

# Socialist Organiser

No. 42 MAY 30, 1981 (CLAIMANTS & STRIKERS, 10p) 20p

# Join the LABOUR PARTY

Write to 150 Walworth Rd, London SE17 1JT



## IRELAND'S FURY, LABOUR'S SHAME



AS WE go to press, four hunger strikers are dead and Brendan McLaughlin (above) is near death. The Tories remain obstinate.

Ireland and many other countries have seen big, angry demonstrations. Yet the British labour movement, with our leaders backing the Tories, does nothing.

For how long?  
See page 7, inside.

**SUPPORT THE HUNGER STRIKERS!  
POLITICAL STATUS NOW!**

**Demonstrate on June 13th, leaving Finsbury Park at 1.30 pm. Called by the London H-Block Armagh Committee.**

**LABOUR: BREAK WITH THE TORIES ON IRELAND SACK CONCANNON!**  
Meet July 4th 2pm at Mansfield BR Station for a march through Don Concannon's constituency



## Now let's walk over the Tories

THOUSANDS of workers have come out to greet the People's March in every area. At the finale in London it will be tens and hundreds of thousands.

On the streets, in visits to union conferences, on delegations to factories, the marchers have greeted and been greeted by workers black and white, male and female, old and young.

Stoppages; factory canteens thrown open to the march; food and drink donated to the march; and collections, show the spirit of this protest — generosity and solidarity among working class people, bitter anger against the Tory government.

Across the country, an army has been mobilised for the right to work.

But after the March, that

army goes back to the factories, the offices, and the dole queues. Its colonels and generals go back to their union-office armchairs.

What then?

Workers and unemployed have welcomed the People's March as an army of inspiration because at last it seems as if the whole labour movement is acting *together* against unemployment. No longer need each person, or each small group, be alone, facing the cold message: 'no longer required', 'no vacancies'.

We must build on that spirit. Now is the time for Trades Councils and Labour Parties in each area to create labour movement campaigns against unemployment.

At Lee Jeans, at Laurence Scotts, and at Plansee, workers are already fighting for

jobs with occupations and strikes. Such local campaigns can organise support, help with blacking, and spread the example of these struggles.

They can also put forward the working-class answers to unemployment: work-sharing under workers' control and with no loss of pay; a 35 hour week now; stop the cuts; force the Tories out; nationalise the firms that sack workers without compensation; take the millions wasted in arms spending and put them into a new programme of public works, giving useful employment at trade union rates.

And the local campaigns can help organise the unemployed — in special unemployed workers' unions and also in the existing unions. They can help create unemployed work-

ers' centres under the control of the unemployed themselves, from which the unemployed can organise to fight for their rights and to help employed workers fight for jobs.

What role in this will the leaders who preside over the People's March play? They will do just as much as we can force them to do, and no more.

They tried to drown or hide, the working-class character of the March, excluding political slogans, and putting bishops rather than militant workers at the head of the protest.

But the reality has become clear: the labour movement, and only the labour movement, has the will and the power to fight unemployment — if it can put its leadership in order.

## BENN FOR DEPUTY!

# Foot and Healey insult the Party

by Nigel Williamson

TONY BENN is to be carpeted by the Shadow Cabinet. But his 'crime' — voting against the Tories on defence, rather than abstaining — will count in his favour with the rank and file.

Moves to penalise Benn for following conference policy will be regarded by the rest of the Party as a deliberate insult to them by the Parliamentary Labour Party. And activists will see Healey's speech denouncing Benn as a brutal example of what Solidarity means by 'unity'.

Meanwhile John Silkin has also entered the contest for the deputy leadership of the

Labour Party. His backers are seeking to stop Benn. But Silkin's constituency support is as non-existent as his left-wing credentials. In fact he is just as likely to take votes from Healey as from Benn.

The crucial decision will be taken at the TGWU biennial conference in Brighton at the end of June. Silkin is a TGWU-sponsored MP, but his chances of securing the union's one and a quarter million votes must be poor.

Healey initially believed that the trade union leaders would hand him the deputy leader job on a silver platter. But he has seen Benn's campaign grow stronger almost daily through rank and file

activity.

ASTMS conference decided to cast its 147,000 votes in favour of Benn, despite the manoeuvring of general secretary Clive Jenkins. Within hours this was followed by the promise of SOGAT's 50,000 votes.

Meanwhile, NUPE and the FBU are balloting their rank and file — who will remember Healey principally as the architect of the five per cent wage limit policy.

Of John Silkin they are likely to ask merely: 'Who?'

Every single comrade should be ensuring that the Constituency Labour Party or trade union nominate Tony Benn.

## LABOUR WOMEN BACK CALL FOR MARCH

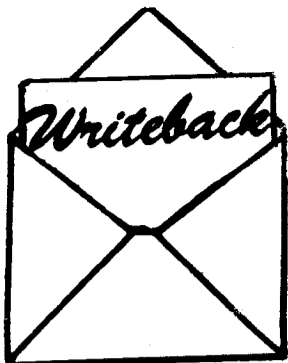
THE National Committee for Labour Women has agreed to sponsor a call for a national demonstration in support of woman's right to work. It follows support for the call from 3,500 women at the Festival for Women's Rights on June 9th.

The potential for a mass demonstration is there. Every day as redundancies mount more and more women are being forced out of work and into the home — and anger is rising.

So far the official labour movement has done little despite a turnout of over 1,000 women in pouring rain, the women's section of the People's March only mobilising a fraction of the support that would be if the Labour Party and TUC actively campaigned for a woman's right to work.

The TUC demonstration in London got 70,000 on to the streets. We should aim to win enough support in the labour and women's movements to make this demonstration truly successful.

A committee was set up from the Festival to coordinate the pressure for a demonstration and also to ensure that when it is called, the wide issues of women's rights are not forgotten. Contact the Action Committee for Woman's Right to Work, 374 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.



## Wales TUC expels WRP

I'D LIKE to add a point to your report on the Wales TUC conference.

The WRP's disgraceful attempt to sue Socialist Organiser for libel was decisively condemned there.

The WRP, who had a book-stall at the Conference, were ordered out of the Grand Pavilion by the Conference organiser after the NUPE delegation complained about their presence because of their attack on Socialist Organiser.

Support for the expulsion also came from Iraqi students manning a nearby stall. They were delighted to see the WRP removed because of the unstinting support given by the WRP to the murderous dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

MARTIN BARCLAY, Cardiff.

## Maurice Ludmer

MAURICE LUDMER, a leading fighter against racism and fascism, died on May 14th of a heart attack, aged 54.

He had worked with the War Graves Commission after the war and witnessed Belsen in 1946. He said in an interview last year, "I took an oath then to fight fascism".

In the '50s and '60s he worked closely with the national minorities workers' organisations, and in Birmingham in 1960 was a founder of the Coordinating Committee Against Racial Discrimination, the first body of its kind. In this work he consistently refused to collaborate with racist state organisations.

He had joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in the 1940s, but left in 1968 when the

CP refused to take an adequate stand against Powellite racism.

Striving to win the organised working class to the anti-racist struggle, he became increasingly involved in Birmingham Trades Council and was President from 1979. He was instrumental, with the Trades Council and national minority workers' and other organisations, in forming Birmingham CARF in 1977, and he was Chairman and Honorary President.

He was a prominent investigative journalist, working to expose fascism as editor from 1975 of the anti-fascist monthly Searchlight, and also in work for television. He was a founding member of the Anti-Nazi League.

## Useless, or misused?

I'D LIKE TO add a footnote to my interview with Ken Livingstone published in SO no.38.

In that interview, Livingstone told me what he saw as the strength of the broad London Labour Party left-wing current of which he is part. Its policies 'may not be ideologically perfect', but it has 'a strong commitment to make sure [the policies] are implemented' — in contrast to 'some more theoretical tendencies'.

I did not pursue that argument much in the interview. There were too many other issues to chase. But some comments made by Livingstone

since being elected Labour GLC leader raise the same point from a different angle.

Pursued by goggle-eyed Fleet Street reporters who demanded to know whether he was really a Marxist, Livingstone replied that he had never read Marx and preferred to be called a 'radical'. The implication was clear: that he had never seen it as sufficiently important to read Marx.

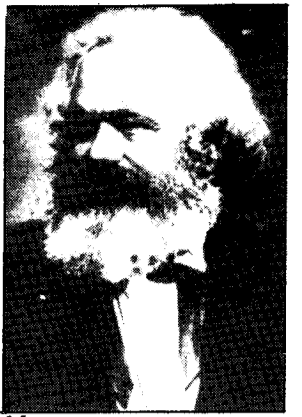
The traditional Labour Left has long lived on ineffectual good intentions. Much of the Marxist Left has contented itself with sectarian self-justification as a substitute for real involvement in the mass movement. On both sides, policies are debated with little reference to putting them into action. Against this background, Livingstone's stress on shelving the quibbles and getting on with some action, even 'not ideologically perfect', makes sense.

Better someone who doesn't read Marx but who starts a real fight against the Tories and the right wing, than a Marxist for whom each book leads only to the next book and never to action. Better also than people like Ted Knight or (in a different context) Eric Heffer, who use their Marxist education to spin arguments for retreat when it is time for an all-out fight.

But is theory really so useless? Or is it just mis-used?

The Labour Left's policies have not just failed for lack of energetic people. They have failed because they are based on no clear theoretical understanding of capitalist society and the conservative forces within it. Efforts to get the capitalist state to legislate harmony and justice are bound to end in farce.

What is to stop the current London Labour programme becoming equally utopian? What is to stop the GLC Labour Left ending up like the Camden Council Labour left (of which Ken Livingstone is also part) — who approved cuts for the sake of making a compromise with



Marx

the Labour Right and thus stopping the Labour Right doing a deal with the Tories?

The Camden council left's compromise, it seems to me, was based on an over-emphasis on 'getting something done' in the council chamber and the corridors, at the expense of a broader political view. I hope I'm wrong — but the same over-emphasis could be fatal for the Labour GLC.

The point is not how much better a GLC leader Ken Livingstone would be if he took a month off to study Capital and the Communist Manifesto — nor that the GLC Labour group should adopt Socialist Organiser as a theoretical advisory team!

The point is that a broad left which focuses on assembling forces for the immediate fight against the right wing, and which plays down theoretical precision, is not enough — at least not on its own.

We also need an organised left wing which focuses on political and theoretical clarity, which sets out to educate as well as to organise, and which mobilises the diverse talents and experience of its supporters into a collective effort to make theory a guide to action and practical experience a guide to theory.

That's what we must try to build in the Socialist Organiser Alliance.

MARTIN THOMAS, London.

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

## How long is temporary?

JEREMY CORBYN, reporting in Socialist Organiser 41 on a meeting of the Target 82 group to build towards the London borough elections, wrote that they "heard encouraging reports of the defeat of the Right in Brent".

This could give a misleading impression. Many old-guard right-wing councillors have been replaced at selection meetings by more left-wing candidates, but it is, as yet, not certain that the Labour Group in Brent will have a left-wing majority

after the election.

And a few weeks ago, the Labour Group of Council elected a more right-wing leader than previously, despite the efforts of the Left. Only one councillor — Merle Amory, a Briefing supporter — has voted in the Labour group against cuts.

Unfortunately, the Right are a long way from being defeated in Brent.

In the same SO, Graham Durham of Briefing and Brent East CLP argues that SO's policy of no cuts and no rent/rate rises

is 'abstentionist', and that 'the no cuts position requiring rate rises has been a necessary temporary retreat whilst the forces are assembled' for a fight.

Yet Briefing comrades in Brent have been arguing for this 'temporary retreat' for at least two years now. And, rather than moving towards a stand against rate rises, this year Briefing supporters dropped even their previous 'no rent rise' policy in Brent.

PETE FIRMIN, Brent.

## Lifting the lid

THE MURKY world of the Italian ruling class has come under the glare of publicity. This has already led to the resignation of Justice Minister Adolpho Sarti and could cause the downfall of the Italian coalition government.

Top bankers, politicians, diplomats, secret service chiefs, newspaper editors and industrialists have been named in a list of 963 alleged members of a secret Masonic lodge code-named P2. Evidence about the existence of P2 came to light at the inquiry into the 'Sindona affair'.



The murder of Giorgio Ambrosoli, who seems to have been blackmailing Sindona over his connections with the Mafia on one hand and two ex-prime ministers, Andreotti and Fanfani, and Christian Democrat leader Zaccagnini, on the other, led to the exposure of huge illegal donations to Christian Democrat funds by Sindona.

Sindona is now serving a 25 year jail sentence in the US after the collapse of his bank. [The shareholders lost their money, but Sindona is alleged to have salted away £150 million for himself].

£150 million is mere small change in the latest scandal. Members of P2 managed an oil tax fiddle in which £1,000 million was shared out among top civil servants and industrialists.

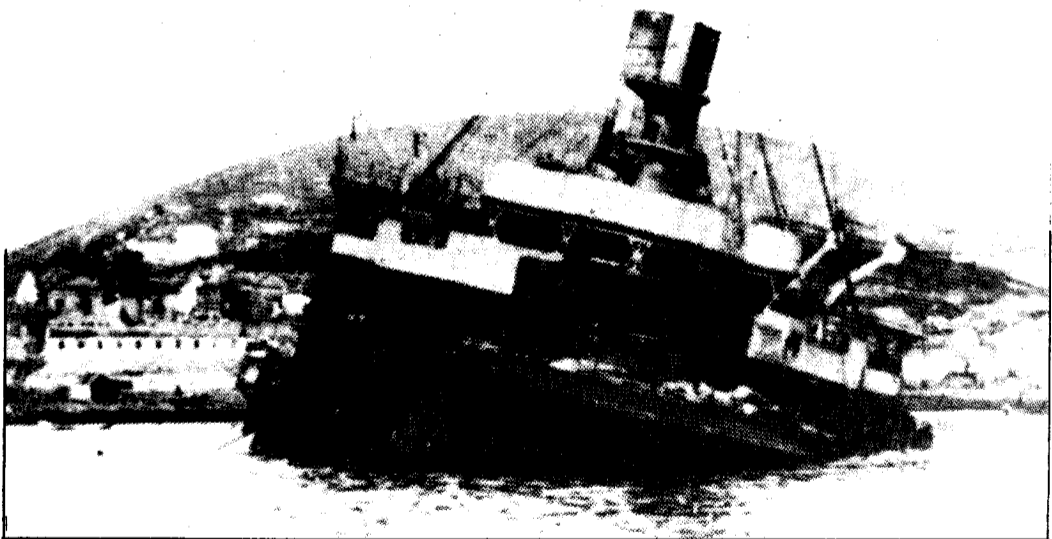


P2 seems to have its finger in all sorts of pies. Former Secret Service chief Col. Antonio Viezzer faces charges of handing over state secrets to P2's Grandmaster, Lucio Gelli, who is now on the run.

The 'respected' Milan newspaper Corriere della Sera's editor and leading journalists are among the list of P2's alleged members. Corriere della Sera has just been bought out by a bank owned by Roberto Calvi, now in jail for illegal export of currency.

What is startling about this tangled tale of corruption, espionage, blackmail and murder, is not that the most highly-

placed rulers of society are dishonest, self-seeking, and ruthless — i.e. gangsters — but that any of it should have come out. You can't imagine our Tories letting that sort of cat out of the bag.



### WHAT DEFENCE CUTS?

Don't cheer too soon at the sacking of Navy Minister Keith Speed, who leaked news of defence cuts to the armed forces and Tory back-benchers.

