

SOCIALIST PRESS



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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

DEMONSTRATION US hands off El Salvador!

March and Rally—Saturday April 25

Assemble at 12.30 pm at Speakers Corner

Speakers include Michael Foot, Ken Gill, Eric Heffer, Alan Sapper, Salvador Moncada (FDR)

Delhi,
Derry,
Brixton

TORIES SHAKEN

BY WORKERS REVOLT

The veil that Mrs Thatcher donned for her banquet with King Khalid of Saudi Arabia should become standard wear for her entire cabinet.

Certainly some effective disguise is now advisable wherever and whenever the organisers of the Tory offensive come face to face with the workers they oppress.

Even as Thatcher was showing her adaptability to the feudal practices of the Gulf States, the most oppressed victims of British class rule were showing they are capable of shaking her government.

In Derry nationalist workers have been in action against the British army; in Brixton the black youth prepare for their next close encounter with the SPG. In Delhi Thatcher finds here racist government's Nationality Bill has dogged her footsteps.

Cringing

While the British TUC cringingly offers its latest appeal for a 'U turn', the most highly exploited victims of the Thatcher government throw themselves into direct action against its army and police shock troops.

These young workers have more effect with their anger, their bricks and petrol bombs than all Len Murray's bootlicking words.

It is those who wish to restrict the struggle, not those who advocate bold policies who are out of step with the mass movement.

In Ireland the impact of Bobby Sands' election has produced the biggest demonstrations against British rule since 1972.

After 11 years of struggle the nationalist population has shown it is not bowed or beaten by one of the most intensive "security" campaigns ever mounted against a civilian population.

Sands' election has given workers—predominantly youth—the self confidence to come back onto the



Youth on the streets in Derry

streets to show their hatred for the imperialists who are leaving Sands to die in the H Blocks.

The army has responded in its time-worn way. One Derry youth lies in hospital critically injured after being shot by one of 100 plastic bullets fired into one group of demonstrators.

Two other Derry youths lie dead, murdered by an army patrol who drove a Land Rover at high speed into a crowd of youth who were armed only with stones.

The two youths were flung into the air. A Land Rover then reversed back over one of them. Both died soon afterwards.

Cynically the RUC listed these war casualties as

victims of a 'road accident'!

There is an organic link between the Catholic youth of Derry and the black youth of Brixton.

Neither are offered any 'official' focus for their struggles—and they therefore fight with the weapons at hand and with the hatred born out of years of oppression and harassment.

In Brixton now the sociologists and peddlars of quack cures have moved in in force.

The Scarman inquiry launched by the government is a particular irony. It was Scarman who was called in to investigate police violence in Belfast in 1969.

His report was used then—as it will be today—to reduce what was a class action to questions of individual 'crimes' (on the part of the black youth) or possibly 'errors' on the part of individual policemen.

The fact is that the spark for Brixton was not this or that incident but 'Operation Swamp 81'—presumably named in honour of Thatcher's racist 'swamp' speech—during which police had stopped and questioned 1,000 people in Brixton before the riot started and which was itself a pretaste of a London-wide 'Operation Star'.

The vicious techniques they have learned on the streets of Derry and Belfast are clearly now being put into effect by the British state forces on the streets of London.

The police harassment faced by the youth of Brixton is not an aberration or an accident.

It is part and parcel of the Tory onslaught. The danger for the youth now is not 'renewed violence'—but the timid reformists who try to divert their struggle into appeals for sports halls and neighbourhood bobbies.

The labour movement should applaud the action of the youth and put itself at the disposal of the whole community of Brixton in organising united defence patrols.

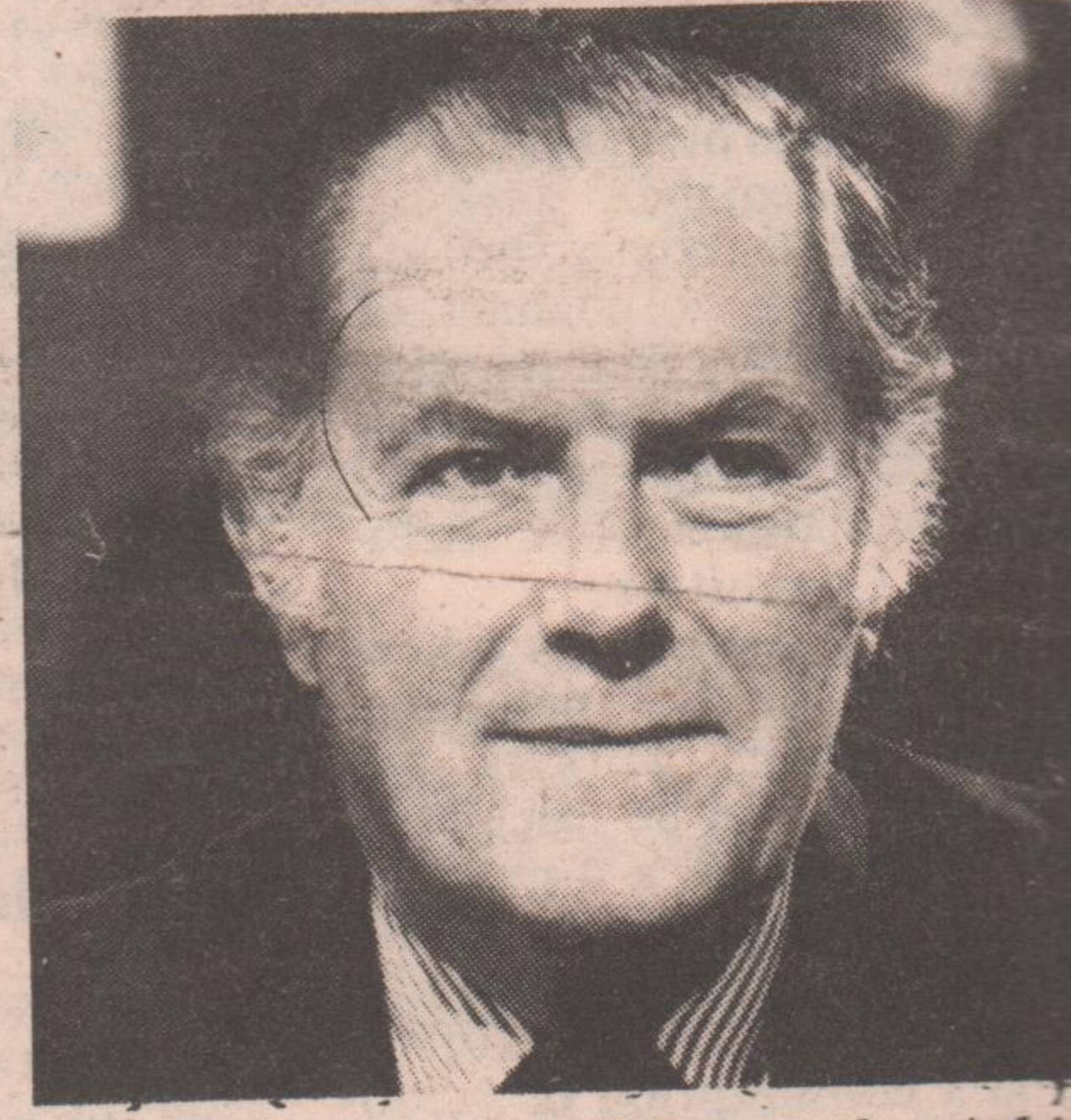
The demands must be not on the youth to turn to the unions—but on the unions to turn to the youth.

In Brixton and Derry the youth have shown that the armed forces on which this government rests can be driven back.

Every day that the TUC refuses to work for a general strike to throw the government out it sides with the police in Brixton and the army in Derry.

