into ugly chaos for three quarters of an hour, to avoid even discussing local tenants' struggles! This contempt for the Party rank and file, together with the contempt for the working class of Coventry, has incensed the Party activists.

On the mutual suggestion of SO supporters, a Coventry Labour Left (CLL) is to be launched in May. Already an open letter is circulating supporting the stand of Tony Benn for Deputy Leader on the grounds that he supports

the Brighton and Wembley Conference decisions against Healey.

The proposed policy for the CLL is:

- Defend the gains of Brighton and Wembley.
- Extend democracy both locally and nationally in the Party and the Unions.
- No cuts, no rent rises and no redundancies.
- Unilateral nuclear disarmament.
- Kick the Tories out — Implement Clause IV.

The CLL provides a real opportunity for the Left to counter the right-wing offensive — organising major rallies and social events, discussing policies openly, drawing trade union activists into the Party, and organising to beat the Right on a day to day basis.

In a city whose labour movement is still steeped with the economism of the prosperous '50s and '60s, and where no serious struggle has yet taken place against massive redundancies, the onset of the CLL is sorely needed. For the first time activists have come together to create the political culture for a fightback; the old methods have been tried, and have been seen to fail.

## The guts to fight the cuts

by Marie Coyle

PARENTS in the Gorbals stepped up their campaign against proposals to close two nursery schools in June by staging a 24 hour occupation of one of them last week-end (3/4 April).

Unfortunately the head teacher had got wind of the occupation, so when the children and parents turned up at 3.30pm on Friday afternoon the nursery school was already locked up. But an adjacent set of offices for the janitor were still open, and just as convenient for an occupation. So in they went.

The purpose of the occupation was to further publicise the campaign and to bring more pressure to bear on the Labour Regional councillors; the Labour Group meets on 13th April, and one of the proposals are on the agenda.

Placards outside the nursery said: 'Labour councillors: fight the cuts, don't implement them', 'Labour councillors: Have you got the guts to fight the cuts?', and 'Labour councillors: whose side are you on, the parents or the Tories?'

The occupation was also supported by other campaigns against cuts: the Adelphi School Action Committee, local Community Councils and Tenants' Associations, the Anti-Dampness Campaign, and the Anti Motorway campaign.

While some people stayed in the occupation throughout the 24 hours, others went down to the pub to collect money for the cause (over £30 was collected), leafleted the shopping arcade, and went off to get the local MP, Frank McElhone, and Regional Councillor, Jimmy Wray.

Surprisingly, Frank McElhone turned up... but could only stay long enough for newspaper photographs at the nursery gates. He's a very busy man, just back from helping the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and he didn't really have any time for a nursery school occupation.

Jimmy Wray didn't turn up at all (though during the recent school bussing dispute he had argued for parents to occupy the school in protest!)

The occupation finished at 4pm on Saturday with a rally in the nursery school play-



ground, addressed by Frances Lockhart, the secretary of the parents' campaign.

It was a step forward. It had a clear political focus on the need to break class collaboration. And it brought

together in action a number of different groups and campaigns.

It will make a long-term occupation a more realistic possibility if the Regional Council approves the proposed closures.



by John Douglas (USDAW branch secretary, CWS Packing, Manchester: in personal capacity)

# USDAW Left defends Wembley

THE VICTORY at Wembley has caused the anger of all employers and their foot-soldiers to be directed upon USDAW conference at Black-pool.

USDAW's support for the 30-30-40 formula was crucial in gaining victory for reform at Wembley. But now the right wing want to fight to reverse all the decisions and policies won by the Left in the past few years.

They realise that what started at Wembley will spread to full-time officials and other right-wingers in the USDAW branches. So

ment from Manchester CWS Packing calls for the labour movement to embrace the demands of the Polish workers: i.e. nurseries at workplaces; three months' maternity leave; wages to increase with the cost of living; no victimisation of activists; etc. — and calling for occupations and strike action against the similar attacks being made on workers in Britain.

Similarly, a motion on

The right wing are organising as well, though they have failed to get a branch resolution to reverse USDAW's support for 30-30-40 in favour of the right wing's preferred formula of a 50% say for MPs. There are several branch resolutions supporting 30-30-40.

The USDAW Executive has declared that it will have a collection for the Polish workers' movement, Solidarnosc, but an amend-

they are intending to have a go.

The rank and file of USDAW, organised loosely in the Broad Left Alliance, suffered serious setbacks in the recent elections for union positions, but some of the issues to be raised at conference should offer a further opportunity to turn USDAW into a union worthy of the name.