There are shifts in allocations. But while every other area of government spending is cut, Margaret Thatcher will keep her pledge to NATO to increase defence spending by 3% a year. And the £5 billion [conservative estimate] Trident is exempt from the defence cuts.

So we won't lose our capacity to get blown to pieces.

Now you can all sleep easy!

### COULD'VE TOLD YOU THAT!

The Communist Party, and Jean Styles, its Lambeth Central candidate in the GLC elections, have been refused legal representation at the Scarman Inquiry into the Brixton events. They will however be able to give written evidence.

Scarman said that he did not want to give parties a political platform in the inquiry.

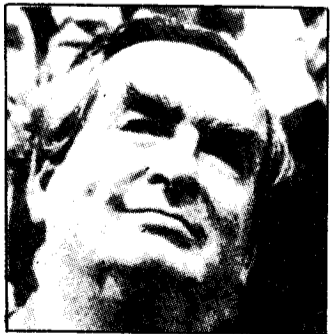
Doesn't this vindicate the belief of the Brixton Defence Committee, Lambeth Trades Council, the GLC Labour group, and others, who are calling for a boycott of Scarman, that the inquiry will refuse to look at the 'political' causes of the riot and in effect will be a whitewash of the police? Will it shatter the CP's touching faith in the integrity and neutrality of the state?

### MISSING THE REVOLUTION?

'The Thinking Person's Revolution' is well under way, according to William Rodgers, the brains (?) behind the Social Democratic Party's membership drive.

A 'thinking person', in case you missed this revolution in consciousness, is defined as a member of the SDP. Unfortunately, thinking personhood seems to be concentrated disproportionately in London and the South, traditional areas of Tory support — over 10,000 in Greater London, for instance, while in the North-West the thought-processes grow dimmer

and in the whole of Wales only 1421 persons can be found who match up to the SDP's demanding intellectual standards.



Denis Healey

### HEALEY PERSECUTED

Spare a thought for poor Dennis Healey. His application to join the National Union of Journalists Freelance Branch is being blocked on the spurious grounds that he doesn't make a living from journalism and that he is a member of the scab 'union', the Institute of Journalists. What will they think of next?

## Another squeeze on the rates

LOCAL COUNCILS will lose £450 million of their grants from the Government if they don't cut their spending for 1981-2 to 5.6% lower than their 1978-9 figures.

This will fuel the rate rise spiral, as councils who can't make up the cut will put in a supplementary rate demand. In metropolitan county areas such as Manchester it could mean two supplementary rate rises [Greater Manchester has 'overspent' by £22 million and Manchester City council by £13.6 million].

The 'temporary' option of rate rises to buy time to build up a fight against the Government is becoming institutionalised into a strategy of making the ratepayers bear the cost of a vindictive Tory government. So the Tories win either way, either forcing through cuts, or forcing high-spending urban areas [mostly Labour-controlled] to take a disproportionate share of the cost of local services — or both.

And the working class is yet again expected to pay.

\*\*\*

IN SCOTLAND, the supplementary rate option is not even a possibility. This could lead to a crunch in Lothian by next

January.

The Local Government [Miscellaneous Provisions] [Scotland] Bill, now winding its way through the Lords, will give the Secretary of State for Scotland the power to order any council to reduce rates if he considers them 'excessive'.

If they refuse, he can immediately cut the Government grant by an amount equivalent to the income raised by the 'excessive' rates. In Scotland the law prohibits supplementary rates, and short-term borrowing is allowable only against expected income.

So a cut in Government money would lead to an immediate crisis. Lothian put in a 50% rate increase for 1981-2, which is definitely regarded as excessive by George Younger, the Scottish Secretary. By mid-January, it is expected to have its grant stopped, which will mean defaulting on its loan repayments and the receiver being brought in.

Will Lothian, which effectively has its back to the wall, be the first council to confront the Government head-on?

The alternative is frantic cuts in the next six months.

If Lothian is to take on the Government and win, massive working class industrial and political action will be required. That has to be built for now.

## KEN LIVINGSTONE

# 'We need more Labour activists'

Ken Livingstone, the newly elected Labour leader of the GLC, last week told Socialist Organiser about what the new GLC will be doing.

"As strikes occur in London, the GLC will move in support of the workers in each struggle. That symbolism can have a more profound impact than the simple structural, bureaucratic changes about fares and so on.

"We're trying to get back to the identification of the Labour Party as the party that is fighting for working class interests.

"To symbolise the transformation of the council when we formally take office on the 28th, we're opening up the building to the People's March for Jobs when they get here. The whole building will be given over to that for the weekend and on Monday. At the same time we're pulling back from all the junketing and going to the Royal Wedding.

"We've also spent a lot of this first couple of weeks considering our relationship to the Labour Party outside. Almost all my first two days were spent in drawing up proposals, which the Labour group agreed, to reduce the powers of the leadership.

"We've removed all patronage from the Leader,

so now every post is elected by the Labour group. All policy issues will come first to the Labour group. They won't be initiated by committee chairs or the Leader and bounced on the Labour group after they have read about it in the press.

"And up to now there have been about 30 members of staff working directly under the Leader. These have now been re-designated and opened up to the whole Labour group.

"We want to have regular meetings with representatives of all the GLC employees' unions so that we discuss our political strategy, get the trade union thinking on it, and keep closely in touch. Also we want to co-opt onto each of the council committees representatives of the staff that work in that particular department.

"I want to see us move as quickly as possible to a 35 hour week. We've already got that for white-collar staff, but I want it for blue-collar staff too, without loss of pay.

## Women

"We're also setting up an ethnic minorities committee, which will have a wider remit than just the staff in this building - it will campaign on the Nationality Bill and issues affecting minorities right the way through London. It will start out by hav-

ing a detailed look at the way that the structures in this building prevent the adequate representation of black staff at all levels of employment here.

"We'll also be looking at discriminatory policies against women. We've only got one top officer who is a woman.

"We'll revive the proposals for a staff creche."

**WHAT ABOUT THE Tories' proposal to put a top limit on business rates?**

"It is a major threat. Clearly the people who control the Tory party are the people who suffer most from

increasing rates in order to defend services. They are going to push ahead with some sort of measure to try to restrict us.

## Disrupt

"But they will find it deeply unpopular with domestic ratepayers, because it will mean massively shifting the burden for local services onto domestic ratepayers.

"If they go beyond that to control the whole of the rate increase, they effectively end local government. If the

Tories move in that direction, we would have to demand full-scale industrial stoppages, and the Parliamentary Labour Party would have to move to disrupt the proceedings of Parliament and prevent it happening".

**WHAT ABOUT the right wing in the GLC Labour group? Andrew McIntosh, the previous leader of the Labour group, has hinted to the New Standard that he might sabotage a left-wing Labour stand by voting with the Tories on the GLC.**

"Since I won the leadership by 30 votes to 20, a majority of those who didn't

vote for me have made clear that they completely support the leadership and the drive to implement the manifesto. The only major debate we've had within the Labour group on a policy issue has been whether to submit evidence to the Scaman Inquiry, and that was won about 30 to 8.

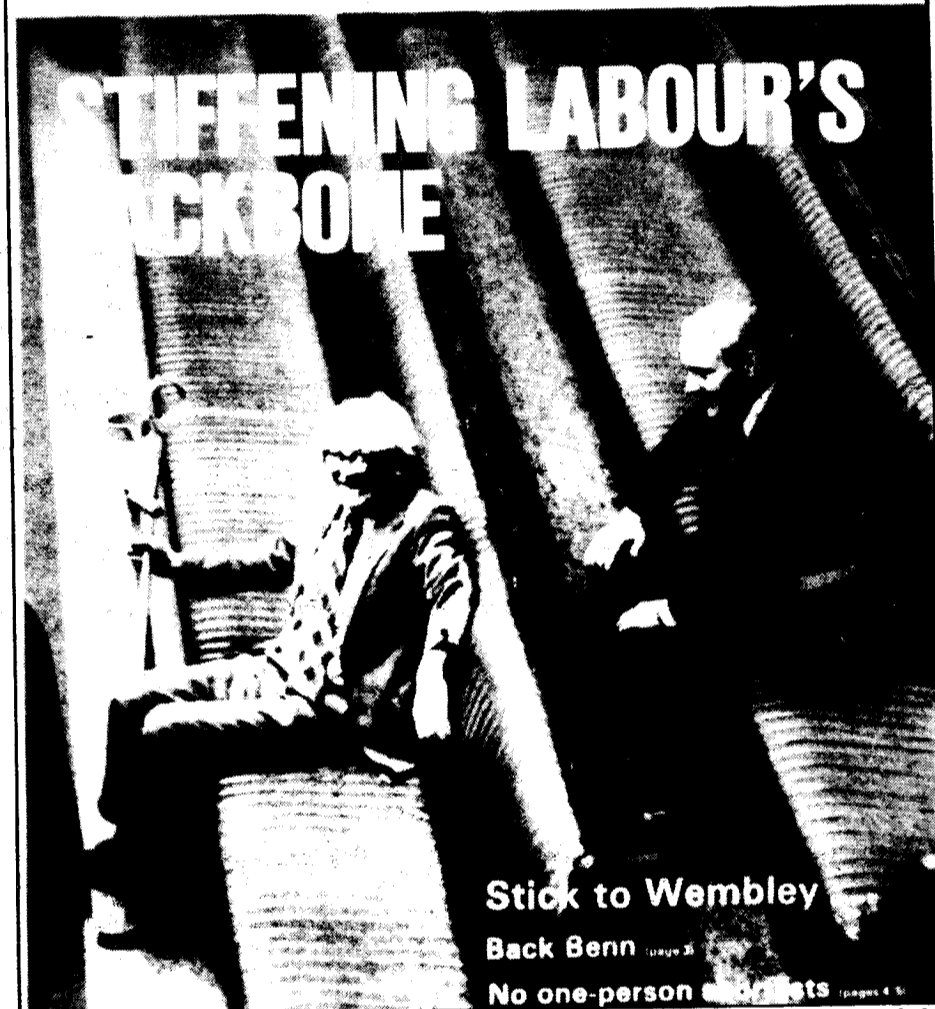
"The disaffected Right went down to that figure of seven or eight, and all of them have given such firm undertakings that they will support the manifesto that they would reveal themselves as the most total frauds if they now started voting against the implementation of the manifesto.

## MOBILISE

FOR LABOUR DEMOCRACY

June 1981

Price 20p



20p plus postage from 10 Park Drive, London NW11. Donations to help the Benn Campaign can be sent c/o Socialist Organiser, marked Rank and File Mobilising Committee - Deputy Campaign Fund

# Stop these shortlists of one

by Vladimir Derer\*

ANOTHER stage in the struggle for mandatory re-selection may well have ended by the time this issue of Socialist Organiser reaches its readers. But even should this be so, and it is by no means certain, the struggle for mandatory re-selection is bound to go on in some other form.

Following the West Bromwich West farce (the General Committee [GC] of this Constituency Labour Party [CLP] decided by 23 votes to 21 to 'shortlist' the sitting MP even though another nominee was backed by eight nominating bodies) the Labour Party National Executive Committee [NEC]'s Organisation Committee is proposing that every GC delegate must be given a copy of the NEC guidelines to re-selection.

These, it is also proposed, must make it clear that a shortlist of one is acceptable only where the only nominations are for the sitting MP.

This proposal, however, was carried by 9 votes to 7. The majority was so narrow partly because, somewhat unusually, both Michael Foot and Dennis Healey were present, but also because some NEC members who could normally be counted on to vote in favour of democratic reforms failed to do so on this occasion (Neil Kinnock and two members representing the trade union section voted against the proposal).

Thus the NEC's final deci-

sion remains in doubt.

The case in favour of a 'shortlist of one' is an extremely poor one. It rests on a seeming ambiguity in the working of the Party constitution and a badly worded sentence in the NEC's guidelines to re-selection.

The constitution lays down the following:

"The Executive Committee of this Party [the CLP] may tender such advice as it deems necessary to the General Committee on the nominations found to be valid, and may suggest to the General Committee the manner in which they shall be dealt with" (Rules for Constituency Labour Parties, Clause XIV, Section 7(e)).

All this means is that the General Committee may amend the proposed 'manner' in which the nominations are dealt with, in practice mainly to add further nominees. In other words, the final decision on this must rest with the General Committee.

The end of the above paragraph, however, reads as follows:

"The General Committee shall then fix a date for a special meeting to decide which nomination, if any, shall be submitted to the National Executive Committee for endorsement as prospective Parliamentary candidate".

This means that it is the 'special meeting' and the 'special meeting' alone which can decide 'which nomination, if any' shall be sent to the NEC. If the 'shortlisting'

reduces the choice to only one nominee, the 'special meeting' cannot take this decision, since it would not have the opportunity to consider the relative merits of all the nominees, or, should this not be practicable, at least of those shortlisted.

Since the constitution requires that the choice as to who shall be the prospective parliamentary candidate be made by the 'special meeting', any attempt to pre-empt its decision at another meeting must be regarded as unconstitutional. This quite apart from the fact that 'selection by conference by shortlisting' deprives validly nominated candidates of their constitutional right to be heard and judged by the only body entitled to do so, and arbitrarily rules out the choice of the nominating bodies made under the constitutional procedure required by Section 3 of Clause XIV.

The present guidelines issued by the NEC do not make the case of the anti-reformers any better. Reference to them merely highlights the unfortunate fact that instead of being explicit, the guidelines, like the constitution, need interpretation. The argument in favour of the

'shortlist of one' is based on the following paragraph of the guidelines:

"At the General Committee meeting when the shortlist is considered no motion to delete the Member of Parliament from the shortlist may be considered. They may, of course, delete, add or amend the other nominees".

This seems confusing enough. If, however, it is read together with the first sentence of the same section there is no longer any room for a misunderstanding. The sentence is as follows:

"The re-selection procedure should follow the practice normally adopted for ordinary selection conferences..."

Nobody can argue that 'shortlists' of one are part of the practice normally adopted for ordinary selection conferences. To claim that shortlists of one become legitimate because of a badly worded sentence in the guidelines is a clumsy attempt to justify an unconstitutional practice.

That such an attempt should find a ready echo among some NEC members is not altogether surprising. It is ironic, however, that the opponents of reform should blame this NEC for the recent democratic advances within the Labour

## Campaign

"No-one here can claim what some of the Socialist Democrat MPs are claiming that the Party has changed since they were elected. Everyone here knew exactly what they were coming into".

**AND KEN Livingstone advice to local Labour activists was:**

"Don't stop campaigning. There's a flood of new people into the Labour Party. And we need it because there's too much to do for the present limited number of activists."

"There's the Benn campaign. There's the campaign building up for the borough elections next year. And we've got to start now on a more active campaign for the defence of Labour councils in not making cuts and pressing ahead with the programme on which they have been elected."

"Party activists have really got to start to move out and start building support"

## Ladywood ousts sitting MP

IN LADYWOOD, Birmingham, the Labour Party's re-selection procedure has been used for the first time to oust a sitting Labour MP.

John Sever, a supporter of the right wing Solidarity group, has been replaced by the Labour candidate for the next election by Albert Bostock, a Birmingham Labour councillor and left wing activist.

Typically, this result causes much more consternation among Labour's right wing than the 'shortlist of one' fiasco ever could. There are drumorous in the press that some members may try to engineer a vote of no confidence in Bostock to reverse the result.

## Subscribe

£3 for 12 issues, £6 for Overseas, air mail: £5 for 12 issues, £9 for 24.

Name.....

Address.....