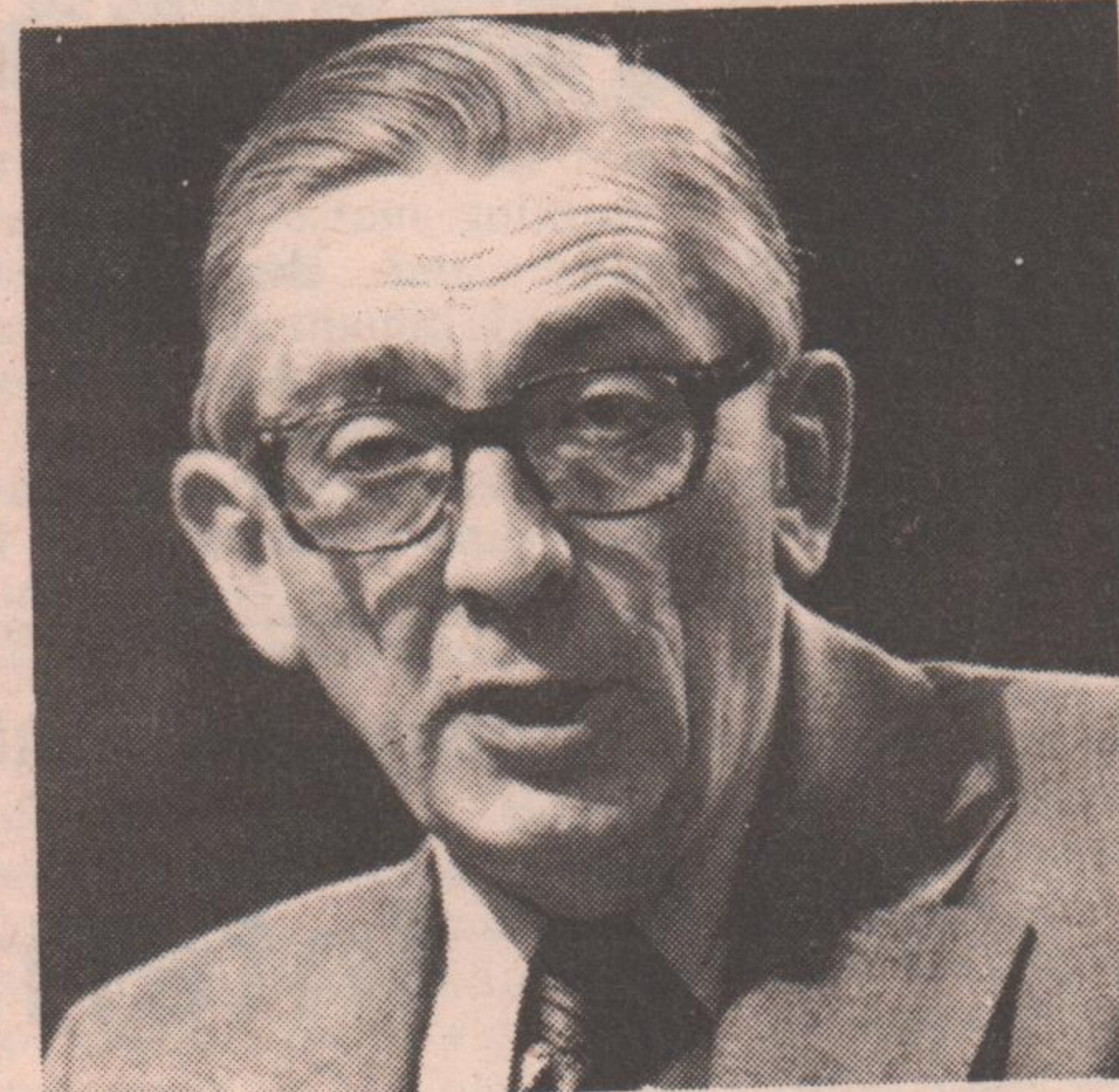


Thatcher

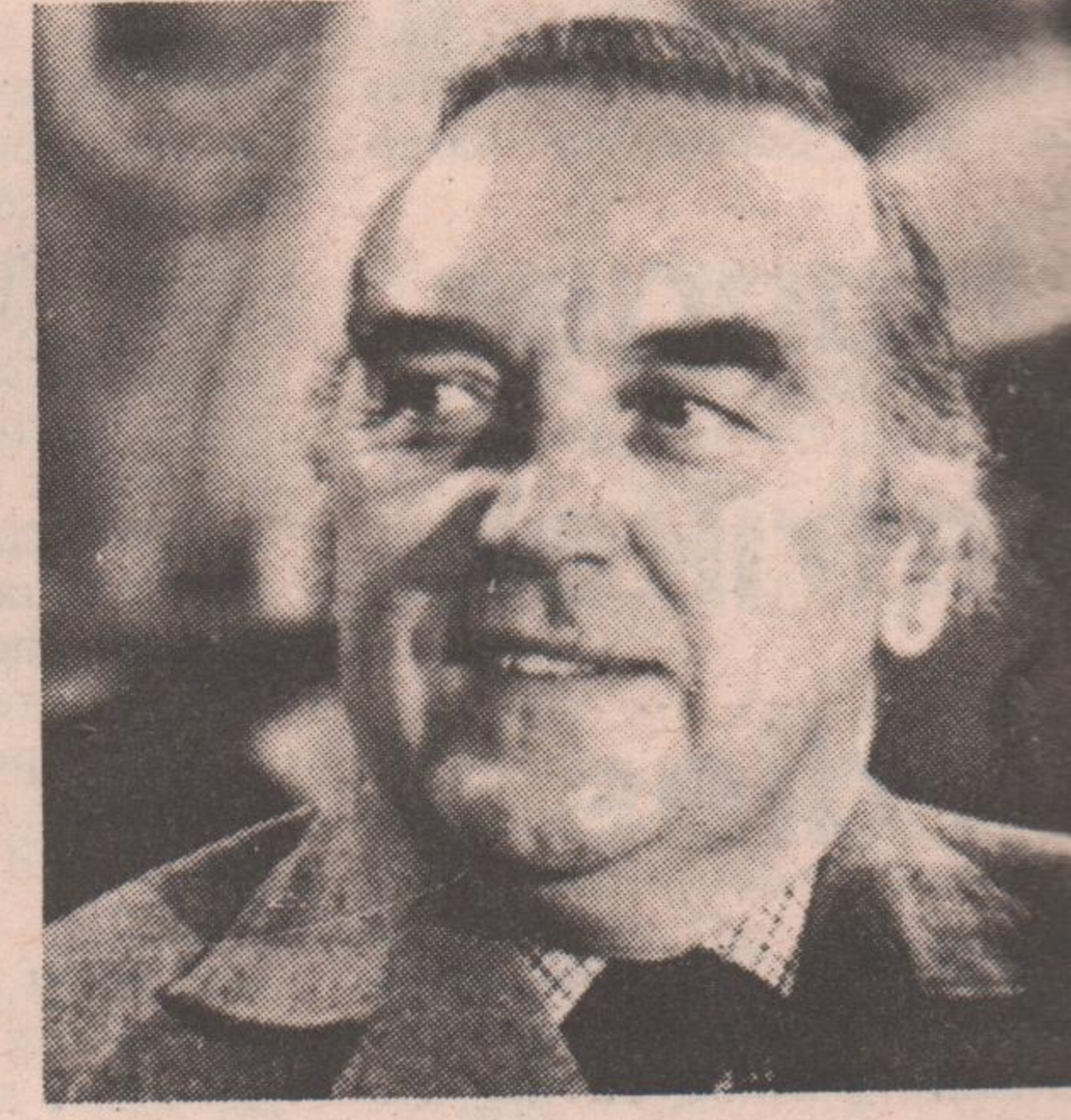


Direct ruler Atkin

MURDERERS!



TUC chief Murray



Labour's Roy Mason: devised Tory po

STOP THEM!

Murder of the most savage kind is being carried out in our name—by the British government with the connivance of the leaders of the British labour movement.

Bobby Sands, a republican prisoner of war has been 51 days on hunger strike demanding recognition of his political status as a prisoner jailed for his opposition to British imperialism.

Indeed between the time of writing on Monday and *Socialist Press* appearing on the streets on Thursday, he could well have died.

Nobody seriously denies that there is a civil war against British rule in the occupied six counties of Ireland—casualties are reported every day.

Nor does anyone seriously pretend that the republican prisoners are "ordinary" criminals: they are picked up and interrogated by special state forces; subjected to special techniques of torture and prolonged remand; and brought before special, no-jury courts which mete out very special sentences on the most tenuous of evidence (Bobby Sands is serving fifteen years for the possession of a single revolver).