With the effects of the bosses' crisis only now be-

ginning to be felt in USDAW, the rank and file will still be looking for answers.

The Broad Left intends to hold a pre-conference meeting with Tony Benn as main speaker, at a time when he will be challenging the status quo in the Deputy Leader election. The Broad Left should be able from that meeting to galvanise rank and file delegates into a spirited defence of Wembley.

unemployment from our branch demands the right to work for every person over school-leaving age; jobs not gigs; cut hours not jobs; work-sharing without loss of pay; a 35 hour week now, and an end to overtime; demand that companies declaring redundancies open their books for inspection by their workforce; full support for all workers taking action to defend jobs; and a fight for a workers' government, accountable to working people, prepared to nationalise without compensation and place under workers' control companies forcing through redundancies.

Only with these policies can USDAW's rank and file mount a fightback and win.

## Builders say: no retreat

by Martin Thomas

TAKING advantage of the slump in the industry, building employers are offering only just over 5% on building workers' wages this year.

They are also proposing that one day late a week should lose workers their 'holiday stamp'. This would mean an £8.50 lateness penalty for building workers.

UCATT General Secretary Les Wood has said it is "the most serious position since the 1972 national strike", and TGWU building workers' leaders have also been talking militant.

But many union activists believe there is little serious behind these threats. No real preparations are being made for a struggle, and in current conditions very careful preparation will be needed for an effective struggle.

The 'Building Worker' group is calling for:

- No retreat on the wage claim for a 'substantial increase';
- No attendance condition on the 'holiday stamp';
- A June to June agreement. (The bosses may try to move towards a November settlement date — November being a bad date for strike action);
- Any agreement to be put to ballots of the union memberships.

## Death threats from Mersey Nazis

THREE prominent anti-racists on Merseyside have received numerous death threats from Nazis in the last fortnight. This follows a successful meeting of Edge Hill Constituency Labour Party against fascism in the Kensington district of the constituency.

This area has for the past two years been used as a recruiting ground by the British Movement and the Nazi Party [UK]. Ten fascist thugs did attempt to break up this meeting, but good stewarding from the labour movement prevented this.

Those who received death threats were Gideon Ben-Tovim, a Communist Party spokesperson on racism, Paul Summerfeld, a local community relations worker, and Rashid Mufti, a Socialist Organiser supporter and leading black activist.

Rashid Mufti told SO that this campaign of death threats on this family and other anti-racists had been systematic and amounted to conspiracy to murder.

Claims by the police to know the identity of the conspirators have not been followed up by action to apprehend them.

Kevin Feintuck

# Victory on the docks

by Simon Temple

THE Southampton dockers have won a major victory in the continuing struggle to defend the National Dock Labour Scheme.

After a fight lasting three weeks, their employer, the British Transport Docks Board (BTDB), withdrew the lock-out imposed after a series of one-day strikes over a pay claim. They also agreed to pay the workers in full for the time they were outside the gate.

This is a blow not only to the port employers but also to the giant container lines, who hoped to break the dockers' militancy and also the increasing coordination between them and other workers in the container industry, like drivers.

It was that coordination and solidarity which forced the bosses to back down. The shop stewards ignored the orders of T&GWU officialdom to restrict picketing to the Southampton area. Flying pickets were sent to the smaller ports which the container lines were using in a desperate attempt to get cargo out of the country.

The support of lorry drivers, seamen and railway workers, as well as the dockers in the major ports, was enlisted. The flow of

trade along the main routes served by Southampton (mainly those to South Africa and the Far East) was reduced to a trickle.

The South Wales ports (also BTDB owned) struck for the day on Thursday March 26th and an all-out national unofficial dock strike was due to start on April 6th.

Faced with an escalating struggle, and no apparent chance of victory, the state-owned BTDB and their Cabinet masters decided to cut their losses rather than have to make an even more embarrassing climb-down later.

News of the struggle had been suppressed by the media (presumably on government orders), but this would inevitably have broken down if the strike had spread nationally. And after the miners' victory, the Tories didn't want another humiliating public defeat.

But that's exactly the message we want to be heard. Like the miners, the Southampton dockers were able to win by militant direct action, by not accepting limitations on the struggle imposed by the bureaucracy; and by campaigning to win the support of other workers.



A national dock strike was set for April 6th. But the bosses backed down.