Send to: SO, 214 Sickle Court, London N1 2SY. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.

\* Vladimir Derer is honorary secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. He writes in a personal capacity.



Mary Corbishley reports on the findings of the new Counter Information Services report on 'Women in the '80s'

spend all day with the kids. It got so bad I didn't want to be in the house... I'd do everything except housework".

Unemployment has risen sharply since 1979, and especially for women. And the official figures hide the real story.

If the Government were to acknowledge the unregistered unemployed, about 480,000 would be added to the figures. In November 1980, the published rates of unemployment were 10.4% for men and 6.5% for women; the real rates were 11.7% for men and 11.1% for women. Women are now 43% of the unemployed, as against less than 30% in 1972.

It will get worse with new technology. A study carried out at Cambridge University predicts that new technology will push out 800,000 jobs by 1983 — 500,000 of them women's jobs.

Women tied to the home, looking after young children, with no money and no job, are driven to tranquillisers to try to cope. And unemployment may be just as grim for girls leaving school who can't find jobs.

"A study of 150 unemployed school-leavers found that 45% of girls as opposed to only 16% of boys were likely to get depressed... [For girls] unemployment means being confined to the house, cut off from friends. When they're at home they're expected to help with the housework and younger children".

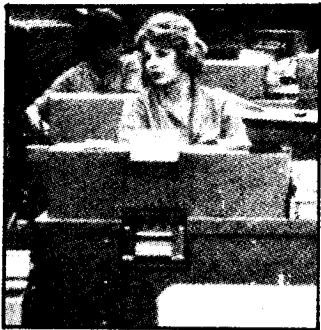
"FOR WOMEN, cuts in standards of living have a special meaning. They are the managers, they stretch the family budget, make sure the kids have warm clothes".

Millions of women are being hit by the erosion of wages through inflation, by cuts in social services and benefits, and most dramatically by unemployment.

Government estimates show that in 1979 1.3 million men and 4.4 million women grossed less than £60 a week — below the supplementary benefit level for a 'standard family'. Women's wages are not 'pin money' for working class families.

But unemployment for women has ramifications beyond the loss of income. Being pushed back into the home, especially if you are married and have children, often means being back in an oppressed role, losing independence, becoming isolated and demoralised.

Julie, a single parent in Leeds, told the CIS researchers: "It drives me potty to

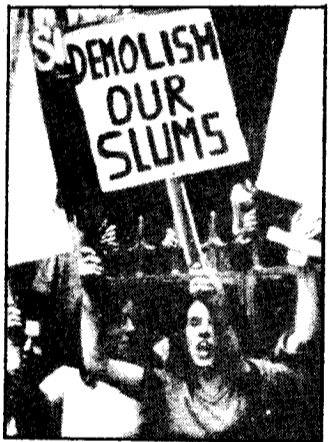


Seven out of ten office workers are women. 99% of typists and secretaries are female — and 14% of office managers. Almost two million women work in occupations that are almost entirely (over 90%) done by women.

But rising unemployment has wiped out any gains that had been made in equal opportunities.



In 1980 the average male manual worker earned £111 a week gross, and the average full-time woman manual worker, £68. For non-manual workers, the rates were £141 and £83 respectively. And the 40% of women who work part-time average hourly rates 60% of full-time men's and 80% of full-time women's.



Bad housing dominates women's lives. In 1974-5, the Labour government spent 96p on housing for every £1 it spent on defence. By 1983-4, Thatcher's government will have cut that 96p to just 33p for every £1 on arms. But Shelter estimates that almost one household in three suffers homelessness, overcrowding or poor conditions.



The Lee Jeans occupation

But that's only one side of the picture. There has been a huge increase in the number of women in trade unions over the last decade.

NUPE's female membership increased by 236% between 1968 and 1978, from 130,000 to 457,000; the female membership of the male-dominated AUEW rose by 52%, from 97,400 to 148,300.

At Lee Jeans, Longworth Hospital, Meccano (Liverpool), Chix, and elsewhere, women are fighting back.

But they have had little help from the still conservative and male-dominated union bureaucrats. The fight is now on to transform the trade unions into organisations controlled by the rank and file, capable of fighting for the interests of women and of all workers.

# FLEET STREET RIPS OUR MINDS

by Jo Thwaites

THE HORROR, the evil, the awe, the fascination and even titillation of the Ripper trial is over. The Fleet Street hacks now only have to recap on the whole affair in case anyone missed even the slightest detail, haggle amongst themselves over who gave the best coverage and maybe — if they're 'thoughtful' journalists — pick up the story of why the police took five years to track Peter Sutcliffe down.

The coverage of the Ripper case has been unprecedented — all the papers have carried intricate, gory details. Why? Because it's what the readers want — the readers want to know all about Sutcliffe, about his divine mission, who his friends were, what his wife was like (many implying that she drove him to become a mass murderer), the stories of the women who escaped etc. etc. So say the editors of Fleet Street, slightly ruffled that the Queen should interfere in complaints of cheque book journalism. And these editors have acted accordingly sparing no angle, no detail and no expense.

But why? The general theme to the coverage has been one of horror — wasn't it terrible, what an awful crime. But this horror has been riddled with a sneaking admiration — this is the man who kept the police guessing for five years, who murdered so many women, who terrorised an entire population of women. Weren't we told never to go out alone, to always make sure you've got a man to protect you?

And this Peter Sutcliffe was the man who did it. The descriptions of him in court, the pictures in the paper all have a common thread — surely this

is a man to be reckoned with. There are recurrent images of evil invoked in reference to him, his dark, satanic, devilish features etc etc. But here was a man, no matter how evil, who knew what he thought about prostitutes and women in general and kept them in their place — literally.

This attitude was not limited to the Press — the Attorney General Sir Michael Havers said of the Ripper's victims, "Some were prostitutes but perhaps the saddest part of this case is that some were not. The last six attacks were on totally respectable women"

## Schema

So if a prostitute is brutally murdered, it's no big deal — she should expect such treatment, it's part of the risks of the job. And her children, her parents, her friends or lovers? Their existence is hardly recognised by the press: it's as if a prostitute is dead for society even before she is killed.

No-one, not the plain talking men of Fleet Street, makes the same comparison about the risks of the job when a policeman or soldier is shot.

Death or injury will be played up or down as much as necessary to fit into the prevailing (ruling class) schema of how the world should be organised. Bobby Sands and the hunger strikers killed themselves, the SAS in the Iranian Embassy siege were heroes. The prostitutes got what they deserved.

A nasty coincidence has been the spate of violent anti-women horror films showing recently. Films like Dressed to Kill and others where the theme is a woman alone, a violent attack and always sex, whether it's a prostitute or a pretty woman, lots of blood

and rape. They portray a view of the world where women are weak, frightened, vulnerable and so on.

And these films are watched by thousands and thousands of people. The Ripper trial was covered in the press in the same vein — only this was for real, this really happened, which makes it all the more captivating and lucrative...

Society tells us that women are second-class citizens, fit to be owned and dominated by men. As long as this assumption is maintained, this society will continue to produce at worst more Peter Sutcliffes, and at the very least justifications for wife-battering and sexual attacks on women.

Every sexist remark that maintains or bolsters up this society's attitude to women and perpetuates the idea that women are inferior or to be made fun of, echoes and reaffirms the attitudes spread about in the Ripper trial reporting. Maybe now those who dismiss a campaign against sexism in the labour movement as being of secondary importance will change their tune.

## Horror

Some people have said that Sutcliffe is mad and therefore it's wrong to extrapolate anything of a general nature from his murders. Whatever his psychiatric illness, the idea of ridding the world of prostitutes, his horror of women's sexuality and the subsequent violence didn't come from nowhere.

It developed from ideas perpetuated in the films, the papers and TV every day — ideas that stem from and are perpetuated by the sexual repression and sexism of the society we live in — and if you think that's mad, I agree.

## Putting our own house in order

SOME OF THE major decisions of the last Socialist Organiser delegate meeting — about going weekly, adopting a new name, and amending the 'Where We Stand' — are reported on page 3. The other main discussion at the meeting on May 16th, was about the role of women in the Socialist Organiser groups.

The problem to be tackled was illustrated by the meeting itself. Of the delegates present from local groups, only one was a woman.

There are too few women in the SO groups. Then not enough of those few get to be group organisers. And not enough play an active and vocal role at national level.

Paradoxically, this failure to develop the role of women within SO is partly a result of the successes of Women's Fightback in fighting for a greater role for women in the labour movement generally.

Fightback has developed by leaps and bounds since it was initiated by Socialist Organiser. But SO groups have consequently tended to be less active in their own right on women's issues, leaving them instead to Fightback.

SO women comrades find they have the full weight of Fightback activity on their shoulders before they can start thinking about other areas of work. So it's not surprising they don't come forward as SO group organisers.

And at the same time militant women don't see SO, as such, as being particularly active on women's issues. So SO is less able to recruit them.

Mary Corbishley, convenor of the recently-established SO Women's Commission, pres-

ented some ideas from the commission. The two main themes were: greater activity by SO itself on women's issues; and 'positive discrimination' for women within the SO groups.

The meeting added some points to Mary Corbishley's proposals, and came up with the following recommendations:

\* All SO groups to practice positive discrimination so that more women take on organisers' jobs.

\* All SO groups to affiliate to Women's Fightback and to take a bundle of Fightback papers to sell separate from the bundle taken by the local Fightback group. (The SO group should, of course, avoid 'poaching' on the Fightback group's sales areas).

\* Women's Fightback and other activity on women's issues to be a standard item on every SO group agenda.

\* Education material on women's liberation to be prepared for use in the SO groups. Special educationals on general socialist and Marxist theory to be run by women SO supporters for women SO supporters. Each SO group to immediately schedule a forum on women's liberation.

\* Women comrades to be encouraged to write more for SO.

\* SO groups to approach local Women's Fightback groups with a view to producing jointly leaflets or regular bulletins at a local factory, or factories, employing women workers.

\* In each SO group, the organiser, or a comrade specially responsible, must organise regular baby-sitting rotas to enable comrades who have to look after babies or young children to attend meetings.

\* SO should publish a special pamphlet on women's liberation and socialism.

The delegate meeting also discussed a failure. At our day-school on March 22nd we set a target of 100 new supporters by May Day. We got nowhere near it. There was only the usual trickle of recruits, perhaps 15 or 20 in the relevant period.

With the large number of special events, mobilisations, and campaigns over recent months, the target just fell by the wayside. Neither the local groups nor the Secretariat gave the necessary attention to activities specifically aimed to bring in new supporters.

But the Delegate Meeting still felt that the potential was there. It called on SO groups to participate fully in or initiate local Labour Party recruitment campaigns, and to make special efforts to draw the new Labour Party recruits towards the SO group.

It also reaffirmed the recommendation to start regular estate sales. And it suggested that SO groups should get themselves better organised by setting up a committee of officers (organiser, paper organiser, treasurer, fund-raiser) to deal with detailed business between full group meetings.

Other reports and discussions at the Delegate meeting covered several areas of activity: the Irish prisoners' campaign; the civil service strike; the People's March; the June youth conference; Labour Party democracy; resolutions for Labour Party conference; and the fight against the WRP's libel action.

The next Delegate Meeting will be on June 13th-14th in London.

by John O'Mahony

SOCIALIST ORGANISER will soon go weekly. That was the unanimous decision of the national meeting of delegates from Socialist Organiser groups which met in London on Saturday 16th May. The first weekly SO will appear immediately after the summer break in August.

When we announced the shift from monthly to fortnightly publication last August, we said, "A weekly SO would go nearer to meeting the needs of the moment, but for now we can only hope to produce it fortnightly". Two developments make weekly publication now a possibility.

In the first place, there is now in existence a network of Socialist Organiser supporters groups which sell and sustain the paper. The circulation of SO has more or less doubled since it went fortnightly ten months ago.

## Unity

In the second place, and decisively, we are having some success in one of the central objectives we set ourselves last August — to begin unifying the class struggle left.

We wrote then: "We must fight for unity of the forces of Marxism around a programme of work in both the political and trade union labour movement. We must organise within the existing labour movement, not outside it and need-

lessly counterposed to it". Socialist Organiser is, of course, itself an association of class struggle socialists from different backgrounds. Now the Labour Party supporters of Socialist Press have decided to add their forces to those already grouped around Socialist Organiser.

This will qualitatively strengthen our work, espec-

ially in industry, where supporters of Socialist Press have been prominent in many struggles in the car industry and elsewhere. It was together with these comrades that Socialist Organiser built the successful cuts conference in March, and we have worked closely with them for some time now.

This is still a long way from being the unification of the forces of revolutionary Marxism which we need to bring about, and Socialist Organiser does not believe that there exists any formula for immediately uniting all the forces of the far left. Nevertheless, if we can consolidate it, it will be an enormous step towards that goal. The fact — and it is an arresting one — is that it will be the largest Marxist unification in Britain for decades, since 1944 in fact!

## Forces

The combined forces of Socialist Press and Socialist Organiser will demonstrate in practice that the cancer of sectarianism and division can be fought, and that the process of fragmentation of the revolutionary left is being reversed. We will demonstrate

# GOING WEEKLY

in practice that the forces which unite around Socialist Organiser can multiply their combined effectiveness in the direct class struggle and in the struggle for revolutionary socialist ideas in the political and trade union wings of the working class movement.

## Merger

This will help us to play the 'central role' we defined for ourselves last August: "To rally the broadest possible numbers of serious class struggle militants in the struggle against Thatcher's Tories and against their close relations on the Right of the Labour Party". The merger with the comrades of Socialist Press will be the beginning, not the end, of the process.

Launched last August, the fortnightly Socialist Organiser played an important role in helping to organise the left for the great victories at Blackpool and Wembley in the following six months. The Left's activities may have been decisive for the outcome; and certainly the fortnightly Socialist Organiser contributed to the effectiveness of the Left.

Now the weekly Socialist Organiser will have the

immediate job of taking the campaign for Labour democracy into the trade unions, where the deciding battles on this issue will have to be fought, in close connection with a struggle for trade union democracy. If we had had a weekly Socialist Organiser in the last few months we would have been a great deal more effective in this work. With a weekly produced in collaboration with the comrades of Socialist Press, our work in the unions should make a qualitative breakthrough in the period ahead.

The weekly Socialist Organiser will be able to be far more balanced in its coverage of the political and industrial fronts of the class struggle, and more effective as a tool of socialist political education.

## Win

It will therefore be more effective as an organiser around which to group militants who come together to integrate these fronts of the class struggle into a coherent strategy and to win the labour movement for our politics.

We can maximise the forces united around the weekly by getting labour movement

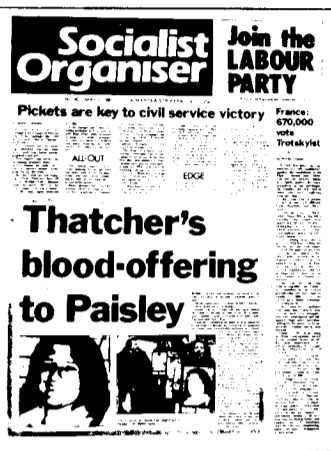
bodies and political tendencies, who agree with our platform to sponsor the paper.

The Socialist Organiser delegate meeting took two other related decisions. We adopted the name 'Socialist Organiser Alliance' for the national network of Socialist Organiser groups. This represents a stage in the development of the groups. It will allow militants in industry more clearly to see the paper and its policies as not just a disembodied voice putting out ideas and comments, but as an organised force geared for fighting for our politics through the organisations of the working class and in the class struggle.