The claim that the republicans are isolated individual gunmen with no popular support has been amply

refuted by Bobby Sands' by-election victory in Fermanagh/South Tyrone, in which he won over 30,000 votes.

Yet the British imperialist rulers refuse to recognise Sands and his fellow republican prisoners in Long Kesh as prisoners of war.

They prefer to leave him to starve to death—together with three other hunger strikers who began their action after Sands.

And in this stand the Tories have the full unstinting support of the Labour leadership and the TUC bureaucracy.

Like Tories

Like the Tories, these "leaders" prefer to let the army, TUC and Loyalist paramilitaries crush the struggles of the oppressed nationalist minority in the North of Ireland than to champion their struggle for the right of self determination for the Irish people.

The growing street violence in the six counties in the last week however underlines the fact that such a course brings its own dangers to British imperialism and its friends in the South.

If Bobby Sands is murdered by the obduracy of the Thatcher government and the inaction of the Labourites, the simmering anger of the Irish people

could boil over on both sides of the border.

This is why Irish PM Minister Haughey has arranged the visit of MPs Blaney, De Valera O'Connell to Sands' bed in Long Kesh.

It is why Cardinals and other churchmen have their voices to the pleasure of the Thatcher government make 'concessions' to republican prisoners in order to forestall Sands' death.

Workers in Britain Ireland should place no confidence in such appeals: Tory government is brutally determined to uphold British military rule in the six counties—and to repress and intimidate its enemies.

Thatcher takes action confident that will receive continued "partisan" support from labour movement bureaucracy.

It is our job to break collaboration, mobilise British working class in solidarity with its brothers sisters in the 32 counties of Ireland, and carry through the fight for political status and the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

No more Irish martyrdom! We call on all our readers fight now in every union branch and Labour Party action to force a British withdrawal and drive out pro-imperialist leaders of the labour movement!

URGENT NEED FOR TURKEY SOLIDARITY

After eight months of military rule in Turkey, the dictatorship is still far away from consolidating its control.

The regime remains as unstable as ever in the face of millions of workers pressing their economic and democratic demands. These same workers have been the main victims of the economic policies of the junta.

The demands of the masses have come through the unexpected channel of the reactionary yellow trade union confederation TURK-IS, which sits in the state-established High Arbitration Committee.

One demand is for a new formula for the minimum wage, which workers are arguing should be calculated on the basis of a 4-member family, while the employers' federation insists it should be based on a single worker and a consumption of 3,200 calories per day.

The workers' demands amount to 4.5 times the present minimum wage. At one point in the talks, TURK-IS leaders actually walked out of the Arbitration Committee.

wages and collective bargaining—which has not taken place since early 1979. Prior to the September coup

hundreds of thousands of workers, in particular DISK members, had been on strike.

The first new collective bargaining agreement has been issued by the Arbitration Committee for the workers at the giant iron and steel plant at Ereğli, offering a 50% rise for 1979, 50% for 1980 and 40% for 1981, in a deal to last for the next three years.

Such an offer must be set in the context of 170% inflation (government figures) and the appallingly low wages prior to the coup.

But the fact remains that the Turkish working class remains far from defeated. Its militancy and its fighting capacity remains strong despite its setbacks under military rule.

Explosive issue

The question of wages will remain an explosive issue in the face of deepening problems for the regime and for Turkish capitalism.

Last week the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on the regime to "return to democracy" within two months—or face the freezing of relations with the EEC.

This development runs hand in hand with a growth of the bourgeois opposition to the regime from the RPP and its former leader Bulent Ecevit. This opposition is based on human rights violations by the junta.

Ecevit has published an article citing the example of the ex-mayor of Istanbul, arguing that there is systematic torture in Turkey.

In response the junta has brought charges against Ecevit and banned him from attending a meeting of leaders of the Second International in West Germany.

There are nearly 100,000. Eventually a new minimum wage, agreed by employers, TURK-IS and the government has been fixed at a figure nearly five times higher than in the pre-coup period!

At the same time workers demands for the lifting of suspensions on trade union activities and for the right to strike have also been expressed through the TURK-IS executive—even while these collaborators pledge their support for the dictatorship.

Millions of workers, both within TURK-IS and the now illegal left wing confederation DISK, are also pushing forward demands on

political prisoners in Turkey and massive repression against the whole labour movement and socialist and revolutionary organisations.

Mass trials have begun of DISK, DEV-YUL, DEV-SOL and PKK (Kurdish) militants with 200-300 death sentences being demanded by the prosecution.

Continuous military operations are being carried out in Kurdistan, with villages and towns terrorised by the Turkish army.

The extension of this repression to layers of bourgeois liberals was the main factor that spurred Ecevit into opposition.

Fascist line

Meanwhile junta chief Evren has been touring the Aegean coast, declaring in speeches that the main dangers to the Turkish state are "secessionism" and "communism".

This same line was the backbone of fascist propaganda during their terror campaign prior to the coup.

Only 500 fascists will be brought to trial while the mass fascist party remains free and waits only for an opportune moment to resume the offensive.

The international workers' movement must not let the trade unionists, working masses, revolutionaries and democrats in Turkey remain at the mercy of the junta, their torturers and the fascists.

It is necessary to organise active solidarity. In



Turkish police drag away gunned down militant

Britain the Turkey Solidarity Campaign stands at the head of this fight—and has just produced a new information bulletin.

Raise the issue of Turkey in your union branch, Labour Party or students union. Affiliate to the TSC:

*Defend democratic rights in Turkey.

*Free all political prisoners in Turkey.

*Black all arms, economic and military aid to the military dictatorship!

Hunger striker dies

AFTER 10 weeks on a hunger strike which was entirely blacked out by the West German press, terrorist prisoner Sigurd Debus died last week.

The German capitalist press had succeeded far more even than the British Tory press in muzzling reports of the hunger strike which was in pursuit of demands for a relaxation of the savage prison regime afflicting Debus and other terrorist prisoners.

This death must be added to the grisly toll of violence carried through by Schmidt's reactionary Social Democratic government, involving the murder in prison of the leadership of the Baader-Meinhof group and other prisoners.

POLISH LEADERS PLAYING WITH FIRE

The Polish government has conceded the right to a Solidarity trade union to the country's farmers.

They have also conceded weekly television time to Solidarity.

This comes with the 'request' by Parliament to end strikes for two months. Solidarity has accepted this since it does not carry the force of law. The leadership also asked the government to make concessions, not made under pressure.

The concessions that have been made are designed both to end the action of the farmers and also to strengthen the more right wing elements around Walesa in Solidarity's leadership.

The farmers agreed to recognise the leading role of the Communist Party in Polish society.

The Polish bureaucracy is clearly playing with fire. The Rural Solidarity development means that there will be another independent body challenging their power—and this will be linked with the working class.

A momentary strengthening of Walesa creates a much greater problem. Potentially the whole of Polish society is opposed to the bureaucracy.

There must now be a struggle to make this new union a representative of the poorer peasants and not just a tool of the richer farmers who will link up with the bureaucracy to squeeze greater exploitation out of the rural poor.

The depth of the crisis also has its reflections inside the Polish Communist Party itself.

The ruling bureaucracy is split as to how to deal with Solidarity and much of the rank and file has gone over to the new movement.

Last Wednesday 500 Communist Party activists from 19 cities met in the Copernicus University of Torun. This is the first major rank and file conference organised of an East European CP.

The reason the conference was allowed must be connected with attempts by the 'liberal' section of the bureaucracy to outmanoeuvre the hardliners.

This is borne out by the attendance of three Central Committee members (although Kania refused to attend), and the endorsement of the conference by the official Warsaw paper, 'Zycie Warszawy'.

The attendance at the conference and its decisions shows how quickly such developments can overtake the bureaucrats who at first endorse them.

True the call was made for the removal of pro-Moscow hardliners Olszowski and Grabski. But the criticism at the conference was of the whole of the leadership, as "people fighting to stay in their positions".

The demands went up for democracy in the party (non-existent since the CPs of the early 20s), and for the full minutes of the

Central Committee meetings to be published.

They also demanded direct elections to the July party congress, not the pre-congress committees which were unrepresentative.