# T&G BLOCKS BEER PICKET

by Jim Denham

STRIKERS from Ansells Brewery in Birmingham have been forced to call off their picketing of the Romford brewery owned by the same firm, Allied Breweries.

Beer from Romford is being used to keep Birmingham pubs open, despite an assurance from T&G official Terry Austin that he had secured an agreement from Romford to monitor production and ensure none of their beer reached Birmingham.

But Austin threatened to withdraw official T&G recognition for the strike if the Romford picketing continued!

The truth seems to be that the T&GWU wanted the picketing stopped in order that talks between Deputy General Secretary Kitson and the Allied bosses could go ahead in an amicable atmosphere.

The strikers are becoming increasingly impatient with the officials' backsliding. Strong picketing of the Gibbs brewery in Salisbury continues, and many strikers want to resume the Romford picket, regardless of what the

officials say.

As one striker told SO, "We've been absolutely solid for two months. We've refused to accept any sell-out deal from the officials. But if we're going to force Allied to re-open our brewery, we've got to step up the picketing and get ALL Allied products blacked".

Messages of support, donations, etc. to Joe Bond, 23 Barnet Rd, Erdington, Birmingham B23.

**KICKOUT THE TORIES!**

Labour democracy

and the

fight for a

WORKERS

GOVERNMENT



40p plus postage from 714 Sicker Court, London N1

# Shipyard action set for 22 April

by Lol Duffy

ON MONDAY 6th April, delegates from shipyards throughout Britain and the North of Ireland met in Newcastle to discuss their response to British Shipbuilders' wage offer and its plans for further rationalisation.

The conference was picketed by workers from Swan Hunter yards on the Tyne and Cammell Lairds on the Mersey, who were calling for the right of delegates to vote at the conference. In past years, the leadership of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has ignored the membership and accepted the deals itself.

The workers also demanded that there should be no backing down in the fight against enforced redundancies.

Conference voted in favour of a recommendation to the membership accepting the latest wage deal of between 7 and 10%. On the question of rationalisation, it was decided to take BS on with national industrial action if the 600 or more enforced redundancy notices are not withdrawn by 22nd April.

This will go to the yards in the form of a recommendation, and the decisions will then be relayed back to the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee (SNC) of the Confed, which will decide on what action to take.

There is a danger that the SNC will make only a token gesture, probably a national overtime ban. Jim Murray, the chair of the SNC, said in the Guardian (7th April), "It is likely to be country-wide, and not necessarily mean strikes".

For the action to be effective, it must hit BS and the Government hard. A national strike must be the call, with occupations to prevent removal of machinery and ships.

The workers in BS didn't cause the crisis which they are being made to pay for. The dockers, miners and steelworkers have shown how to fight back. Now shipyard workers must do the same.

\*\*\*

AT A MASS meeting of the Confed in Cammell Lairds on 9th April, it was decided by a large majority to support national industrial action. The management staff had already sent a message of support for action by the Confed.

There are over 70 people in Lairds who have been given redundancy notices, and it is one of the two yards mentioned by BS as possibly facing closure. (The other is Scott Lithgow).

ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)



# Socialist Organiser

## State workers hit back at navy scabs

by Stephen Corbishley

CIVIL SERVICE workers throughout the country have responded to Thatcher's use of navy scabs at Faslane Polaris base in Scotland with a magnificent display of solidarity.

On Tuesday 14th, members of all the civil service unions walked out on a national half-day strike in protest at the strike-breaking. Even sections that had not previously taken any part in the unions' campaign, responded.

Once again, Thatcher has underestimated the militancy and determination of rank and file civil servants. Her attempts to isolate the Faslane workers (who are refusing to re-fit the nuclear submarine *Resolution*) have fallen completely flat.

In fact, Faslane has now become the focus for a renewed campaign of militancy throughout the civil service.

With the selective strikes and general disruption now in their sixth week, the Government is hitting back with suspensions. In the last two weeks, 15 tax collection offices have been closed and all the staff in

them (more than 500 people) suspended. The Government has forced the closure of the Department of Employment Runcorn computer centre (where the staff had been working two days out of five), hitting job release scheme payments.

There have also been threats of suspensions in DHSS offices round the country. More suspensions are expected in the Inland Revenue, as the Government steps up its efforts to break the IRSF.

The Government, faced with the strike lasting for longer than it expected, now admits to having lost over £1 billion of revenue so far. But still they are managing to appear unconcerned, and are clearly receiving substantial support from the City, the banks, and big business.