## Seize

We also adopted some amendments to our platform which Socialist Press supporters suggested to us. The delegates felt that these were completely in line with the politics, intentions and character of the existing platform which they augmented and clarify.

If we can muster the energy, the seriousness, and the sense of political purpose to seize the opportunities that now open up for us, then the weekly Socialist Organiser and the Socialist Organiser Alliance will change the face of the Left in the period ahead. And that is the precondition for changing the face of British politics.



Socialist Organiser started as a monthly in 1979, became fortnightly last August, and is to go weekly this August.

# SOUTH AFRICAN STRIKERS FIGHT LEYLAND SACKINGS

by Bob Fine

2000 BLACK workers at British Leyland's two plants in Cape Town have come out on strike. They downed tools in protest against the management's intransigence over a wage demand.

On 7th May, the workers' union, NUMAROSA — a 15,000-strong affiliate of the Federation of South African Trade Unions — gave the management a week to negotiate a wage increase to keep up with inflation. This was a supplementary demand over and above an increase due in June according to an earlier wage agreement between the union and management.

Within a few days the Leyland bosses refused to meet or even discuss the demand for negotiation, and instead accused the union of breaking their agreement. When the entire black workforce came out, Leyland dismissed the strikers and are now attempting to rehire on an individual basis.

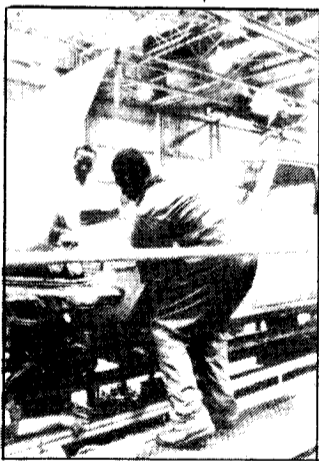
This is the latest of Leyland's long history of union-bashing in South Africa. They are one of the meanest employers even by South African standards.

## Lowest

For example, at Ford the lowest hourly rate has been R1.60 (about 80p). It is going up this pay-round to R1.80. At Leyland, the rate has been R1.30 and is due to rise to R1.39.

All Socialist Organiser supporters should raise the issue in their unions and the Labour Party, demanding that Leyland reinstate all the dismissed workers and negotiate

with the union over a supplementary pay rise. The smallest acts of support are well publicised among black workers in



## Resolution

The following resolutions have been passed by the Leyland Action Committee and by the TGEU 5/293 (Cowley Assembly Plant) branch.

• We express total support for reinstatement struggle at Firestone and will fight for maximum possible blacking and strike solidarity action.

• We express total support for wage demands and unconditional reinstatement of every striking fellow worker at Leyland and will fight for maximum blacking and strike solidarity action.

Socialist Organiser supporters are urged to pass similar resolutions through their trade union branches and shop stewards' committees, and send copies to: NUMARW, 2 Goodhope St, Bellville South, Cape Town (for Leyland), and Government Zini, Ford Cortina, Struandale Plant, Port Elizabeth (for Firestone).

South Africa and are a source of great encouragement.

Meanwhile a strike has also broken out at Ford and General Motors. It is in solidarity with workers at Firestone, who downed tools in January when the company changed its policy over the refunding of pensions.

## Insists

Until that time, workers received their pension payments back when they left or were dismissed by the company; they served as a kind of redundancy payment.

Now Firestone insists that government support that workers should not be refunded until they are 60 years old. Firestone's response was to dismiss the black workforce of an entire factory, and about 200 did not get their jobs back.

Workers at Ford and GM refused to handle Firestone tyres and one of their unions, Motor Assembly and Component Workers, launched a strike when the companies ordered them to do so.

## Strong

This rekindled militancy at Firestone, where most of the black workers have struck again.

The union involved is the outcrop of the earlier Ford Workers' Committee, which has strong Black Consciousness ties, was at one time headed by Thozamile Botha (the now-exiled leader of a radical community organisation in Port Elizabeth), and has an uneasy relation with NUMAROSA, who also organise at Ford and GM. It seems however that this strike has widespread support.



## Mitterrand gives his guarantees

by Martin Thomas

WHILE the French Stock Exchange slumped and some over-optimistic left-wingers [like Socialist Challenge] gushed about 'an historic opportunity for socialism', the big-business weekly, the Economist, published an interview with a French banker.

Soberly assessing the impact of the presidential election victory of Socialist Party candidate Francois Mitterrand, the banker declared that Mitterrand's promised nationalisations would make 'no difference'. The banks already take no important decisions without consulting the Government.

In his first few weeks as President Mitterrand has been at

pains to support the reassuring message of that unflappable banker.

His prime minister, Pierre Mauroy, has announced a government which includes Pompidou's former deputy, Michel Jobert, as minister for foreign trade. Two members of the Left Radicals [a small group, politically something like the Liberals in Britain] also have senior jobs: Maurice Faure is minister of justice, and Michel Crepeau is minister of the environment.

These ministers represent guarantees to the French capitalist class that no real blows will be struck at their privileges. But most would not be very worried anyway, on looking at the record of the new Socialist Party ministers.

Finance Minister Jacques Delors served under the Gaullist prime minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas in 1969, and is no left-winger.

Mitterrand must also be hoping to coax over bigger sections of Centrists and Gaullists after the new National Assembly elections on June 14 and 21. If he does so, he can hope to get a National Assembly majority relatively independent of the Communist Party, which is still plaintively begging for some ministerial jobs.

The main French trade union federations are stressing that they don't expect too much, too fast, from the new Government. But rank and file French workers may have their own ideas.

## RELEASE THESE COMRADES

THE CHINESE Democratic Movement Resource Centre in Hong Kong has issued an appeal for the release of two Chinese oppositionists, Xu Wen-li and Yang Qing.

Xu and Yang, both arrested on April 10th, were former editors of the Beijing democratic movement journal 'April 5th Forum'. Xu is an electrician, aged 36; Yang, a steelworker in his 30s.

'April 5th Forum' advocated 'struggle for democracy and

struggle for a full and just legal system". It saw its role as "putting into practice what is already laid down in the Constitution, namely for the people to exercise its right to oversee and manage their own country."

The Chinese Democratic Movement Resource Centre calls on supporters to write to send a telegram to the Chinese Embassy and to send a copy to the Chinese Democratic Movement Resource Centre, Kowloon City Post Office Box 89278, Hong Kong.

# Stop the BL slaughter: OCCUPY!

announcement  
new round of plant  
represents  
challenge to the  
union movement  
defence of jobs.

closures are an  
of the Edwardes  
launched in Sep-  
1979.

effectively mean  
of five more  
and the axing of  
ore jobs as part of  
aimed at concentra-  
duction in two main  
Longbridge and

two key manage-  
decisions are the  
of the TR7 sports  
the transfer of the  
Rover Saloon from  
to the Cowley  
Plant when it is  
in April 1982.

could lead to the  
of the modern SD1  
Plant with a loss  
jobs and throw the  
of the Speke body-  
jeopardy which  
frames for the TR7.  
Engines would  
affected and BL  
are looking  
at the future of  
In addition the  
Division plant in  
is to close.

capacity would  
back—resulting in  
of the Welling-  
foundry this year  
a serious ques-  
over the No. 3  
in Leeds.

ough Jaguar will  
open and receive a  
model in 1983, the  
is earmarked for  
and  
of jobs are at risk.  
plan as a whole is  
conceived. Comple-  
one year gives  
management exactly the  
time scale they need  
opposition.

pressure is immedi-  
ed onto the indiv-  
worker. Management  
losses will be  
as far as possible"  
ary means.

## Plants

plants are to be  
the normal plant  
terms will apply  
to there being co-  
of work, run down  
"

agement will move  
to present workers  
accompli. Already  
they plan to  
the TR7 and achieve  
stage of the closure  
plant.

the Cowley Assembly  
management is laying  
for the expansion of  
in the factory.  
redundancies  
looked a certainty  
the Maxi ceases  
in June now  
and even the  
scheme may

through Acclaim  
to be launched  
and will be

followed rapidly by the new  
face lift hatchback Princess  
and, they hope, the new  
Rover.

In 1983 the first model  
of the LC10 range will be  
launched in the Cowley  
Assembly South Works.

But workers at Cowley  
who may feel safer as a  
result of these moves should  
not be deluded. Their future  
cannot be separated from  
the effects of the Edwardes  
and Thatcher policies on the  
corporation as a whole.

They should remember  
that the original "Edwardes  
Plan" of September 1978  
designated Rovers as a  
growth area and transferred  
the TR7 from the doomed  
Assembly Plant at Canley in  
Coventry!

Every cut Edwardes  
makes is a step towards the  
complete closure of BL.  
Whatever BL's present  
strategy, how can two car  
assembly plants plus Jaguar  
and Rover compete in the  
world car manufacturing  
industry today?

But, true to form, the  
trade union officials are  
doing nothing to oppose  
the closure. They were given  
the information by manage-  
ment last Tuesday, but as  
yet not a single initiative has  
emerged from them.

Of course there have  
been some angry words:  
Brian Mathers, the Midlands  
Regional Secretary of the  
TGWU, has said the decision  
is "a scandal". Grenville  
Hawley, national automotive  
secretary of the TGWU has  
said it is "diabolical".

## Closure

At the same time Hawley  
cancelled a convenors' con-  
ference scheduled for  
Monday of this week, to  
discuss management's  
proposed new procedure  
agreement.

The meeting would  
inevitably have discussed  
the new round of plant closures.

Their attitude is not sur-  
prising. Although the TGWU  
at first objected, the unions  
(organised at that time  
through the CSEU) actually  
supported the closure of 13  
plants under the original  
Edwardes plan. They argued  
that it was necessary in  
order to make BL viable.

And when Edwardes  
balloted the workforce on  
his so-called "survival plan"  
the Confed enclosed a letter  
urging a yes vote for  
Edwardes.

That vote was a big  
defeat for the BL workforce.  
Edwardes sacked Derek  
Robinson on the basis of it  
and has used it as his author-  
ity ever since.

Those events make  
today's fight harder.

## Betrayals

But Edwardes' authority  
has never been challenged. In  
each confrontation he has  
got away scot free—because  
of the betrayals of the  
officials and in many cases  
the convenors as well.

A fight must begin now.

Shop stewards at the Cowley  
Assembly Plant have pledged  
not to accept the SD1 if the  
closure is resisted at Solihull.

But the key lies in the  
threatened plants them-  
selves. Supporting action can  
only be effective if they  
resist.

## Resistance

A mass meeting at Rovers  
last Wednesday carried a  
resolution from the stewards  
committee pledging resis-  
tance to the closure by all  
means possible.

But in reality the resolu-  
tion doesn't mean very  
much. Time is the crucial  
factor.

Although the final  
closure may be 11 months  
away, management will  
move quickly to start nego-  
tiations on severance pay  
and undermine the develop-  
ment of any resistance.

Action has to be taken  
now. But ways have to be  
found to give confidence to  
workers facing that struggle.

Edwardes argues that the  
plants are "not viable". He  
is already pointing to losses  
of £266 million in BL's car  
operations, to the recession  
and to the strength of the  
pound as reasons for the  
closures.

Workers must immedi-  
ately be given an answer to  
these questions. Who says  
that those were the losses in  
the car side?

Is it not that BL paid  
£100 million to the banks in  
the interest on the so-called  
government "hand-outs",  
and that they spent a further  
£100 million on redundan-  
cies and closures?

Edwardes has just had a  
52% pay increase giving him  
£100,000 a year—open the  
books of BL!

## Occupy

Workers have the right to  
a secure job! Why should  
they be thrown on the scrap  
heap because of the crisis of  
a system they can't control  
and because of the policies  
of a reactionary government  
and management?

The only effective action  
is the occupation of the  
threatened plants immedi-  
ately and the call for a strike  
in support in the rest of the  
combine.

To achieve this the  
threatened plants must act  
together. A meeting of con-  
venors and stewards from  
the threatened plants should  
be convened immediately to  
give confidence to the work-  
force and propose action  
against the closures.

The combine committee  
which meets on June 6, must  
also take action to back up  
this initiative. A conference  
of BL workers and stewards  
should be called to extend  
support and organise resis-  
tance.

\*Occupy the five plants  
now.

\*Call for support  
throughout BL.

\*Open the books of BL!

\*Black all movement of  
production or machines!



## The spirit of the March

"IT WAS like an army of liber-  
ation", said one of the Eastern  
leg marchers, describing the  
scene when the two legs of the  
march, from Liverpool and from  
Yorkshire, met in Northampton.

The marchers from Liverpool  
had managed to win some democ-  
racy on the road. But the eastern  
marchers had been kept  
within "officially approved"  
limits.

No political slogans. No  
songs. No political badges. No  
delegations to factories. No  
local trade unionists joining the  
march as it passed through  
towns. No marchers' assem-  
blies. No elected march  
stewards.

So when the Western leg  
broke ranks and mingled the  
two contingents, shouting soc-  
ialist slogans, it was a glorious  
breakthrough.

The Eastern leg stewards  
tried to regain their grip by  
marching off their people before  
the western marchers were  
ready. But they'll never get the  
lid back on the spirit of the  
march.

The Western leg started out  
undemocratic, too, but after two  
days the marchers won a 'demo-  
cratic assembly'. Women  
marchers established their  
right to wear 'women's right to  
work' sashes: march stewards  
were elected; and the marchers  
insisted that no-one could be  
kicked off the march without  
the approval of a democratic  
assembly.

The March still has its prob-  
lems with bureaucracy. Some  
officials insist that it's wrong for  
the marchers to decide things,  
because the March belongs  
instead to 'the people of Brit-  
tain'. The voice of the people is  
the voice of God, the ancient  
Romans used to say; these  
people seem to reckon that the  
voice of the people is the voice of  
the trade union official!

Since Birmingham there have  
been no democratic assemblies,  
the officials arguing that the  
march is now 'too big'. But the  
call coming from the militant  
marchers is: one march, one  
democratic assembly, no exclu-  
sions... and we'll trample the  
Tories!

JOHN SMITH (LFL)



## AFTER THE MARCH - THE FIGHT IN THE FACTORIES

## Lee Jeans: OCCUPIED!

by Dave Milliken and Stan  
Crooke

AS THE sit-in at Lee Jeans at  
Greenock near Glasgow enters  
its 19th week, the 200 women  
workers have stepped up their  
fight against closure by launch-  
ing a campaign to get the firm's  
products blacked.

The sit-in began on February  
5th when management suddenly  
announced that the factory was  
to close at the end of April.  
The workforce was divided into  
three sections, each to be in  
occupation for a 12 hour shift  
followed by 24 hours off.

Despite the end of the 90  
day notice, management have  
not dared to use police to evict  
the workers for fear of the con-  
frontation this would provoke  
with the trade union movement  
nationally. There is widespread  
support and the canteen notice  
boards are covered with bunches  
of letters from trade union and

Labour Party branches.

The owners, Vanity Fair Cor-  
poration, are hoping to sit out  
the occupation, thinking that  
support will die away, that the  
workers will not be able to hold  
out on their official £5 a week  
strike pay from the National  
Tailors and Garment Workers'  
Union (NTGWU), and that pro-  
duction can be shifted to the  
firm's other factories in the  
north of Ireland (where wages  
are lower than at Greenock).

Management have also been  
trying to intimidate the workers  
by other means. For instance a  
bill of £2,885 for electricity and  
a £2,100 a week rent and rates  
bill have been sent to the work-  
ers. P45s have also been sent to  
them with a covering note  
urging them to apply for unem-  
ployment benefit and telling that  
their redundancy money is avail-  
able at nearby Gourrock.