These demands for democracy and for the end of secrecy are important elements in the transitional programme to political revolution.

But it must be made clear to Polish CP members that the CP is the party of the bureaucracy.

The vast majority of the leadership rests on its privileges as an elite caste. There is no changing the Stalinist CP. There was even a demand that news of events in Poland be circulated to the CPs in the rest of Eastern Europe. But such a move, unless directed to the masses is an attempt to avert the danger of a Soviet invasion simply by appeals to other Stalinist bureaucracies.

What is necessary is a genuine revolutionary party—a Trotskyist party—to lead a political revolution to overthrow the bureaucratic caste and bring about workers' power through councils such as those that developed last year in the form of the Gdansk Central Strike Committee.

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Stalinists' about-face on Sands' election

On Thursday 9 April the *Morning Star*, paper of the Communist Party, carried an article by their Ireland 'specialist' Chris Myant.

As the introduction to the article says: Chris Myant argues that if the life of Long Kesh hunger striker Bobby Sands depends on his winning the seat, then his election is none too healthy.

This prediction is amplified in the article, in which Myant argues that some people are introducing as few as 1,000 votes for Sands. This was on the same day as over 30,000 people were supporting Sands, and he was winning the seat.

Why was Myant putting this pessimistic position?

Irish CP

The answer is in the article. He quotes "Unity", the paper of the Irish Communist Party, as saying that

the voters have a "sham, no-choice election", claiming that neither of the candidates "raise the real issues".

For the CP British, the "real issues" are the "real issues" of the Irish people.

Loyalist

Loyalist West and republican Sands are thus regarded as being the same.

How did the *Morning Star* react to the result of this election?

True to form, having

argued against voting for Sands, the *Star* then claims that the result was a victory for their policies!

"Massive vote for Long Kesh peace" was the headline of the *Morning Star* on April 10.

They called it "the popular backing for a humane solution". A solution which they presumably had opposed.

Plainly the people of Fermanagh disagree with the CP on what are the "real issues". And so should socialists in Britain.

AUSTERITY ON THE MARCH

Austerita, austeridad, austerity. However you spell it, it is the war cry of hard-pressed reactionary governments today from Peking through Warsaw, Rome, Madrid, Paris and London to Washington.

Whatever their professions of eternal hatred and incompatibility, all those governments are in accord on one thing—the need for austerity.

And what that means is the need to raise the exploitation of the direct producers in society by cutting their real wages and raising their productivity through speed-up and intensifying work and cutting available social services.

Similar

Whether these measures are in the interests of Stalinist bureaucrats' privileges or capitalists' profits they are remarkably similar and get remarkably similar justifications from their advocates.

Long passages from the recent speeches of Deng Hsiao Ping, Leonid Brezhnev, Stanislaw Kania, Arnaldo Forlani, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan would be interchangeable.

And nearly everywhere the advocates of austerity are in trouble. If they ever had it in the first place they are in danger of losing their political means of support and power.

If Poland shows that most acutely in the Stalinist-ruled countries, Italy must be nearly the most severe case among capitalist countries.

Every new packet of austerity measures severs another strand in the thread by which the life of the Forlani government hangs.

Last week, after protracted negotiations with the unions, and in the aftermath

of the announcement of a worsening in Italy's massive trade deficit, Forlani announced a new packet of measures.

They are designed to reinforce the 6% devaluation and raising of interest rates four weeks ago.

They are designed to cut government spending by the equivalent of £2,500 million.

It seems unlikely, however, that this can be achieved since the government was unable to impose its major demand on the unions—the suspension of the sliding scale of wages.

Italy's workers won their sliding scale in the 1960s and early 1970s. It means that wages are renegotiated every two or three years and between that period rise automatically with the cost of living.

The protection which this gives against inflation is not complete and there are many ways in which the

MARCH



CP and SP leaders Berlinguer and Craxi

scala mobile could be improved.

But nonetheless it was a tremendous victory for Italy's working class and for

a decade now it has been the gain most disputed by the capitalists and their government.

Italy's experience with

the *scala mobile* shows how important is this demand in the struggle to prevent the capitalist class from inflicting the cost of their crisis on workers.

Divided

In the negotiations of the last few weeks the Forlani government has been trying to get the unions to agree to suspend the *scala mobile* so that prices would be allowed to decisively overtake wage rates at least for a period.

The three national unions—Catholic (CISL), Socialist (UIL) and Communist (CIGL)—were divided on their response.

The CISL bureaucracy was prepared to sell the



Italian CP demonstration

scala mobile for a very low price. But the resistance of the CIGL following the CP's new "opposition" strategy, prevented this from happening.

But the CIGL bureaucrats are no more committed to the *scala mobile* in principle than are their CISL counterparts.

They have said that prices are frozen and other measures taken they are willing to discuss the question.

The defence of the *scala mobile* therefore cannot be left to the union bureaucrats; it depends on continual vigilance by the rank and file in the unions.

New stage in Spanish crisis

Last week's killing of two more retired military officers and a capitalist—by ETA and the "autonomous anti-capitalist commandos"—has plunged Spain into a fresh stage of its political crisis.

As after every terrorist attack now the Cabinet went immediately into emergency session following which the Prime Minister Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo met with the military chiefs of staff.

That is the meeting

which is increasingly becoming Spain's real cabinet.

The Ministers of the Democratic Centre Union (UCD) government are trying to avert the impending military coup by abdicating their authority—not vast to start with—to the military leaders.

Sham

And in turn the opposition parties—the Socialists and Communists—abdicating their political role to the weak and reactionary UCD.

Parliament has become more a sham than ever since

it was hijacked on February 23 by Lt. Colonel Tejero—who has just sold his memoirs to a publisher and has published a long article justifying the coup in the leading right wing paper ABC.

The only serious parliamentary vote since last year's vote of censure by the Socialist Party did, however, take place last week.

It was over whether ecclesiastical law should hold any way under the new law which liberalises divorce.

The combined forces of the opposition parties and

rebel "social democratic" sections of the UCD led to a defeat for the "Christian Democrat" sections of the UCD.

The vote served to underline the lack of authority of the UCD government.

Gained little

It has led to rumours of an impending cabinet reshuffle in which "social democrats" would be removed and beyond this to speculation about a possible emergency UCD Congress, a split in the party and to early general elections within a few months.

It could easily become a bargaining counter in the CP's plan to negotiate a new role in government alongside parties of the ruling class.

Without the suspension of the *scala mobile* Forlani has gained little in these negotiations. If anything they bring nearer the moment when the Italian ruling class decides that his puny coalition government can serve their voracious interests no longer.

From this distance looks very unlikely that such elections could again be won by the discredited parties of the right and that the opposition Socialists would find themselves unwillingly with a majority.

There are few in Spain today who can imagine such a scenario continuing uninterrupted without another attempt by the military to oust the civilian politician altogether.

And yet the main workers parties and unions continue to stand idly by.

'Shuttle' heightens war danger

The whoops of delight from the Reagan administration at the success of the space shuttle exercise last week has nothing to do with any new-found Republican interest in scientific advancement.

Reagan's government is busily slashing Federal spending on scientific research. But it is funnelling unlimited funds into a vast arms build-up as part of their plans to increase still further the military might of US imperialism.

The Shuttle may mean for many readers a further historic step towards exploration of the universe: but for Reagan, Haig and Bush it means the possibility of establishing orbiting weapons platforms, bristling with high-definition surveillance equipment and high power laser guns to shoot down intercontinental missiles in any nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Reagan is seeking cuts in spending by NASA, as part

of his economic package. But the vast military potential of the Shuttle programme seems likely to ensure that further funds are made available over and above the four flights already agreed by Congress.

US military planners had been worried at the recent successes of Soviet "killer

satellites" which manoeuvre close to and destroy target satellites by detonating themselves.

The USSR is apparently ahead of US technology in this field, which would theoretically enable Soviet satellites to wipe out key US military spy satellites and those used for communica-

tions.

Research is going on into the production of satellites equipped with sensors and laser guns.