With the dispute showing no signs of ending, the Tory press is beginning to call for negotiations. But the danger is that the Government will succeed in drawing the union leaders into negotiations on a new pay bargaining system for next year, while dropping this year's 15% claim.

The mood of the membership is increasingly for a sharp escalation of the dispute. Even full-time officials and 'moderate' NEC members attached to the 41 local co-ordinating committee reflected this mood in their report-backs to the national leaders on Thursday 2nd April.

Repeated calls were made for the action to be stepped up, with proposals ranging from all-out indefinite stoppage, to a five-day national stoppage. And the action is being stepped up.

A total blockade has been mounted by Customs and Excise workers on all trade to and from Ireland. And union members in the Civil Aviation Authority are expected to vote for stepping up action, probably resulting in a series of rotating one-day strikes in airports throughout Great Britain and a work to rule.

Pressure is also mounting to bring out the two benefit computer centres at Livingstone and Reading. The argument for this is that the Government would be unable to survive

the political impact of claimants and unemployed being deprived of benefits.

But socialists must resist this argument. We must ensure that our action hits at big business and commerce, but not at claimants and the unemployed.

If the two computer centres were brought out on indefinite strike, it could only give the Tories a weapon to create division within our own ranks and to alienate the rest of the trade union movement from us.

The need now is for the rank and file to assert itself more effectively in the organisation and direction of the strike. We need a national conference of lay delegates from the 41 local coordinating committees, on the same lines as that already held for the full-time officials.

And other unions — especially the Seamen and the T&GWU — must be approached for solidarity action in closing all airports and docks, as a first step towards an indefinite strike of all civil service workers except those at the two computer centres.

## 30,000 VOTERS SAY POLITICAL STATUS NOW!

BOBBY SANDS' victory in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election is a major blow to Thatcher and her Northern Irish Secretary Humphrey Atkins. It is no longer possible for them to claim that the hunger strike and the campaign for political status are only supported by a few extremists (all 30,000 of them). They have suffered a serious defeat in their policy of criminalising the prisoners and the Republican struggle. It is no longer possible for the press to pretend that the hunger strike does not exist or is failing for lack of support.

Despite the Army and the RUC hindering Sands' campaign, despite a call from the SDLP to abstain and despite calls not to vote for Sands from such varied sources as his Unionist opponent Harry West and Labour frontbench spokesman Don Concannon, Sands won by 30,492 votes to 29,046 with only about 3,000 abstentions.

Thatcher and Atkins are now faced with the choice of accepting Sands as a legitimate representative or trying to overthrow the election result. As we go to press, it is not yet clear whether Bobby Sands will be expelled from Parliament by Labour and Tory votes, and whether the voters of Fermanagh and South Tyrone really can choose who they want to represent them.

One thing is clear: the result of the election puts the responsibility for Bobby

Sands' fate clearly where it belongs — on the shoulders of the British government. They will only save his life if they accept the restoration of political status for Republican prisoners and they will only do that if there is a massive campaign, not just in Ireland but also in Britain.

The next few weeks are vital. Bobby Sands is already very weak, suffering from pains in his eyes and stomach trouble and having trouble in taking water.

Unless we build a massive campaign to force Thatcher to concede political status, his death is a certainty.

His life is in our hands. We can still force the Tories to back down. This means:

★ making the demonstration on April 26th as large as possible, with coaches from every part of the country;

★ organising local events such as meetings or pickets of local papers or TV or radio stations to protest against the coverage of the hunger strike;

★ passing resolutions through trade union and Labour Party branches supporting political status and demanding that the branch support any local activity. Copies of such motions should be sent to Atkins, to local MPs and to the National H-Blocks Committee, 30 Mountjoy Square, Dublin.

We must force the government to grant political status now.

## BENN SIGNS SO DEFENCE APPEAL

by Sean Matgamna

THE WRP's legal persecution of Socialist Organiser continues.

And now others have been drawn into the legal net too.

The WRP intimidated the printers which SO shared with *Socialist Press* into censoring both papers. SO knew about it in time to arrange to have an article, 'The WRP: some facts behind the libel case', printed separately for later insertion into SO.

*Socialist Press* found out about it only when Morning Litho printers refused to print two pages (out of 10) which included a reprint of the SO editorial board statement of 21st March.

Later, the WRP got

*Socialist Press* removed from the shelves at Colletts bookshop, Charing Cross Road (which is linked with the Communist Party), by threatening the proprietors with a writ because *Socialist Press* had included two SO leaflets on the libel case as inserts.