The key now is the blacking,  
in particular of the products

from the north of Ireland, where  
40 new workers have been tak-  
on, new machinery has been  
installed, and overtime is being  
worked.

Dockers in Liverpool, Hull,  
London, Dublin and Belfast have  
agreed to black all Lee Jeans  
products passing through their  
ports, and TGWU lorry drivers  
have also agreed to black trans-  
port of anything that manages  
to get through the docks.

Throughout the sit-in, the  
NTGWU leadership has dragged  
its feet, especially on blacking  
which has been organised by the  
workers themselves. The lead-  
ers just talk of 'getting the firm  
back to the negotiating table'.

The lack of any real drive from  
the NTGWU officers makes  
all the more important that the  
Lee Jeans workers receive the  
support of the rank and file of  
the labour movement nationally.  
The blacking campaign must be  
extended to all retail outlets.

## Ansells: SOLD OUT!

"TELL ME, Brian Mathers —  
how do you fight for jobs if you  
are not allowed to strike for  
them".

In one of the stormiest meet-  
ings on the People's March,  
in West Bromwich on Monday  
17th, Ansells shop steward  
Barry Blinko challenged West  
Midlands TGWU secretary  
Brian Mathers.

The platform tried to stop

Blinko, but marchers and work-  
ers at the rally gave Blinko a  
a good reception and heckled  
Mathers.

What was behind it? The  
1,000 brewery workers struck in  
January against an enforced  
four day week. The Ansells  
bosses responded by announc-  
ing they would close the brew-  
ery. The strike continued, de-  
manding the reopening of the

brewery and reinstatement  
all the workers.

Mathers and other TGWU  
officials consistently hinder  
the struggle, pushing 'con-  
promise' solutions and try-  
ing to stop official picketing at other  
Allied breweries (Allied with  
Ansells). Now, finally, they have  
forced a postal ballot to end the  
dispute.

# Laurence Scotts: OCCUPIED!

by Paul Muddle

AT THE occupied Laurence Scotts plant in Openshaw, Manchester, convenor Bob Penchion told Socialist Organiser, "This is an all or nothing situation."

"The dispute at Laurence Scotts is even more important than the occupation at Gardners last year because the workers are fighting total closure, not limited redundancies."

"Employers up and down the country will be waiting to see if Snipe's tactics succeed, so that they too can use them."

Arthur Snipe is the one-man owner of the Doncaster-based business empire Mining Supplies, which took over Laurence Scotts in October 1980.

As the union fact-sheet about the occupation says, "Snipe built his empire on profits made from the National Coal Board. His lifestyle and attitudes are those of a 19th century mill-owner."

"As Master of the local Hunt he can enjoy his huge estate at Farnby Manor (near Newark), all financed by the £25,640 sal-

ary he pays himself plus the £180,000 he made from his shareholdings in 1980."

Snipe decided to close the Manchester works in February, but he kept it secret for two months because the works was already on short-time working and he was benefiting from a six-month Government subsidy.

On April 8th he finally sent a letter to the unions telling them that the factory would be closed down on July 10.

The 650 workers met on April 24 and voted by a majority of 80 to occupy the factory. Management responded by threatening to sack them all immediately without redundancy money; but a second mass meeting on May 3rd voted to continue the occupation.

The workers in Manchester have received support from the other factories in Snipe's Mining Supplies empire. Workers at Blantyre have given money to the Appeal Fund, and in Norwich workers are blacking transfer of work from Manchester.

Support has also been given from workers elsewhere in Manchester and miners in South Wales. All the engineering

unions are officially backing the Laurence Scotts workforce.

Messages/money to: George Fryer, 20 Roundcroft Road, Romiley, Cheshire.

## Royal Pride

WORKERS AT Laurence Scotts joined with workers at Royal Pride in a demonstration in Manchester on Saturday 16th in defence of trade union rights. The demonstration was supported by Manchester and Salford Trades Councils and was very well attended.

The workers from the Royal Pride furniture factory in Salford, mostly women, have now been on strike for 13 weeks for union recognition.

Although the women have had support from local trade union branches and members, the strike fund is now drying up. As most of the women are the sole earners in their families, and receive only £15 a week strike pay, financial help is urgently needed: send to Royal Pride Strike Fund, c/o FTAT, 37 Anson Rd, Victoria Park, Manchester 14.

## Plansee: STILL FIGHTING!

by Rob Dawber

THE FIGHT to save 120 jobs at Plansee Engineering, Sheffield, is now in its 15th week. But AUEW convenor Ian Paisley told Socialist Organiser, "We are now at the position as regards blacking and official union action that we should have been at after only six weeks."

The AUEW is the largest, most powerful union in Sheffield, with over 30,000 members. But, dominated by the Communist Party, it has done little or nothing to help the Plansee workers.

The local AUEW leadership has criticised Plansees for supporting a meeting of Rotherham unemployed workers (by sending speakers), and denounced them for having members of the SWP on the strike committee

(Ian Paisley is a member of the SWP).

To make the strike bite, the workers a few weeks ago demanded a Confed meeting to discuss blacking. AUEW district secretary George Caborn (a CP member) eventually agreed, but meanwhile he arranged a meeting with the local Engineering Employers' Federation and suggested that they talk about redundancy payments.

At this meeting the EEF did offer to make ex-gratia payments to the sacked workers equal to the redundancy money. A meeting of the workers later rejected this, but at the Confed meeting Caborn saw fit to drop blacking from the agenda!

He then had to be pressed to agree to a further meeting of the Confed to discuss it.

The Plansee workers are having to rely on their own initiative and have sent letters round to all union branches calling for blacking of Plansee products. They have also sent cars to all major northern and Midlands towns, visiting engineering plants, and they have reported enormous help and support. This week they are visiting London.

Blacking is crucial. Get these products blacked: Goldmaster, Tips, Metalwork Plansee, Tizit, Herbert Cutanit, Plansee Tooling, Tizit Maxilock, HSS Tooling, Ardoloy Hypercut, and Tufcut.

Although they are now receiving strike pay, money is running out, and donations are urgently needed.

Messages/money to: Len Godbeheve, 138 Greenhow St.

## YOPs: now spread the struggle

by Stan Crooke

YOUTHS working in Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) schemes in Glasgow struck on May 14th for the day, as the launching of a campaign for a better deal for YOP workers.

The strike had been built for by leafletting training workshops, council offices (where youth on YOP schemes sponsored by the council come to pick up their pay), and the offices of the local Community Services Agencies, which administer YOP schemes.

In most workshops and CSA offices the staff genuinely backed the youths' fight and took leaflets to pass on to the different YOP schemes.

From midday to one o'clock the strikers staged a picket of the Council Chambers to get publicity for their struggle, while a delegation went inside to meet the Lord Provost and get his support. He ceremoniously signed the YOP petition, and duly pledged his support — but what this means in practice is anybody's guess.

The slogans on the placards at the lobby summed up the

youths' attitude towards the YOP schemes: 'We want jobs, not YOPs', 'YOPs — You're On Pennies', 'YOPs — You're On Peanuts'. The demands put forward in the strike leaflet were for: a pay rise to meet our needs, better working conditions, full trade union rights, and shorter hours'.

After the lobby a group of strikers went down to the head offices of the Manpower Services Commission in Glasgow to hand in a petition of nearly 2,000 names which had been collected in the last fortnight on the streets and in the factories in the Gorbals around the Polmadie workshop. The head of the MSC promised to send the petition on to Edinburgh... from where it would be sent to London, and then to someone else...

From the MSC offices the strikers moved on to the TGWU offices to see about joining a union. They also wanted to know whether, if they had joined the TGWU before striking, they would have got union support. Full-timer Willie Queen would give no promises.

Although there was a fair spread of different YOP schemes represented on the lobby — from Polmadie, Calton, Townhead, Kinning Park and Hillington, the overall turnout for it — less than a hundred — was, it has to be admitted, disappointing.

But the day's events did bring together youths from a number of different YOP schemes in Glasgow and provided the opportunity for setting up a coordinating committee which can organise and step up the campaign for an end to the cheap labour of YOP workers.



PHOTOS: ANPHORACH

## LABOUR MUST SUPPORT THE HUNGER STRIKERS

by John O'Mahony

MR CONCANNON, Humphrey Atkins' understudy, visited Bobby Sands MP a couple of days before he died in order to tell him that 'under no circumstances would Labour ever support his demands'.

Sands gave him 'a dirty look' and the hero left.

This strange episode seems to have had no point unless it was to allow Mr Concannon to jump on the dying man with his pit boots on. It will be rich in symbolism for the Catholics of Northern Ireland, though. That, they will say, sums up exactly how the Labour Party and the British labour movement has always related to them.

Concannon was a representative of Michael Foot in this affair. Foot's justification to the AUEW National Committee of his object support for Thatcher was in the same strange vein: "We agree with the Government that there was one matter on which they had to be inflexible. That was the question of conceding the so-called political status of IRA prisoners."

Concessions, said Foot, would be "a boost for the IRA and act as a recruiting sergeant for them and add to the number of innocent people that would be killed."

"Matters in Northern Ireland should be settled by the free choice of the people through the ballot box and not by the point of the gun".

## Strikes

In fact the result of four hunger strikers being allowed to die (and a fifth, probably, by the time readers receive Socialist Organiser) is that, north and south of the Border, there is mass support for the IRA prisoners and generally for their political objectives on a scale not seen since Bloody Sunday in January 1972, when the British Army in Derry shot and killed thirteen unarmed civilians.

A wave of strikes swept some parts of the southern 26 Counties, especially in the border areas, on the day Bobby Sands was buried. 100,000 attended his funeral in Belfast. Similar massive turnouts attended the other funerals.

This is probably not at all a matter of complete support for the Provisionals and their military campaign, though it does indicate support for their objective of ending Partition. But now tens and tens of thousands with previously only a vague commitment or sympathy with the Republican movement have been shocked into activity by the grandeur and horror of the political hunger strike.

Within the big mobilisations, the Republican hard core is

growing and thus building a capacity to continue the military campaign. For example, Sinn Fein claims a 30% to 40% rise in membership in Belfast in the last week. On the Dublin demonstration there was more or less open recruitment on a basis of offering military training to youth.

## Army

If Margaret Thatcher, or Michael Foot, had wanted to build the Republican movement, they wouldn't have acted differently in refusing to grant the prisoners' demands on clothing and prison work and thus to end the hunger strike.

Concannon's and Foot's comments reek of nothing so much as the wisdom of a politically dullwitted Army intelligence assessment, passed to the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and to the official Labour understudy of Britain's



gauliteer in the northern Six Counties of Ireland.

Of course it would be difficult for Michael Foot to take a fresh look. It was the Labour Government that officially abolished political status in 1976. Political ('special category') status was introduced in 1972 by the Heath government when Britain decided to try to reach a political solution; it was withdrawn when Britain decided that the only option it had in the Six Counties was to sit tight, hold the ring, and beat down the Catholic revolt.

But together with the support for the hunger strikers and its spin-off of support and recruitment to the Republican movement has gone an intense communal polarisation of Six County politics, and indeed of Irish politics. Not the least of the consequences of the heroism of Sands, Hughes, McCreesh and O'Hara is that Ian Paisley massively increased his party's share of the Protestant vote in the local government elections.

Michael Foot talks of the

ballot box. But all political processes have been qualitatively devalued by the stable Protestant sectarian majority built in to the Six County state by judicious drawing of its boundaries.

Northern Ireland is a bearpit in which the Catholic and Protestant communities are locked in a chronic antagonism within an artificial statelet carved out by Britain in 1920. So long as this communal antagonism continues, there can be no solution according to ballot box majority and minority.

It was fifty years of living as second class citizens beneath a Protestant Ascendancy majority that led to the revolt of the 35% Catholic minority, and continues to fuel their current battles.

Solid working-class unity has proved impossible in this state, because the working class is itself split into segments of competing and hostile communities. The only hope of changing this is to break the framework of the Six County state. It is this fact that makes the struggle of the Provisional Republican movement not only just but indeed progressive, despite its terrible political limitations and the often counter-productive results of its militaristic conceptions.

## Class

The hope for a socialist breakthrough is that in the southern 26 counties, where class struggle exists in a normal form, class action might appeal across the Border and across the sectarian divide to the Protestant workers. The recent strikes in the south, despite being a valuable blow in the current struggle, cannot do that: on a purely nationalist basis, they must underline existing communal divisions rather than help eradicate them.

That too is a by-product of what the British government is doing in the Six Counties and to Ireland as a whole — a by-product of the work Foot and Concannon share responsibility for.

It makes it all the more important that the British labour movement should support the hunger strikers, and that we reject what our own government is doing in Ireland. We must reject, condemn, repudiate and denounce Concannon and Foot throughout the labour movement. We must fight to give the lie to what pig-of-the-decade Concannon told the dying Bobby Sands. Labour must support what Sands demands and what hundreds of others — potential hunger strikers — still demand. And all the more determinedly after the example of heroism and self-sacrifice given by Sands, Hughes, McCreesh, O'Hara, and McLaughlin.



EVERY kitchen in this country has aluminium saucepans. These saucepans are made from a red earth, bauxite, mined by multinational companies in Jamaica.

You can also go into any record shop in a place like, say, Bournemouth, and find racks full of Jamaican music, put there by multinational companies.

Bob Marley was a black Jamaican metalworker and musician. His music was rooted in the oppressed masses of Jamaica, greatly enriching popular music in many countries — and thereby also greatly enriching the very multinationals that impose that oppression.

Marley's 'superstar' status and the wide popularity of reggae raise a number of questions. Why is black music so much more profitable than that of other people? Britain possesses, for example the Beatles. Why is it that Marley's music has gone to the top of the parade internationally and that of the earlier members of the Wailers or other reggae stars like John...

Bob Marley's contribution to the world of music is a testament to the power of the oppressed masses. His music is a call to action, a call to the oppressed to rise up and fight for their rights.

the most direct example. It followed a long tradition stretching from morris (i.e. moorish) dancing to the innumerable influences of the last 100 years: from the Rabbitt's Foot minstrels to Bix Beiderbeck, Al Jolson, Elvis Presley and Mick Jagger.

The recording industry in Jamaica began in the early 1960s. At first it was heavily influenced by black American performers based around New Orleans and the southern seaboard, for example T-Bone Walker. This was because radio stations situated there dominated the airwaves and there was a constant flow of contraband discs from there to Jamaica.

## Wailers

Influenced by these black American sounds, the young ghetto singers were busy rehearsing for the emergent local producers.

The Jamaican toaster Jah Scorcher has given this account: "Trench Town was also known as the cornerstone of Jamaican music, from 1st Street right back to 14th Street. It turned out some of Jamaica's most respected singers. I remember the Wail-

ers, Gaylads, Heptones, Alton Ellis, Melodians...

"Bob teamed up with Peter Tosh, Bunny Livingston (now known as Bunny Wailer), Junior Braithwaite and Beverley Kelso to form the original Wailers group. They were known then as the Wailing Wailers and after constant rehearsing Bob did his first record in 1961.

"In 1962 the group did a song for Coxsoné Dodd of Studio 1. When 'Simmer Down' and 'Put it on' hit the streets, it was like sparks flying all over the place. The Wailing Wailers were mashing it up with their extraordinary style of singing. More hits followed, such as One Love, Lonesome Feeling, the Ten Commandments of Love and Love and Affection. The songs made them into a household name.