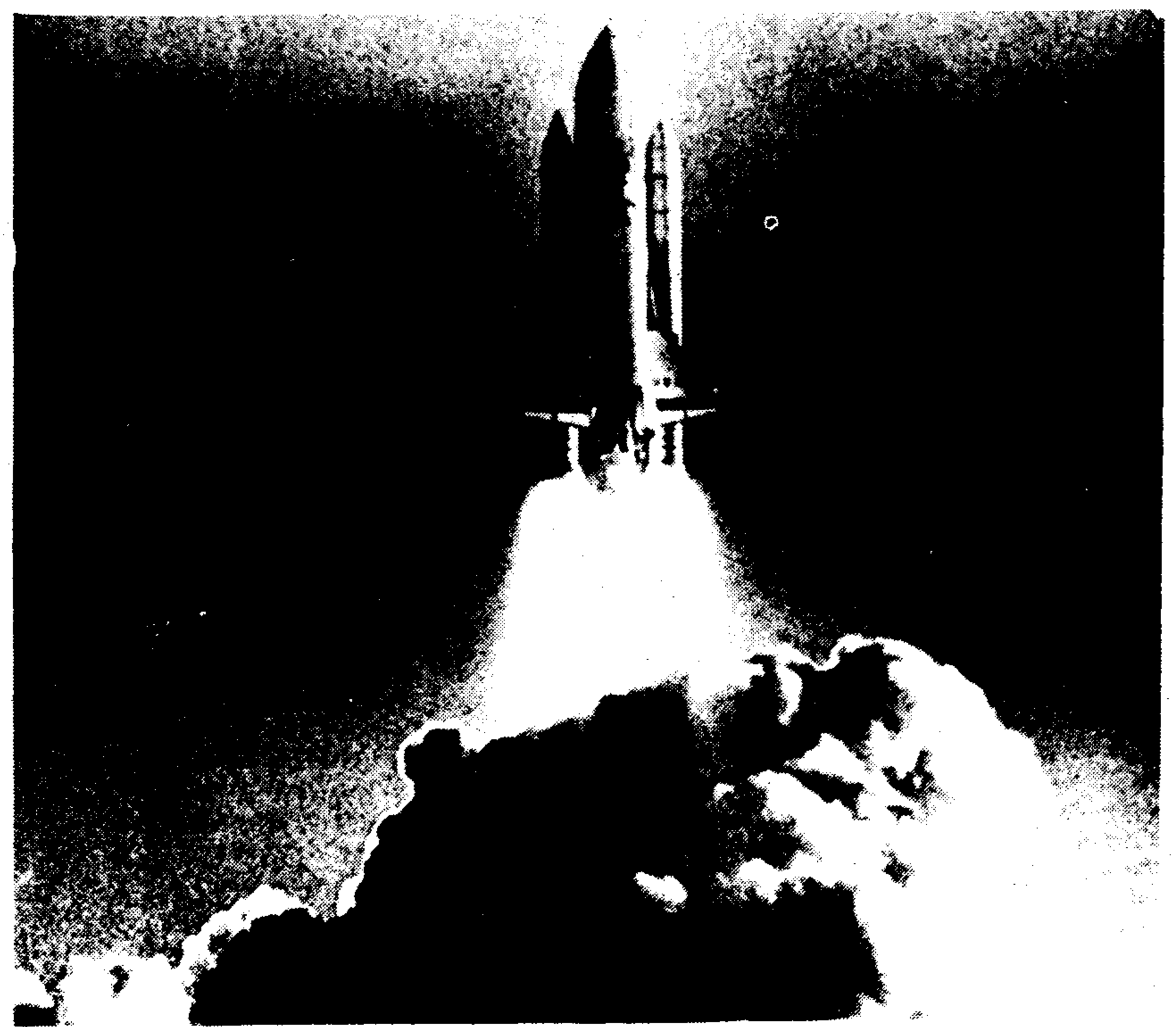
Military outpost

But the Space Shuttle shows that the US imperialists may soon be able to go still further ahead—launching, positioning and even servicing their satellites at will; capturing Soviet satellites and taking them back to earth; and moving swiftly to establish a manned orbiting military outpost serviced by Shuttle.

Such an outpost could not only destroy enemy missiles but launch its own missiles against selected targets.

The US Air Force is already planning its own \$450 million control centre for military space flights and its own launch pad for what is seen as an expanded arena of military build-up.

In the forthcoming Shuttle flights substantial footage in the cargo bay has been allocated for undis-



Shuttle blasts off

closed US military use.

The cost of such military development is huge—and will itself cut down the scientific aspects of the Shuttle programme.

Every ten days

By the end of the 1980s it is predicted that Shuttle flights will be taking place every ten days. How many such flights will be designed for scientific work—and how many simply carrying aloft weapons of death and des-

truction in a further cosmic extension of the imperialist arms race?

Soviet President Brezhnev greeted the Space Shuttle by warning of the military implications of the programme, and appealing to the Reagan government to establish the same kind of "peaceful coexistence" in Space as exists on earth.

Yet the fact is that as long as imperialism exists, the danger of war is an ever present threat hanging over the masses on a world scale.

Brezhnev and his fellow Stalinist bureaucrats warn of the dangers of imperialism—but stand opposed to working class action to overthrow it, fearing that such struggle will also bring the end to their own privileged parasitic existence.

Only the building of revolutionary parties in every country to lead the struggle to defeat imperialism and oust the Stalinist bureaucracies can answer the threat of nuclear annihilation.



GLC Election test for Tories

By Ann Evans

On May 7 Londoners will be voting for a new Greater London Council in the first major test of the feeling that has obviously been building up against the Tories throughout the country.

The Labour Party is hoping to unseat the Tory council and its leader Sir Horace Cutler—one of Thatcher's greatest fans who has sought to carry out her cuts with enthusiasm.

In order to succeed in toppling the Tories, Labour is going to the polls with a left wing programme worked out by the London Labour Party.