As a result of the threat, Colletts now say that they will only sell *Socialist Press* if they have a guarantee that each issue is checked for libel by a lawyer. Such an hour's work for a lawyer costs about £60.

But everything is not going well for the WRP. The *Leveller* magazine reprinted one of the two allegedly libellous sentences from *Socialist Organiser*. The *Observer* last Sunday repeated the essen-

tial points and words of the same allegedly libellous paragraph.

Is the WRP going to prosecute them? It seems unlikely. More probably the WRP will dare use its money only against the revolutionary press.

It is of course preoccupied with other things. Having raised £60,000 for a 'WRP development fund', it has staged a little public ceremony to 'hand it over' to one of its own full-time workers, Claire Dixon, to use for developing the so-called Youth Training Centres. This is probably meant to prove that these youth centres are not WRP auxiliary organisations, though most people would take it as an indication of the opposite.

Meanwhile SO's drive for political and financial support is gaining momentum. We got very widespread support at the National Union of Journalists conference. A lobby of SO and *Socialist Press* supporters outside the Equity conference met with a lot of sympathy from Equity left-wingers, despite the strong influence of the WRP in that union.

A number of labour movement organisations, including the BL Works Committee at Leyland, Lancashire, have promised or sent in donations (though not enough, un-

fortunately!) Many comrades of Socialist Organiser have sent donations too (again, not enough!)

Other left papers have promised support, but so far only *Socialist Press*, *London Labour Briefing*, and the *Leveller* have done anything. In three issues since its editor first agreed to carry our appeal, *Socialist Challenge* has remained silent. It is not entirely clear why.

As comrades will see, a number of personalities prominent on the Left have rallied to the support of Socialist Organiser, including Tony Benn.

If the legal case follows its natural course, it will — we are told — cost us about £12,000 just to 'service' the various legal processes. We need money urgently. We need political support too.

Raise money for SO. Collect supporters for SO. Send messages of encouragement and solidarity to *Socialist Press* for its splendid stand. Write to *Socialist Challenge*, *Socialist Worker*, and *Militant*, asking them to take a stand.

Defend the free labour movement press!

Signatories so far of the appeal 'A Labour Inquiry, not the Courts', include:

Tony Benn MP, Reg Race MP, Ernie Roberts MP, Dennis Skinner MP.

Paul Moore, Neil Turner, Matthew Warburton (Lambeth Labour councillors), Dick North, Vanessa Wiseman, Jackie North, Hilary Tarr, John Esterson (victims members of Lambeth NUT), John East (Acting President, Lambeth NUT), Wendy Hewing (vice-president, Lambeth NUT), Chris Sutton (secretary, Lambeth Trades Union Council), Graham Norwood, Harry Stannard.

Sam Gordon (former secretary of the Fourth International), Sam Bornstein, Al Richardson.

Mike Bower, Howard Hannah, Vincent Hanna, Aidan White, Denis McShane, John Jennings, Simon Collings, Ron Knowles, Peter McIntyre, Eamonn McCann, Steve Child, Carol Coulter, and in all 47 delegates at the NUJ annual delegate meeting.

38 members at the Equity annual general meeting.

Victor Schonfield, Vladimir Derer, Pete Willsman, Vera Derer (Campaign for Labour Party Democracy), Jon Lansman (secretary, Rank and File Mobilising Committee).

Ray Apps (Brighton Kemp-ton CLP), Tony Banks (Tooting CLP), Ken Livingstone (Greater London Council), Chris Mullin (Vauxhall CLP), Nigel Stanley, John Denham, Graham Bash (Ilford South CLP), Pat Kane, Keith Veness (Islington Central CLP), Amanda Leon (Southwark NUT), Bernard Regan (Westminster NUT), John Ford (Deptford CLP), — and some 62 others

### Appeal for funds

LABOUR MOVEMENT  
PRESS DEFENCE  
FUND

Send donations to Jonathan Hammond (Hon. Treasurer), c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Cheques payable to 'Labour Movement Press Defence Fund'.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Organisation: .....

Donation: .....

### A LABOUR INQUIRY, NOT THE COURTS

We, the undersigned, condemn Vanessa Redgrave's and the WRP's use of the courts against the labour movement press. We support the proposal that a labour movement inquiry be set up to investigate the statements made in the Socialist Organiser article.

NAME ORGANISATION

.....

.....

.....

Return to Labour Movement Press Defence Fund, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.