The New Orleans R&B which Marley, Tosh and Livingston borrowed from when they first began singing together was already being replaced on the American scene by a new form, Soul. As the civil rights struggle developed, so a more markedly African type of singing came out of the ghetto churches and into the market place.

Within a few years some-

thing similar happened in Jamaica. The producer Lee 'Scratch' Perry has told how one day on his way to his studio he passed a church where a meeting of the Afro-Christian Pukumina cult was taking place and how he made a conscious decision to try and capture the feeling of this singing on record.

This long tradition of Bible reading and discussion and of church singing in Jamaica fused with a tradition of African drumming preserved in the runaway-slave kingdom of the interior to create the basic rhythm of reggae. It was these rhythms that Bob Marley was to popularise.

In Kingston, in the late 60s, he came under the influence of Mortimo Planno, a prominent figure of the Rastafarian cult which reveres Marcus Garvey as a prophet. (Bob Marley had been born in the parish of St. Ann's, the birthplace of Marcus Garvey).

The Wailers and certain other groups began to move away from the earlier R&B influenced rhythms to a new rhythm, which seemed to move forward steadily and yet at the same time to stand its ground. Their sound also depended on the interweaving of three different but equal voices and their lyrics became heavily Rastafarian.

Just as there are elements in Rasta doctrine which could have come straight out of the writings of the Seventeenth Century English revolutionary Gerard Winstanley, so there are elements of melody in reggae which can be found in sea shanties and Methodist hymns. Perhaps this is part of the explanation of reggae's popularity here.

It was the reggae music that they produced at this stage that was reworked with added rock guitar and issued by Island Records, a company owned by a white Jamaican, Chris Blackwell.

In the meantime, Bob Marley had entered a close association with the American singer Johnny Nash, each influencing the other. Indeed Bob Marley's first performance in this country, at the Apollo Club in Willesden, was together with Johnny Nash.

## Equal

After the first Island release, Catch A Fire, Marley toured America supporting Sly and the Family Stone. With growing international popularity, a number of older songs like Duppy Conqueror, Small Axe and Put It On were re-released on the album 'Burning'.

But almost as soon as this sound began to become internationally famous it also became impossible to produce, for Livingston and Tosh, unwilling to tour, now left the group as Braithwaite and Kelso had done earlier. The I Threes, a female trio, was brought in to replace them. (The replacement of three equal voices by a male lead and three subordinate female

# Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights Get up, stand up, don't give up the fight!

voices was evidence of the influence on Bob Marley of the Rastafarianism's sexism.)

Bob Marley went on to become an international rock star, arguably without ever compromising in the music he performed.

## Blacks

He began to influence American musicians like Stevie Wonder, he was invited by Robert Mugabe to play at the independence celebrations of Zimbabwe, at home, in Jamaica, he was the star of the One Love concert and received the Order of Merit from the Jamaican government and the United Nations Third World Peace Prize.

How is it that his brand of reggae could be seen as the expression of the oppressed people of Trench Town and of black people elsewhere and at the same time be favoured by the multinational profiteers and some of their political representatives.

The answer surely must lie

in the ambiguity and the limitations of what Rastafarianism teaches. On the one hand, it represents to the oppressed the power of endurance, a defiant claim to an ancient and glorious identity as well as a future salvation. It represents moreover a rejection of Western culture, of imperialism and exploitation.

At the same time, by failing to define capitalism historically, by failing to offer a strategy for defeating imperialism and by restricting itself to political passivity, Rastafarianism has become safe. Its talk of "peace" and "love" relate to the longings of the poor and oppressed but in no way threaten their enemies.

When Michael Manley, Edward Seaga and Bob Marley all held hands together at the One Love concert, they all claimed to be inspired by the same ideals. If the music of Bob Marley helped millions of blacks to discover their identities as blacks, it also helped them lose their identities as the historic enemies of people like Manley and Seaga.

## WHERE WE STAND

★ Organise the left to beat back the Tories' attacks!  
No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket lines; no state interference in our unions.

No to any wage curbs. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions.

Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. For a price index calculated by working class organisations, as the basis for clauses in all wage agreements to provide automatic monthly rises in line with the true cost of living for the working class. The same inflation-proofing should apply to state benefits, grants and pensions.

★ Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Protection for those services against inflation by automatic inflation-proofing of expenditure. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector. For occupations and supporting strike action to defend jobs and services.

★ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs. Fight for a 35 hour week and an end to overtime. Demand work sharing, without loss of pay. Organise the unemployed — campaign for a programme of useful public works to create new jobs for the unemployed.

Defend all jobs! Open the books of those firms that threaten closure or redundancies, along with those of their suppliers and bankers, to elected trade union committees. For occupation and blacking action to halt the closures. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' management.

★ Make the bosses pay, not the working class. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.

• Freeze rents and rates.

★ Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets.

Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence.

★ The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc), public accountability, etc.

★ Free abortion on demand. Women's equal right to work and full equality for women. Defend and extend free state nursery and childcare provision.

★ Against attacks on gays by the state; abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and affirm their stand publicly.

★ The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.

★ The black working people of South Africa should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles and armed combat against the white supremacist regime. South African goods and services should be blacked.

★ It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each parliament and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.

★ The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control.

The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and the bosses.



# THIS SPORTING LIFE...

THE 100th Cup Final, with two very average teams bringing home more than £1½ million, showed once more the two worlds of football.

The referee was on £35 per game. Players with bonuses and perks made around £10,000 each. God knows what the managers made. John Bond was reported to be charging £500 per interview.

Each club was allocated 25,000 tickets, two thirds of which went to directors, functionaries, players and season ticket holders. Many of these are sold to ticket touts so that the genuine supporters end up fleeced, paying £35 for a £3.50 ticket.

Last year the police questioned a West Ham player, but despite extensive documentation of this abuse the authorities do nothing.

There was even more muttering about Southern bias this year. Manchester City supporters had to fork out for two trips to Wembley (the last replay in 1970 was held in the North), while Spurs supporters had a short walk and were able to queue for the Wembley ticket

allocation as well as their club's.

The Football Association, as greedy as anybody else connected with soccer, is meanwhile furious at the decision of the world body [FIFA] to farm out the distribution of tickets for the 1982 World Cup in Spain to a private company — which has sold the exclusive rights to tickets in the UK to a group called Sportsworld, thus depriving the FA of a handsome profit.

Also, for the first time for nearly a quarter of a century, South Africa will be given a block of seats for the World Cup Finals.

WORKING men's clubs tend to be fortresses of male chauvinism. As one citadel after another falls, the anti-libber can at least feel safe in this inviolate lair, pint in one hand, snooker cue in the other.

The Club and Institute Union has two million members in 4,000 clubs, all men. Women are generally entitled to 'lady membership', but cannot vote, stand for office, or take in guests. They are not entitled to the CIU pass card guaranteeing access to any affiliate.

Over a year ago Sheila Capstick, a long-standing member of Wakefield City Working Men's Club, was banned from playing snooker simply because she was a woman. Out of this incident ERICAA (the Equal Rights in Clubs Campaign for Action) was established.

The campaign has worked for support among trade councils and Labour Parties which have strong links with clubs, and hopes to get a motion on the agenda of the CIU conference this year. This campaign for 'a woman's right to cues' is a small but vital part of the overall struggle against chauvinism in sport.

RACING, as my old man used to say at least ten times a day, is a mug's game. One of its most efficient means of separating undiscerning punter from hard-earned geld is ante-post betting. You take a price on your fancy months in advance, knowing the animal may not even run. Witness the sad case of Storm Bird, owned by multi-millionaire Robert Sangster and trained by Vincent O'Brien, the Wizard of Ballydoyle.

Storm Bird has not run this season owing to a virus and a mysterious assault on the noble beast's tail and mane. Despite being quoted for the 2,000 Guineas and the Derby, Storm Bird missed the former and his odds for the latter soared.

Favourable reports from O'Brien and a decision to run the nag in the Irish 2,000 Guineas led to alleged betting of £70,000 with William Hill, and Storm Bird was installed as second favourite for the Derby. More heavy betting and then the

bad news: Storm Bird will not run in the Irish race or the Derby.

Thousands of punters have lost their money. Many will suspect it's because of 'blue bets' put in the book for show to lure the unwary money.

It is doubtful if Storm Bird will ever run again. This is not likely to bother Sangster. As Richard Baerlein observed, "Many people could live for life on the amount that Robert Sangster has lost on his horse in the ante-post Guineas and Derby market".

ALL SOCIALISTS will be disappointed at Rangers' victory in their replayed Scottish Cup Final against Dundee United. Rangers still refuses to employ Catholics, and the Scottish FA still refuses to do anything about this, equating it in the most ridiculous terms with Celtic flying the Irish tricolour over Parkhead.

Still, Rangers were humiliated in the League, finishing further behind champions Celtic than at any time since the '60s.

The Faith is however burning bright at Parkhead ('Celtic go down to five lucky goals', the Parkhead Review announced after a 5-0 defeat!) Celtic half-back Don Sullivan recently faced the usual questions in a magazine interview.

Favourite meal? Steak and chips. Favourite drink? Milk. Person you would most like to meet? No, not Olivia Newton-John, or Clint Eastwood. Not even Sheena Easton! His Holiness the Pope, Don replied firmly.

JOHN McILROY



So London survived the 60,000 Scottish fans who arrived for the football international despite obstructions and warnings. But have we heard the last of the anti-Scottish panic?

## Don't let wealth crush free comment

THIS IS 'apparently the only way' to 'clear the name' of Vanessa Redgrave, wrote Paul Jennings of the WRP in Tribune (May 1st), trying to justify Ms Redgrave's libel writs against Socialist Organiser.

Jennings' letter (which we reprinted in SO no.41) has now been circulated, slightly amended, over the signature of WRP General Secretary Mike Banda, to some of the people who have signed our appeal, 'A Labour Inquiry, not the Courts'.

return for a 'right of reply' in Newsline for some of the socialists branded by them as police agents or worse).

• or, most importantly, what grounds they have for saying our comments libelled Ms Redgrave (who was not even mentioned in the article complained of), or indeed were anything but the truth.

The letter (both versions) also doesn't explain what the WRP actually hopes to gain by going to court. When Ms Redgrave took the Observer to court in 1975, the court found that the Observer had been at fault — but also that Ms Redgrave deserved no damages because she had no reputation to lose.

Can the WRP hope to do better against us? We can't see how. What we can see is that even if the WRP dropped the case tomorrow, their litigation would have cost us some £600 in legal and other expenses. Regardless of what the court decides, or even whether the case finally reaches the courts, the WRP can hope to cripple us financially just by spinning out the case and relying on their superior wealth.

The truth is that the WRP have not rejected our call for a labour movement inquiry and chosen the courts instead. They are actually not irrevocably committed to any hearing of the issues.

### Writs

So far they have merely used their money as a crude bludgeon: they have avoided the courts so far. The logical legal step when SO refused to be silenced by writs was to go for a court injunction to stop us continuing to 'libel' them. But that would require a hearing in court, and SO could ask for the whole business to be thrown out. Therefore the WRP has not dared go for an injunction.

It is safer to rely on their money, using the built-in bias of the existing law towards those who have wealth to throw around. They can keep us in the expensive legal labyrinth for two or three years before they are required to have their organisation and its record examined



Contains an account of the internal regime of the WRP. £2.50 plus 20p post from WSL, BM Box 5277. London WC1N 3XX.

in open court. Against this attempt to use the machinery of capitalist law to silence us, we can rely only on the support of activists committed to defend free comment in the labour movement.

Latest signatories of our appeal include Ray Davies (Mid-Glamorgan County Council) and Wyndham Conniff (Llanwern Steel Action Group).

## Stoke: the Right retreats

by Arthur Bough

THE RIGHT wing bloc of trade unionists and Labour Party members in Stoke has suffered two heavy setbacks over the last few weeks.

In the local elections, SO supporter Jim Barrow had a crushing victory in the traditionally Liberal Hartshill ward. Labour won it last time with a majority of 100, but Jim's majority this time was a thumping 500. And the ward has massively increased its membership.

Earlier this year when the right-wing Solidarity tendency were attempting to witch-hunt members of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee (then called Stoke Left Action Movement locally), they said that Jim would never win Hartshill because of the damage the Mobilising Committee would do to Labour's chances. Now Jim's victory has confirmed the correctness of the Mobilising Committee's policies and of the local group's decision to refuse to disband for the sake of the

election. Solidarity also attempted to get Peter Moore, another Mobilising Committee supporter, removed as secretary of the Trades Council. That has also ended in a crushing defeat for the Right.

Ceramic and Allied Trades Union delegates and other leading right-wingers objected to Moore's election on a technicality arising from a contradiction in the Trades Council's rules. But they failed to get him removed. At the last meeting, the CATU delegates resigned from the Trades Council, and were clapped and jeered by most delegates as they walked out.

As a result of their decision, CATU have isolated themselves in the movement, and Les Sillitoe, former General Secretary of CATU and new Lord Mayor of Stoke, will now have to give up a number of his senior posts in the TUC.

### Cripple

Neither the original (Jennings) nor the new (Banda) version of the letter says:

• why they go to the capitalist courts rather than a labour movement inquiry,

• why they have not used their most obvious means of replying to our allegedly libellous comments — an article in their paper Newsline, or a use of the right of reply we offered them in Socialist Organiser (in



THE U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has highlighted a major design deficiency in boiling water reactors [BWRs], which make up one-third of America's nuclear power plants.

The fault lies in the plumbing for the boiling water, which acts as a coolant for the reactor core, and could have serious repercussions during a reactor shutdown or 'scram'.

Briefly, a reactor is shut down by inserting control rods

into the 'core' of uranium or plutonium. The control rods absorb the particles released by radioactive disintegration [neutrons], which would otherwise cause further breakdowns of atoms in a chain reaction, releasing heat which is used to make electricity.

When a reactor is 'scrammed' the insertion of the control rods displaces some of the coolant water round the core. The water passes into the pipes and tank

## New nuclear disaster risk revealed

of the 'Scram Discharge Volume System' through a vent valve. Later it is emptied into a basement.

If the vent valve sticks open, or a pipe develops cracks, then the whole cooling system empties — unless the plant operators shut off the valves manually.

But the NRC points out that there is virtually no way of telling whether a discharge pipe is broken.

If the operators fail to detect a broken pipe, and don't close the valves, then there could be a 'meltdown'. The temperature of the core would rise rapidly, and it would melt its way through the reactor vessel, through the concrete basement of the plant, and into the soil below, where it would explode in contact with the ground water.

This would not be a nuclear explosion, but it would still

cause extensive devastation and radio-active pollution, resulting in many deaths or illnesses.

Attempts to stop this disaster would be hampered by the fact that, because of the design of these reactors, the escaping water would run down stairways onto the electrical equipment controlling the core cooling system!

General Electric, the company that designed and built the plants, says that this type of disaster 'is a lot less likely to happen' than the NRC says. Some reassurance!

This report follows closely another one which says that the walls and welding of the steel containment vessels in pressurised water reactors [the other two-thirds of US nuclear power plants] could deteriorate much faster than expected. Interestingly, both sets of problems were predicted in a book

published in April — 'Power Plant Cost Escalation', by Charles Komanoff.

He points out that inherent weaknesses in the scram system became obvious at the Browns Ferry reactor, Alabama, in June 1980, when operators tried for 14 minutes to shut down the reactor before succeeding.

Meanwhile, at Sizewell, in Suffolk, protests have been mounting against the siting of a pressurised water reactor. See above, and also see Harrisburg!