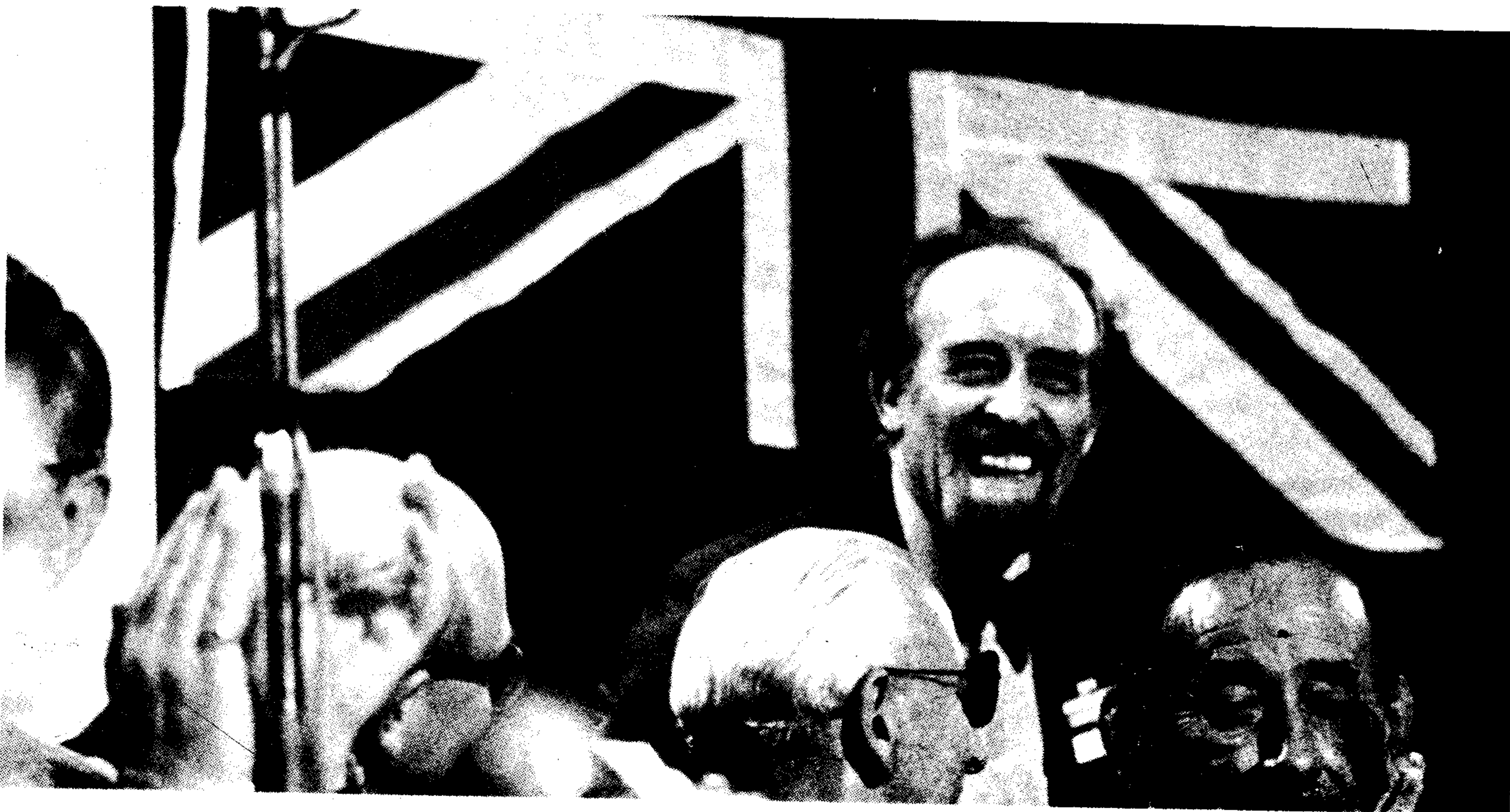
Denounced

This programme has been roundly denounced by the Tories in their election propaganda as Marxist subversion.

In fact the Tories, faced with the appalling results of this government's policies, are sounding increasingly hollow and desperate in their red-baiting, and are unable to put forward any positive proposals for the GLC other than more cuts.

Sir Horace Cutler, for instance, in a recent piece in the *South London Press* listed his achievements (which include "the culmination of our work on the Gillette London Marathon") in a couple of paragraphs, and then used half of the article to attack the "Marxists" in the London Labour Party:

"Their targets are all lined up; your pocket first; abolition of the City; nationalisation of the banks; the abolition of the House of Lords and following that as the night the day, the replacement of the monarchy with a Marxist president—and on present



Cutler—welcomed onto platform at 1979 Tory Party Conference

form it may be Arthur Scargill!"

Local Tory manifestoes make it equally clear that the rulers of County Hall are counting on a red scare to keep Labour out—their own policies and the record of this government are clearly not going to get them votes.

Of course it isn't true that Labour's manifesto is a fully-fledged Marxist programme. In fact many of the demands which the Tories are particularly vehement about are really rather moderate.

Heavy subsidising of public transport, in order to extend services and cut fares, is accepted in many European cities which are by no means run by Marxists—Paris

for instance.

Nevertheless, Labour's GLC election programme contains many important, radical proposals which, if implemented, would lead to a major confrontation with the Tories.

Implement pledges

For this reason it is vital that *Socialist Press* supporters fight hard for the election of a Labour GLC, and fight hard for the full implementation of the manifesto once these councillors are in power.

Taken as a whole the manifesto means confrontation with the Tories because it commits Labour to a massive increase in spending.

On housing, a pledge is given to build new homes, repair existing homes and "keep costs within the reach of Londoners".

The programme also commits Labour to "launch a major attack on disrepair in the private rented sector by buying and converting homes and stop the sale of vacant council housing. Labour will resist other government dictates on sales, help modernise and improve run-down council estates, assist those on low incomes to buy homes in the private sector with 100% mortgages, and support the work carried out by Housing Associations."

The proposals for London Transport are likely

to be a major vote catcher and have been stressed in all the election material put out by Labour candidates.

While Horace Cutler has indulged in gimmicky schemes to investigate "waste" and "extravagance" in London Transport, fares have increased, services have been cut and jobs have been eliminated by natural wastage leaving many scheduled bus services abandoned each morning because crews are not available. Every single Londoner knows that London Transport is in chaos, and the reasons are lack of planning and lack of finance.

Labour's proposals are hardly revolutionary—but they do mean lower fares

and a more rational, planned service.

Bus and tube fares are to be cut by 25% and the fare structure simplified. Fares will then be frozen throughout the term of office. More staff will be recruited and more buses bought. Subsidies will be increased and extended to include British Rail services within the GLC area.

Popularity

The Tories themselves are worried about the potential popularity of these transport proposals. Just one month before election day and amidst a massive publicity campaign they have introduced a suburban flat fare

scheme.

However the scheme is so limited in application that most people are probably now paying *more* for their regular journeys!

Another proposal singled out for attack by the Tories is a brief statement on the police:

"London's ratepayers pay over £200 a year for their police, but unlike every other area of Britain have no say at all in the running of its police force. Labour will campaign for the introduction of democratic control in this crucial area."

What form of democratic control takes is open to question, but this proposal has been seized on by Tories and press alike as "political control of the police and a step towards a Marxist dictatorship".

Repression

But with police repression being stepped up and a police occupation now established in Brixton, this proposal is bound to strike a chord with the harassed unemployed youth in London's boroughs.

This election is one of the most important local elections for many years for several reasons.

A big swing to Labour would be a major blow against the Tories at a time when they are split in their own ranks and faced with growing resistance from civil service and other unions.

It would be an opportunity to challenge the Tories' policies from a position much stronger than any other Labour local council. The GLC, after all, has a budget which is greater than the national product of most countries in the world.

But all this depends on Labour's representatives being held to their manifesto commitments and forced to confront the Tories head on.

Murdered: but screws go free

Barry Prosser is not the first prisoner to be murdered by prison officers in Britain and he will not be the last.

But he is one of the few to have an inquest jury return a verdict of unlawful killing.

Prosser was murdered by screws while in the hospital wing of Winslow Green Prison, Birmingham

Medical evidence

The inquest turned on two things. Firstly the

unequivocal medical evidence from two pathologists that 32 year old Prosser had been attacked with considerable violence, bursting his stomach, and a coroner who was reluctant to accept an open verdict.

Beaten up

One witness, Patrick Calvin, said he heard Prosser being beaten up and one warden say "He was a bugger to put down".

Later he was told he could get an early release if he kept his mouth shut.

Three screws are now on 'paid leave' from the prison, including Melvyn Jackson, the senior officer who was acquitted of murder by Birmingham's stipendiary magistrate, and who now cannot stand trial.

An 'urgent inquiry' is being carried out to find some way of smoothing the troubled waters. This is not expected to include jail sentences for the wardens.

BLOW FOR SDP

THE 43-strong Social Democratic Party always had problems. But now it is facing a £2,000 bill for legal costs as a result of its unsuccessful legal tussle with its 43,000-strong upstart rival of the same name.

The original SDP has not exactly had an illustrious history since its formation in 1979.

Its leader, Donald Kean, contested the Glasgow Central by-election—but his campaign produced only ten votes out of 19,000.

Judge James Fitzhugh unkindly declared that it was inconceivable that Roy Jenkins and the Gang of 3 were now passing themselves off as members of Kean's party.

Press Gang



Is it a bird? Is it a bullet? Is it Superman?

No. It's the sky-rocketing costs of keeping an almost totally useless supersonic aircraft in the sky.

Concorde, the dream of the sixties; the cash-guzzler of the seventies has become the embarrassing white elephant of the eighties.

A Commons committee on Industry and Trade has recommended that its future be investigated—and pointed out that the cost of cancelling Concorde (about £40 million) would be less than the cost of continuing to run it for the next five years (£123 million).

Concorde has long been a depository of jingoistic rhetoric. Can the nation which brought the sonic boom to five continents be all bad?

It is of course that boom—which means that Concorde cannot fly supersonic over land—which has rendered the technological advances in Concorde virtually useless.

Capitalism has abused its technological knowledge to produce an aircraft which

can fly at a speed which can't be used, consuming fuel that can't be afforded.

Inside the plane the fawning first class service convinced jaded businessmen that this is the only way to travel.

It gets them there early enough to grab a few hours sleep to work up an appetite again after the excesses of the flight.

Concorde was defended by Labour as well as Tory governments. For the Tories it was the physical embodiment of British supremacy. For Tony Benn it was a glorified job creation scheme—useless work at a high price.

The press prefer the Tories' apology. BA advertisements and gutter press copy become interchangeable—'Fly the flag'.