★ ★ ★

WHILE people are still dying from cancers induced by radiation from the Hiroshima/Nagasaki A-bombs, dropped 36 years ago, a reassessment of the effects of radiation on survivors of the explosions has come up with some disturbing conclusions. It now seems that many of them were subject to much less radiation than was originally

thought — and so cancer can be caused by radiation at levels only one-quarter as high as previously thought.

Humidity in the atmosphere, it is now pointed out, can greatly reduce the intensity of neutron radiation. The research on the Hiroshima/Nagasaki survivors is important because they are the largest source of information on the effects of low-level radiation on humans.

These results will obviously lead to the downward revision of permitted levels of radiation in the US — or they should do. As yet there has been no response in Britain.

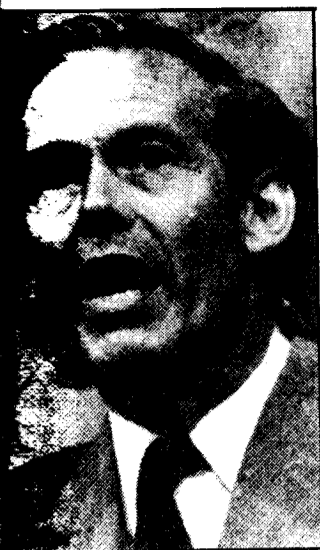
### FEEDBACK

I've been writing this science column for about three months now, and I've really enjoyed it. But I would like to know if SO readers are finding it interesting and/or relevant. So if you've got any comments or ideas or information for pieces in the column, or if you'd like to write a piece yourself, drop me a line, c/o Socialist Organiser.

LES HEARN

## UNION CONFERENCES '81

# NUPE: NO MANDATE FOR SELL-OUTS



by Mary Ireson

"WHERE IS your mandate now?", Alan Fisher asked Margaret Thatcher, referring to the county council election results.

The same question could be put to the NUPE leadership after the union's conference on May 10-12.

The Executive put forward a wages strategy which accepted the Government's 6% limit, on the basis that the membership was not willing to struggle. Conference unanimously rejected this 'strategy' but unfortunately failed to adopt a precise policy to tie the negotiators down. A

Camden resolution calling for a minimum wage of £80 and a recall conference if the claim is not met, was rejected.

The health service delegates' meeting unanimously called for a one-day all-out strike of ambulance workers if the employers failed to make a bigger offer. A ballot of NUPE ambulance workers has since shown a six-to-one majority in favour of the strike action.

The Executive was defeated again when conference voted for a full-time women's officer. (However, the women's officer will be appointed, not elected — and may even be a man, as the

male full-timers enjoyed telling us).

The session on women's rights also decided unanimously that in future pay negotiations we should demand workplace nursery facilities as part of the deal.

The Right to Work campaign was given £500 after a card vote, though the chair tried to declare the resolution lost on the show of hands.

There were three standing ovations for the People's Marchers — but no clear commitment from the Executive to action, not promises, on jobs.

Debate on Ireland was smothered. There were two resolu-

tions. One was moved formally and quickly disposed of. The second fell — and an amendment to it from our branch automatically fell, too — when the branch proposing it failed to move it.

It looked as if the union leadership had put the lid on because they felt that Loyalist members in Northern Ireland would probably leave the union if NUPE showed support for the hunger strikers.

The conference overwhelmingly rejected a motion urging Tony Benn to withdraw from the Labour deputy leader contest. NUPE's block vote will be decided by a branch ballot.

But what about democracy and a new leadership in NUPE? NUPE supports election of Labour leaders, but its own officials are appointed!

A resolution was down calling for Alan Fisher to continue, and no new General Secretary to be appointed, until election of officials is discussed at the next Rules Revision Conference.

But the leadership skilfully dodged the issue. By retiring Bernard Dix and allowing him a farewell speech, they pushed out the resolution through lack of time. Rumour has it that Dix would not have retired otherwise.

The NUPE conference overwhelmingly rejected the Fisher leadership's line that 'the membership won't fight'.

## CPSA: 'biggest democratic gain for 20 years'

by Stephen Corbishley

WITH FOUR of the top jobs in CPSA soon to come up for grabs, CPSA conference looked as if it was going to be dominated by a grubby struggle for privilege and power by a handful of bureaucrats.

Yet the conference achieved the biggest single advance for trade union democracy for the last 20 years: the delegates rejected the National Executive Committee (NEC) formula of 'elections for life' and voted over three-to-one in favour of elections every five years for the four top posts in the union.

There were other victories. Affiliation to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was overwhelmingly carried despite threats from Ministry of Defence delegates to take action. Even the threat to curtail the pay strike in the Ministry of Defence after the CND affiliation was won influenced no-one.

In the Civil Service section of the Conference, the Executive's

backing for WEEP (one of the Government's cheap-labour schemes to cover up unemployment) was smashed, with less than ten delegates voting in favour. The fight to win a 'no loss of jobs' clause before new technology is introduced into the civil service was carried with a substantial majority.

The right wing were able to inflict some significant defeats on us — over women's rights.

A proposal to have a full-time officer and/or a special sub-committee of the Executive on women's rights was defeated. Then, after a successful campaign to force the Broad Left controlled Standing Orders Committee to bring the motion calling for CPSA affiliation to the National Abortion Campaign back onto the agenda, this motion was defeated by a successful and well-coordinated manoeuvre to go for 'next business'.

The defeat cannot simply be laid at the door of a clever right wing manoeuvre. Those on the

Left, Militant especially, who have consistently argued against the fight to raise issues like abortion rights, and against women's self-organisation, must bear a part of the blame.

The NEC elections saw a marked shift to the left. The new NEC is 10 left to 18 right, as against 1 left, 27 right last year; and on straight votes cast, the Broad Left actually won 15 out of the top 28 places (only 10 were elected because of the rules limiting the number of NEC members from any one part of the union to a pre-set maximum).

Yet these gains could still crumble in the face of a sustained campaign by union president Kate Losinska and her cohorts against 'reds under the bed'. We need to build the Broad Left (and reject the sectarianism of the SWP faction, Redder Tape), but also to free it from the domination of the Militant/Communist Party axis that currently leads the Broad Left.

Left gains in UCW

DENNIS HEALEY won the Union of Communication Workers (UCW)'s block vote for Labour deputy leader by a show of hands at the UCW conference on 17th-22nd May.

But there were some gains for the Left. 500 people attended a fringe meeting addressed by Tony Benn and organised by the Broad Left. Conference voted almost unanimously to tell the Executive to withdraw from a statement signed in January which committed the union to help the bosses make 'economies'. And one Broad Left candidate was elected to the NEC.

## ASTMS backs Benn

CLIVE JENKINS's increasingly right-wing leadership of ASTMS received a jolt at the union conference on May 16-18.

Their attempt to manoeuvre support for Dennis Healey in the elections for deputy leadership of the Labour Party was defeated.

In its place, a motion was passed by the conference instructing the union's delegation to cast its 147,000 votes for Tony Benn.

The NEC had attempted to avoid a vote at conference by withdrawing their initial proposal to support the 'status quo' in the Labour leadership, and substituting a vague call for consultation at Divisional and Branch level to 'advise' the NEC and the delegation.

While this at first appeared plausible to some delegates, including some left-wingers, it was plainly a manoeuvre to avoid any mandate. It was countered by ten emergency

resolutions calling for a vote for Benn, and by 146,840 votes to 140,340 Jenkins was defeated.

It was the first occasion on which the platform has been defeated in order to mandate a union delegate under Labour's new electoral college system.

It shows the need to drive the campaign for democratisation right into the trade union movement.

The ASTMS conference also saw important rule changes to increase democratic control of the union's delegations to the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

But attempts to amend the rules to enable the recruitment of unemployed potential members of ASTMS were defeated.

And the reactionary element of the union came into full and ugly view when delegates barracked and slow-handclapped Sheffield delegate Ron Giles as he attempted to move for an emergency motion in support of the Irish hunger strikers.

## EEPTU: stirred but not shaken

by an EETPU member

ACTIVISTS opposed to Frank Chapple's totalitarian regime in the electrician's union, won two important victories at the EETPU's conference in Blackpool.

A resolution from the North London (Plumbers) Lodge that 'the executive council's policy of closing lodges and branches has not been in the best interests of members and should be reversed' was carried against the EC's recommendation.

The resolution was aimed at the Chapple regime's general policy of amalgamating lodges and branches into huge area branches that discourage active involvement, and the placing of hundreds of disenfranchised members into holding branches, administered by full-time officials, which never meet.

But at conference the resolution was also important in highlighting opposition to the EC's most recent attacks on branches' democratic rights — particularly the closure of the Central London Branch. Central London had refused to accept that a member, who hadn't attended meetings for 14 years, could be appointed by the EC as the branch delegate to a local Labour Party against their wishes. For their pains in opposing the EETPU's consti-

ution, the branch was suspended and remains closed down.

70 supporters of Central London, organised by the 'Rank and File Contact' group, vocally lobbied the conference on May 12th. The campaign they are fighting will go on. Even though conference clearly opposed Chapple's actions there is no likelihood that the EC will actually change its policy on Central London.

Now it's vital that Labour Party activists back up the EETPU's persecuted dissidents and assert that local branches have rights, and should be supported in their fight to oppose Chapple's attempts to pack out Labour bodies with his own bureaucratically-installed apparatchiks.

Conference also defeated the EC on its policy of supporting private medical schemes. After a fight to have the resolution on the agenda, a 2-1 vote carried a call for the EC to oppose 'all forms of private practice, including medical insurance schemes such as those operated by BUPA and the Private Patients' Plan' and deplored trade unions supporting such private health schemes.

Two slaps in the face — BUT unless the rank and file get organised to kick out Chapple that's all that these decisions will be.

## FBU: no retreat on pay

by Doug Mackay

THE FIRE Brigades Union conference took place last week under the shadow of the Government's Green Paper proposing further cuts and in the wake of the local government elections.

The conference unanimously supported the Executive Committee proposal for a one-day strike if the employers refuse to honour the pay formula that ended the 1977-8 strike. With Labour now in control of the major metropolitan authorities, the delegates were determined to get a better deal than from

the Tories previously in power.

As in previous years, the question of wages is closely linked with the question of jobs. Manning levels have been drastically cut during the last four years. A reduced working week introduced in 1979 did not lead to an overall increase in the number of firemen.

Unfortunately, a resolution from Strathclyde Brigade Committee which called for immediate industrial action in the events of the employers attempting to implement the proposals in the Green Paper was defeated

on the recommendation of the Executive.

Both Dennis Healey and Tony Benn spoke to lunchtime fringe meetings. A well-attended and enthusiastic meeting for Benn was followed the next day by a meeting addressed by Healey which was smaller and less enthusiastic.

Conference, contrary to reports appearing in some national newspapers, agreed that all members of the union paying the political levy should record their votes at FBU branch meetings. Thus the campaign in the Labour Party over the

deputy leadership is now reaching into the rank and file of the trade unions.

The FBU has adopted a similar procedure to NUPE, and thus the political arguments that are now raging inside the Labour Party must find their reflection at every branch meeting of the unions.

The Executive of the FBU had proposed a 'leave it to us' formula for the deputy leader elections. This was decisively rejected by the conference in favour of the branch ballot system.

## YORKS MINERS SET FOR SHOWDOWN ON CLOSURES

by John Cunningham (Yorkshire NUM)

YORKSHIRE miners have threatened to strike if the National Coal Board goes back on its pledge to exploit fresh coal reserves in Orgreave Colliery, near Sheffield.

Orgreave, one of the pits threatened by closure earlier this year, was taken off the closure list after the miners took strike action in February. The National Coal Board have since completed a bore-hole programme which has proved

the existence of workable reserves sufficient to extend the pit's life by ten years.

But NCB officials have said that so much money is needed to exploit these reserves that the whole proposition is uneconomic and Orgreave will have to close.

This about-turn by the NCB will mean a fight by the Yorkshire NUM, whose members have already voted in a pithead ballot for strike action if pits are threatened with closure on grounds other than seam exhaustion.

Orgreave will be a test case. If the Yorkshire NUM is defeated, then the strike at the beginning of the year will have been a waste of time. A victory for the NCB will give it the confidence to go ahead with its closure programme, though at a slower pace than originally planned.

Yorkshire miners must stand firm by their earlier ballot decision. The stakes are high, and everyone will be watching what happens, particularly the Tories. Hands off Orgreave, must be the battle cry!

## Police attack

BLACK PEOPLE — and white people too — in East London are furious after a recent police raid on an Under-Fives Group party.

Towards the end of the party, plain-clothes police suddenly grabbed a young black man sitting outside, for no apparent reason. As other people protested, two van loads and three car loads of police, plus dogs and handlers, arrived.

A girl and a young boy were roughly manhandled by police, and the black youth and one of the party organisers (a white man) were taken to the police station — where the youth was eventually released and the white man was charged with obstruction and assault.

# CIVIL SERVICE ACTION ESCALATES

by Stephen Corbishley

IN THE most brutal picket-busting operation yet seen in the Civil Service strike, South Wales police smashed aside the CPSA/SCPS picket line outside the driving licence centre in Swansea and released the van carrying essential nitrogen supplies for the computer air-conditioning system. This van had been blockaded for over two weeks, surrounded by mass pickets on a 24 hour basis.

This was the Tories' first answer to the militant resolutions passed at all the five civil service union conferences held in May. Their other response has been to reiterate their stand on the six per cent cash limit.

A meeting of the Council of Civil Service Unions (COC-

SU) on Tuesday 26th will decide the next steps for escalation of the industrial action.

All the union conferences agreed to escalate — with a formula of limited extended action or an all-out stoppage of five days or less. Yet these formulas, which came up as compromises, are very likely to be unpopular with many union members.

The dilemma is that many rank and file members do not trust the COCSU leadership to deliver harder action; but at the same time they reject the stop-go strategy that could play into the employers' hands.

Their repeated emphasis on arbitration, and talk about an independent body or review for a new pay system for 1982 and beyond, shows how close

the COCSU leadership are to the Tory Government. The only restraint on them is the fear of a rank and file backlash, especially among the lower-paid civil servants.

Yet socialists must now tackle the problem of taking the action forward on the basis of the official policies of the union conferences.

By organising regular meetings of members and branch office representatives of all the civil service unions, in every area, plans for action can be laid now. If the word for escalation is given on Tuesday 26th May, militants and the Left need to be able to make sure the five-day call-out is a success, and to extend it where possible.

The unofficial action in Dundee, Aberdeen, and other East of Scotland Social Security and

Department of Employment offices was claimed by Redder Tape and the Socialist Workers Party to be a possible spark for wider unofficial action. That has not happened.

We need to recognise how much influence the official leaders of COCSU still have over the course of the strike. That influence can only be undermined by building pressure on the COCSU leaders to implement the plan of escalation agreed by union delegates so far, and making sure the rank and file supports (and goes beyond) those official plans.

In this way we can build for an all-out indefinite strike of all areas except the benefit-paying computers, with militant pickets; and the efforts of the bureaucrats to agree a sell-out can be thwarted.

# Ford: a victory with a sting

by Stephen Corbishley

FORD WORKERS have won a victory

10,000 workers at Halewood struck from May 11th against a new disciplinary code imposing a penalty of two shifts' pay for any unofficial strikes. They went back on Tuesday 26th after Ford backed down and withdrew the code.

There is a sting in the tail, though. The trade union officials have pledged themselves to police all agreements.