The *Daily Express* tried to recapture the golden days of its imperial past with a lead story entitled "Hands Off Concorde".

Both the *Express* and the *Mail* compared Concorde to the latest episode of American Star Wars—the space shuttle Columbia (cost \$35

million per voyage).

The shuttle flight—which makes even Concorde seem cheap—was seen as somehow paying the world back for all the USA's humiliations in the last ten years.

The argument put forward by the press to defend Concorde are similar to the arguments for increased arms spending.

The sugar on the pill is patriotism, chauvinism and nationalism. Underneath is the drive for profits and with Concorde the state's bosses are private industry's profits.

Only the *Observer*—ever a critic of Concorde—said the right place for it was a museum.

While millions are thrown on the scrap heap, capitalism promises a glittering future but offers only a heap of useless metal.

The unemployed stand outside the gates of the bosses' amusement arcade as millions of pounds are spent to offer the bourgeoisie a joy ride in one of the world's most sophisticated liabilities.

"Fly the flag" has become "Fly the White Elephant".

New Cold War Society

A new organisation calling itself the Anti-Soviet Society has emerged on the far right.

As yet little is known of the forces behind this setup but its mailing address—a Libertarian bookshop in London's Covent Garden provides a few clues.

One of the people involved in this venture is a former research officer of the Freedom Association who resigned some months back to form his own Libertarian Alliance.

The Anti-Soviet Society

purports to be a broad alliance of anti-communists dedicated to the overthrow of the society system with the minimum of chaos and bloodshed.

An idea of what they would like to replace the Soviet system with is given by the speaker they have invited to their public meeting, a representative from the Alliance of Russian Solidarists (NTS in Russian).

The NTS claim to be a Christian Democratic party represented throughout the capitalist world and in Russia itself.

Their work in Russia they say is carried out on an "impressive scale" although they are (not surprisingly) obliged to work underground.

There is also in existence a World Anti-Communist League which was founded in 1966 by Nationalist Chinese and Korean politicians.

It is now riddled with anti-semites and openly Nazi organisations.

Much of the funding of this group comes from Saudi Arabian businessmen.

Take Benn campaign to union rank & file

By John Lister

Trade union conferences throughout the summer months are to provide a major forum for the campaign to secure Tony Benn's election as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party.

With Benn well placed to win the majority of constituency votes, but unlikely to win substantial support from the Parliamentary Labour Party, his only hope lies in his ability to win rank and file support within the unions in order to overturn the bureaucratic conspiracy to back Denis Healey.

There must be no half measures in such a campaign. By defying both right wing and fake 'left' union leaders in his decision to stand for election Benn has left himself no choice but to go over their heads to the union membership.

Such a campaign offers an opportunity for socialists

at every level in the labour movement to promote a debate on questions of policy and programme.

Such a debate opens up possibilities stretching far beyond the considerable limitations of the five points put forward by Benn in his election platform.

Critical support

Socialist Press, while not endorsing Benn's platform, gives its critical support to this campaign. And we welcome the initiatives now being taken by the Rank and File Mobilising Committee to promote the campaign in the period between now and the October Party conference.

Benn told a meeting last week of the RFMC that he had only recently discovered the extent to which secret deals had been made by union leaders and Shadow

Cabinet right wingers in their efforts to prevent Benn even standing in the first place.

It is necessary to take decisions out of the hands of such people.

Pressure must be brought to bear on MPs through local GMCs, and on union leaders through resolutions at branch, area and national level as well as conferences.

The Shadow Cabinet is



Healey

pledged, almost to a man, (and they are all men!) to the objectives of "Labour Solidarity"—reversing the democratic gains that have been made and avoiding any new measures to make them implement conference policies.

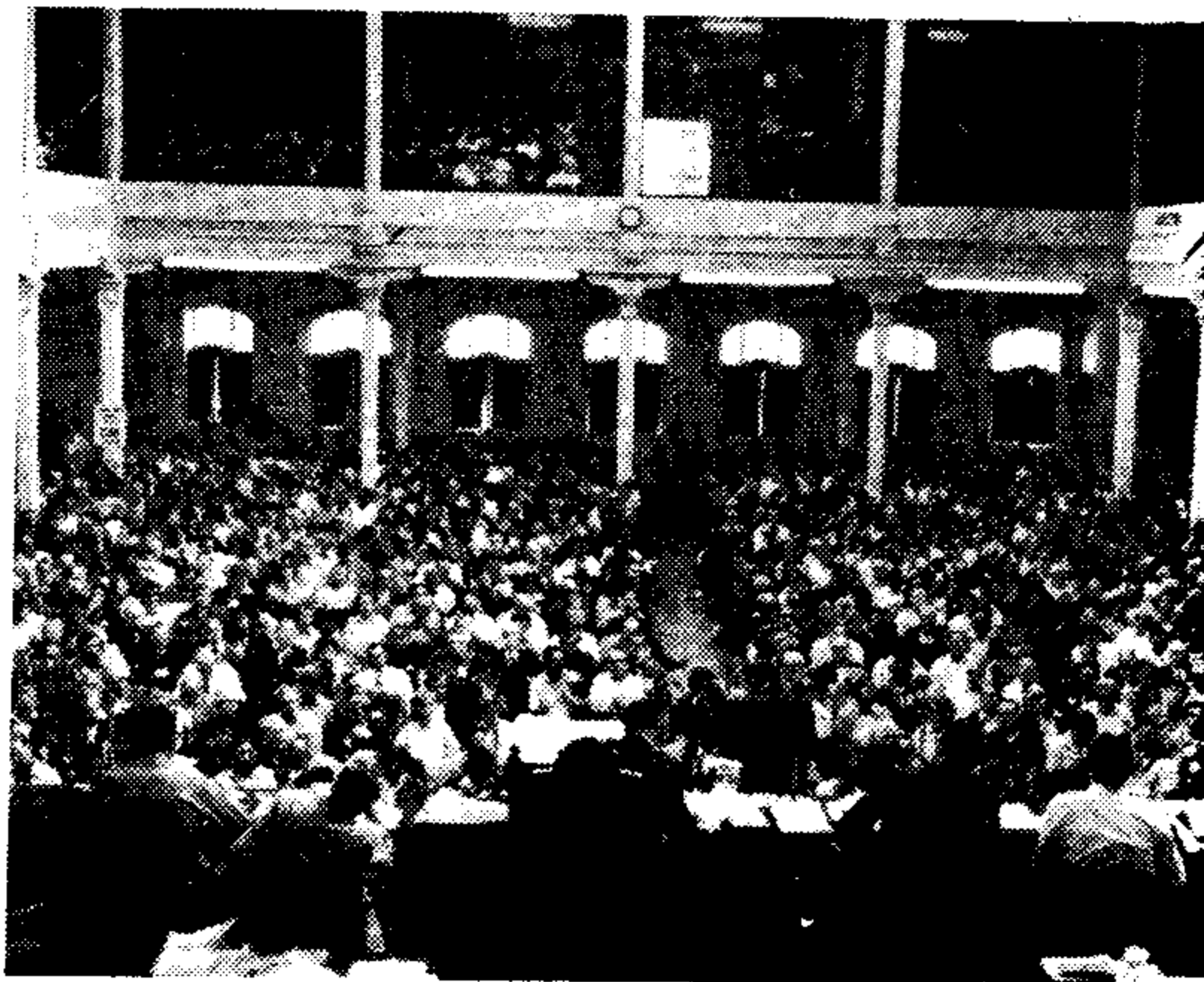
The RFMC looked in detail at the list of forthcoming trade union conferences. It was agreed to lobby for Benn to address these conferences on the politics of his campaign—and where necessary to organise fringe meetings on the issues involved.

Most important of these conferences are the USDAW conference (26-29 April); NUPE (10-12 May); ASTMS (16-18 May); GMWU (7-11 June); TGWU (22-26 June).

and COHSE (23-26 June).

We urge readers in these unions to submit emergency resolutions through their branches calling on their leaders to invite Benn to address the conference, and to mandate their own delegates to support the RFMC campaign.