The bosses could have had this pledge for the asking before they ever introduced the code — so have they now got some special assurance from the union leaders that they will clamp down on militancy?

And are they relying on threats to close Halewood to make a clampdown effective?

Ford still has a major investment plan in train at Halewood, but last week it was revealed that they now plan to produce the Escort at Valencia as well as Halewood.

# Potters fight pay sell-out

300 angry pottery workers took unofficial action over their pay claim on May 19th. The workers from H & R Johnson (who make Cristal tiles) struck over the scrapping of back pay for their latest settlement, and because the implementation of a 39 hour week has been postponed until next January.

Normally the potters' pay settlement is backdated to March 1st, but this year the bosses, with help from the Ceramic and Allied Trades Union (CATU) bureaucrats, got backdating scrapped.

The employers' first offer was 5%. The workers massively rejected it in a secret ballot, despite the union leaders making no recommendation. It looked like being the industry's first all-out strike in 120 years.

The bosses increased their offer to 7% but without back pay, and refused to implement a 39 hour week until January. The effect of scrapping back pay is that the 7% is worth no more than the 5% originally offered.

Many workers were afraid of their factory closing in one of the worst slumps in the pottery industry for years, and the bureaucrats went round trying to scare people into accepting. But the voting was so close that there had to be a recount.

Eventually, the deal was accepted by a majority of only 160.

The workers at Johnsons are refusing to accept the vote, and are demanding urgent talks with the unions. If they do not get what they want, some may want to leave CATU and join the TGWU.

Meanwhile it is not clear whether workers in the giant Wedgwood group will even get 7%. Wedgwood resigned from the bosses' federation because they thought the original 5% offer was too generous! CATU has said it expects Wedgwoods to pay up, but if the bosses refuse past experience does not suggest much of a fight coming from the union leaders.

The rank and file of the pottery union needs to organise to change the union's extremely undemocratic structure and remove its right wing leaders — and to start by supporting and spreading the Johnsons strike. Pottery workers cannot rely on the bureaucrats to defend their living standards or protect their jobs.

# Basingstoke Tenants fight on

by Alasdair Jamison

BASINGSTOKE'S rent strike is over. But the rents fight is continuing, through the Labour Party.

On Sunday 17th May, after consultation with its Estate Committee, the Steering Committee of the Basingstoke Rent and Rates Action Campaign decided that the strike should be wound up. The partial rent strike started on April 6th, in response to a 66½% increase in council rents.

Although this increase was clearly designed to undermine the basis of council housing by encouraging purchases, and has brought real hardship to a number of lower-paid homes, fear of eviction has reduced support to the point where victory is not a realistic possibility.

On the housing issue, the Borough Council now rules by

fear alone. At no time has the Tory majority been able to explain why they are raising a £1.2 million surplus from the tenants in the coming year over and above the Heseltine increase. And already there is talk of a supplementary increase being sought in October 1981.

Although the ending of the rent strike is a serious defeat for the tenants' movement in Basingstoke, the experience of the campaign has been far from negative.

Tenants have shown by the speed and efficiency with which the estate organisations and the steering committee were set up that they are well able to organise themselves effectively when the need arises.

About 23 public meetings took place in hardly two months, almost all of which were packed to capacity or beyond. Many tenants who attended council meetings were left with an

indelible impression of the poverty of ideas and lack of human consideration of those on the majority benches of the Borough Council.

The Conservative majority on the council now lives on borrowed time, as more and more active tenants join the Labour Party and commit themselves to working for the 1982 elections.

So the Rents and Rates Action Campaign is far from over. There is now a standing committee to monitor and campaign for the interests of tenants in conjunction with the Labour group of councillors. And a number of Labour Party members, including Socialist Organiser supporters, are drawing up a left platform for Labour candidates in the 1982 borough elections, to make sure that next year Basingstoke has a Labour council pledged to withdraw the rent rises.



# Labour should sack Maxwell

by Stan Crooke

BACKED UP by a detachment of police, the messenger-at-arms of the Court of Session put an end, for the time being at least, to the sit-in at Bestobell Insulation Ltd in Glasgow early in the morning of Friday 15th May.

Bestobell's laggery began their sit-in a month before, after Bestobell management put sheet metal workers onto the laggery's work. A warrant of ejection from the occupied buildings was ignored by the laggery, and so were two summonses to appear in court in Edinburgh. So on the 15th May the police and messenger-at-arms moved in to get them out.

While police sealed off all possible escape routes from Bestobell, with cops stationed on the patch of waste ground to one side of the occupied office block and a line of them strung out along the railway line which runs behind Bestobell, the padlocked chain on the main gates was cut through and the messenger-at-arms entered to serve the warrants to arrest summoning the laggery to the court hearing in Edinburgh.

SPEAKING IN Dundee on May 14, National Union of Journalists vice-president Jonathan Hammond told the union's local branch:

Our chapel at Pergamon Press has been on strike since March 4 in support of a claim for better pay and conditions which has been outstanding since autumn 1979. Mr Maxwell is chairperson of Pergamon.

Recently, under the auspices of the National Westminster Bank, Pergamon made a successful takeover bid for BPC, taking 77% of the equity. Mr Maxwell was consequently appointed BPC Chief Executive.

In addition, Pergamon has recently acquired a 7% interest in Collins, the book publishing company based in Glasgow and

London, and was rumoured to be taking an interest in New English Library, recently sold by Times-Mirror to Hodder & Stoughton.

Mr Maxwell's attitude to the Pergamon strike and the events leading up to it has been, to say the least, unsatisfactory. He has consistently failed either to negotiate meaningfully with our chapel or authorise his managers to do so.

Consider these facts: the starting salary in Journals Production at Pergamon is a derisory £3919. Put that against the reported £6 million profit figures for Pergamon in 1980.

All sick pay is discretionary. Maternity leave is the statutory minimum plus a lump sum of

£130. In addition, two days after the strike started, he sacked our members, thereby challenging their democratic right to strike.

Mr Maxwell frequently boasts about his commitment to trade unionism and to socialism. Indeed, he is a member both of ASTMS and of the Labour Party. I would respectfully ask both ASTMS and the Labour Party: is Mr Maxwell's behaviour at Pergamon consistent with the standards required by membership of those organisations?

I can only say that, as an active and committed member of the Labour Party myself, I would be most unhappy at Mr Maxwell's continuing membership of it if he continues to behave in this way.

THE three week old occupation at the offices of Time Out, a London investigative/entertainment guide magazine has been threatened with use of the courts.

Over 80 summonses have been issued to the staff by the owner Tony Elliott to be heard in the High Court on June 5th.

The occupation was decided unanimously after Tony Elliott tried to scrap the pay agreement under which all staff, journalists, typists the lot, are paid the same rate.

The NUJ has made the occupation official. Donations and messages of support to: Time Out Occupation, c/o NUJ, Acorn House, 314 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

# Bestobell: DEFYING THE COURTS

The names of the laggery were read out two at a time and those named led to the waiting coaches (provided by Parks of Hamilton). Cheers and applause rang out from the occupied offices as the laggery walked to the coaches, but as the number left in the building decreased the cheering and applause died away. By nine o'clock the eviction had been completed, and management and a couple of scabs returned to the premises from which they had been locked out for over four weeks.

## Mood

In court at Edinburgh the judge announced that he was in a 'lenient mood', and therefore fined the 51 laggery up before him 'only' £100 each, save for the convenor Raymond Platt, who received a £150 fine in re-

cognition of his office.

By ignoring the warrant of ejection and the summonses the laggery had 'categorically broken the law', said the judge, and had he not been in such good humour that day he would have sent them down.

But at seven o'clock on the Monday morning after the court hearing the laggery were back at Bestobell, though this time on the outside, and were picketing the gates to carry on with their fight. There was a vanload of police just to make sure there was no attempt to re-occupy the buildings and to reduce the effectiveness of picketing.

Whether the fines will be paid is still undecided. Raising the money (£5,150) is not the major problem — collection sheets are already circulating in some of the shipyards and larger factories in Glasgow. The question is whether the government

and the state, through the law court, are going to be allowed to get away with penalising trade unionists for fighting for the right to work.

## Crime

(And the Bestobell workers are not alone. The 48 workers arrested in the Robb Caledon dispute last year are now coming up before the courts as well and being fined £100 each. The fines are for 'breach of the peace' and 'obstruction', but their real 'crime' is to have organised effective mass picketing.)

To take on the courts and the state, the laggery need the backing of the labour movement both in Glasgow and nationally. But at the moment they are still not even getting any backing from their own union officials.

Hugh Wyper, one of the local TGWU full-timers, told the laggery on the day they began picketing that it was a mistake for them to have gone into occupation (because it's illegal) and instead they should have accepted management's use of sheet metal workers on insulation work. And the next day at a joint meeting between him, management and the laggery, he put the same line again.

## Help

Help the laggery:  
 • Organise collections to help cover the running costs of their fight, or to help pay the fines if they decide to pay them. (Send donations to: J.P. McKenna, c/o TGWU, 216 West Regent St. Glasgow).  
 • Contact workers in Bestobell workplaces outside Glasgow

(Cardiff, Manchester, Slough, etc) to make sure they know about the dispute and are backing it. A mailing has already been done but so far no replies have been received. (The phone number of the convenor at Bestobell is 041-221 7741).

## State

• TGWU members should be pushing motions through their branches demanding that the strike is made official and that Hugh Wyper be given the push if he's going to carry on scabbing. (Send motions to: TGWU, 216 West Regent St. Glasgow).

• The use of the courts against the workers at Bestobell and Robb Caledon raises the whole question of state attacks on trade union rights. The labour movement must mobilise to defeat the attempts to fine the Bestobell workers for fighting for the right to work. This is a fight which now shows all the signs of escalating into a test case in the ongoing struggle between the working class and the capitalist state.

# Socialist Organiser

## The streets are ours!

by Alexis Carras

"There's gonna be a riot", "Brixton, Belfast", "Self-Defence the only way".

These were the slogans which echoed from the 15,000 strong anti-racist demonstration in Coventry last weekend (May 23rd).

An angry, stormy march expressing more clearly than any speeches the outrage of the black working class of the city at the recent murder of Satnam Singh Gill and the countless attacks, muggings, petrol bombings and harassment.

Led by a several hundred-strong contingent of Asian women, many of them certainly on a demonstration for the first time in their lives, the procession wound through the streets of the mainly Asian areas of Foleshill and Hillfields for several hours.

As the march approached the entrance to the city centre, the crowd surged forwards with the chant "We're gonna take the precinct" — the precinct which in the last months has been made a virtual no-go area for black people by the racist skins and organised Nazis, the precinct in which Satnam was stabbed to death in broad daylight.

It was in the city centre and a few minutes later at the steps of the Cathedral, where the organisers of the march had decided to hold the rally that violence flared.

Provocations by small groups of racist skinheads, spurred on by no other than our old friend Robert Relf, along with the heavy-handed police attitude were enough to ignite this militant demonstration into a pitched battle with the boys in blue. In effect the rally was abandoned amidst chaotic scenes of horse charges and police snatch squads trying to contain the black youth within a several-deep cordon.

As the drums of the Sikhs beat away, an unmistakable declaration of war, the words of the MP Bill Wilson, preaching harmony and good black/policy relations melted away amidst the noise and whoops of joy as pavement stones were torn up and lobbed at the cops. 74 arrests. But despite all the harassment and previous weeks of arrests and intimidation, the black youth of Coventry showed that they were not to be broken and that the fight will continue another

# ONE LAW FOR STRIKE-BREAKERS

A NORM is a norm is a norm. Except... when it's your own pay rise you're deciding on.

While civil servants are told there is absolutely no possibility of their 7% offer being raised, that government pay norms must be held to in the public sector, MPs voted themselves an 18.7% pay rise. Lord Soames, the boss of the civil service, gets 18.7% too.

There were protests from Labour MPs, notably Dennis

Skinner. But the 18.7% was won — and without even the threat of strike action.

The other group of workers who seem to have slipped through the six per cent net are the armed forces. The armed forces do depend on strike action to prove their worth to the nation — other people's strikes, in which they reveal their usefulness as scabs.

It's adding insult to injury

for the striking civil servants at naval bases who are told they're only worth seven per cent, and then see the Navy scabs get 11%. Especially when they have to do emergency patch-ups because the strikebreakers can't do the job.

This insult must double the determination of civil servants to win their full 15% claim.

MORE: SEE INSIDE



### Fund: we need £313!

THE FUND is no healthier than it was last week, when we headlined our appeal, 'Nearly a disaster'.

This month's total, including Bankers' Orders, stands at £328.75 on the 26th of the month. And we're aiming for £641 — the regular £500, plus the £141 shortfall from April.

The regular fund has been weakened by the special fund drive we've launched to fight the WRP's libel case against us. But keeping up the regular fund is just as important a part of defending Socialist Organiser against the WRP's wealth and lack of scruple as is the special fund.

Fund-raising isn't just big one-off events. Remember: if each supporter gets just five readers each fortnight to give 50p for their paper instead of 20p, that adds up to £750 a month!

Send money for the regular fund (cheques payable to Socialist Organiser) or to the special fund (cheques payable to Labour Movement Press Defence Fund) to 214 Jubilee Court, London E15.

## NATIONAL LEFT-WING YOUTH CONFERENCE

AT LANCASTER POLY-COVENTRY

**AGENDA**

**SATURDAY**

10-10.45 Introduction  
11 The Fight Against Racism: Film, speakers from Coventry's Anti-Racist Defence and from Brixton

1. LUNCH and film on El Salvador plus speaker  
2. The Fight for Jobs, Trade Unions, and Organising on the Dole Queues (plus Film)

3.30 Youth in the Labour Movement and the Fight for a

**SUNDAY**

10 Ireland's Fight for Freedom: film and discussion  
11 Women's Rights and Gay Rights (workshop sessions)  
12 What sort of revolutionary youth paper? Workshop sessions followed by a short plenary

1. LUNCH and film on El Salvador plus speaker  
2. Workshops: YCND and Huston of the YS  
3. Plenary session: Discussion of resolution and a wind-up from workshops. Elections for steering committee

4.45 Conference ends. Speakers of the INTERNATIONAL

**What's it all about?**

COVENTRY youth organise anti-racist defence after an Asian is murdered by fascists in the city centre. Republican youth fight the army and the RUC on the streets of Derry. Mods fight it out with the police in Scarborough and Brixton smoulders.

Youth are fighting back. And we need a socialist youth movement to help give that fightback organisation and direction.

Barricade and Red Youth are calling a conference to start building a National Left Wing Youth Movement. The National Left Wing Youth Movement will be active on every front of the struggle — for anti-racist workers' defence, for decent jobs for youth, for the rights of the unemployed, for women's rights and gay rights, for nuclear disarmament, for solidarity with the Irish struggle.

But it will also organise to make the official Labour Party Young Socialists the sort of movement it should be: the mass youth organisation of the Labour Party that youth ready to fight the Tories immediately turn to and identify with.

The Young Socialists is the youth section of the labour movement, but at present it is dominated by the Militant tendency, which reduces political activity to preaching general formulas about the need for bold socialist policies: nationalisation of the top 220 monopolies, etc. Barricade and Red Youth have been organising a revolutionary youth movement to continue that work.

We are proposing a policy platform. At the Young Socialists conference this Easter, we found that hundreds of Young Socialists activists support policies like these. On the streets, hundreds are beginning to fight for them. Now it's our job to organise!

**6-7 JUNE GIG SATURDAY NIGHT**  
**£2 WAGED 50p UNWAGED and YOP's**