The impact of Benn's candidacy in sharpening the



TGWU confer

political questions within the Labour Party was confirmed at a meeting of the Tribune Group on April 13, where the so-called "left wing" of the PLP was split down the middle on whether or not to support Benn against Healey.

The next few months will see a large number of pseudo-left poseurs smoked out within the Labour Party.

and in the course of struggle *Socialist Press* reporters must press hard for a consistent programme of socialist politics in contrast both to the reactionary platform of Benn's inadequate points,

Weekend of anti-nuke protest

With Margaret Thatcher touring the Middle East in search of military outposts, the anti-war movement gathered pace at the weekend with a series of major rallies in Britain and Europe.

A 7,000-strong European protest including 1,000 CND supporters from Britain marched to the NATO headquarters in Brussels. Delegations from 13 countries were present in what is seen as a preparation for a full scale march in Brussels in October.

A declaration calling for a nuclear-free Europe was handed in at the NATO building which was heavily guarded by Belgian riot police.

An American anti-missiles campaigner warned that:

"On November 4 another

nuclear warhead was elected President of the United States. Only through an international movement will the people destroy the bomb before the bomb destroys the people."

Meanwhile in Britain a 9,000 strong rally was held on Saturday in Manchester, following a 600-strong march from Leeds.

In the Midlands over 10,000 people turned out to support a protest march and festival in Rugby targeted on the Hillmorton radio transmitter, used to communicate with Polaris submarines.

In the Southern Region, CND activities were focussed on a Monday rally at Greenham Common, the US air base destined as one of the sites for the new Cruise missiles aimed at the USSR.

Some 5,000 protestors turned out.

And in London, five CND marches were held.

At the same time the vote of the NUT conference to defy the line of the union's Executive and adopt a "no nukes" policy underlined the growing anti-war current within the trade unions and broader labour movement.

The civil servants' strike has shown that many personnel essential to the operation of the British nuclear arsenal are prepared to take action against the government and able to have an impact on British military capacity.

The task in the next period is to develop the campaign within the labour movement and at the same time ram home the message that there will be no disarmament while Thatcher's government remains in office.

To secure jobs and dispose of the bomb requires working class action to kick out the Tories.

A look at Benn's five points

Benn's announcement of his candidacy in the Deputy Leader elections stressed that the confrontation is not one of personalities but of policies.

He is right. But this does not mean that Benn—who must be supported against Healey—has a correct package of policies. On the contrary, the five points he has put forward fall far short of a consistent socialist programme, and show quite clearly that Benn remains—however 'left' he may appear—committed to the utopian politics of seeking to achieve socialism through parliamentary reforms within capitalism.

A brief examination of his proposals show why this is the case.

"1. As a first priority to restore full employment during the life time of the next Labour Government by adopting the alternative economic strategy.

2. To expand and develop Housing, Health, Education, Welfare and other essential public services both to meet people's needs and to create jobs."

Of course all socialists agree with restoring full employment and the expansion of Housing, Health, Education, Welfare and other essential public services.

But the "alternative economic strategy" referred to by Benn in point 1 is in fact a strategy for reforming and restructuring capitalism in Britain. It is not a strategy for a planned socialist economy, which is inconceivable

without the nationalisation of the banks, land and major industry.

The "alternative economic strategy" offers no such perspective: and it is also strongly infected by nationalism—with strident demands for import controls to protect "British" capitalist industry against "foreign" capitalist competition.

The "strategy" therefore offers no real alternative to the class collaborationist policies of Labour's right wing.

"3. To support and strengthen the rights of women, to extend democracy and self-government at all levels in industry and society, to defend the trade unions, to protect the interests of the ethnic communities, to enact a Freedom of Information Bill and to end the House of Lords."

These praiseworthy objectives are all couched in terms of Parliamentary reforms: yet the abolition of the House of Lords and the effective defence of trade union rights and extension of the rights of women demand a mobilisation of mass support.

"4. To develop cooperation with all the countries of Europe to secure the complete withdrawal of Britain from the Common Market and to support the United Nations in its work for

peace, international justice and world development."

Benn's call for withdrawal from the Common Market is infected by the same nationalism as the alternative economic strategy.

Rather than seeing the British working class as part of a necessary European struggle to destroy the fabric of the EEC and establish a Socialist United States of Europe, Benn simply addresses the question of disentangling the British capitalist economy from the EEC straitjacket.

And his support for the reactionary United Nations—whose sole task is to work for the stabilisation of imperialist rule across the majority of the earth's surface—speaks volumes for the political confusion of left wing reformists.

"5. To adopt a non-nuclear defence strategy for Britain, to work for European nuclear disarmament, and to secure the removal of all American nuclear bases from Britain."

Evaded

Benn's formulation neatly evades an important question. Against whom is his "non-nuclear defence strategy" intended to defend us? Does he agree with Labour's right wing that British capitalism should be

"defended" against supposed "Soviet threat"?

In fact the danger of obliteration comes from military build-up by the imperialists, and the growing mood of desperation and aggression that is driving American military leaders to contemplate launching "limited" European nuclear war.

Overthrow

We need not plan to equip the British armed forces with effective nuclear weaponry, but strategy to overthrow disarm British imperialist forces, and assist the forces in Ireland throughout the world are fighting imperialist oppression and exploitation.

We do not of course expect Benn to elaborate such a programme. He has come a long way from the period of collaboration with the Wilson and Callaghan governments, but remains firmly a reformist rather than a revolutionary.

But his candidacy offers the chance to discuss all these issues throughout the labour movement, and to fight to raise the understanding of leftward forces in the Labour Party the need to go beyond Benn's five points to a consistent, international socialist programme.





Munitions workers on the Clyde, 1915

Working class housing

RENT STRIKES: CLYDESIDE &

Ernie Stubbins takes a look at the historical experiences of the working class in fighting the imposition of rent increases. He begins this week with Clydeside and Leeds. Next week,

The First World War led to a massive increase in the demand for ship-builders and munitions workers especially in the Clyde Valley region where these industries were traditionally centred.

Naturally a great influx of workers into the area meant that a shortage of housing developed, and local landlords and estate agents were quick to take advantage of this by raising rent levels.

Resentment to these increases was widespread, but the success of the campaign depended on an initial local breakthrough showing that the workers could beat the landlords by their organisation and strength.

The breakthrough came in the Govan area, where it was led by Mrs Barbour, who was described by Willie Gallacher as 'an ordinary Govan housewife'.

Trained

In fact, as John Maclean makes clear in his articles written after the Rent Strike Mrs Barbour had been trained as a public speaker and organiser by Henry McBride, the secretary of the Labour Party Housing Committee, which had been active in the Clydeside region for some ten years, fighting for improved conditions and for the provision of council housing for the working class.

In the Govan area, Barbour and McBride organised a successful rent strike, persuading many working

class households to refuse to pay the increases.

At this stage the landlords involved backed down and withdrew the increases. However, the Govan victory caused widespread interest among the workers, and soon similar rent strikes were breaking out all over Clydeside.

Two factors

John Maclean makes it clear that there were two important factors in the successful spread of the rent strikes throughout the Clydeside region.

The first of these was a campaign of factory gate meetings called by the various left groups in the area, reporting the success of the Govan action and explaining its tactics.

The second factor was the strength of the Women's Housing Committee in involving large numbers of working class women in the physical defence of their homes against the bailiffs and the police during the course of the strike.

In the early stages of the campaign the workers brought pressure on the local council to use its powers to reduce rent levels, but this had no effect on the Glasgow bourgeoisie.

Legal tactic

Meanwhile the landlords, having failed to recover possession of the rent-struck dwellings found a new legal tactic.

They applied to the Courts for writs to have the

striking workers' wages stopped at source for the outstanding debts. Before these cases could be heard the government intervened by appointing a Commission of Enquiry, consisting of two professors, to look into the problem of rents in the region.

By now the landlords were acting together effectively and aggressively. Almost all of them issued notices of substantial rent increases.

The Commission eventually granted increases of about half of the level claimed by the landlords.

Demonstrations

This had the unforeseen effect of bringing into the struggle all the other workers of Clydeside, who now found their rents increased viciously.

Because of this broadening of the struggle, when a number of rent strikers were arrested, there were mass demonstrations and these were backed up by total stoppages of work in the shipyards.

Under this pressure the Sheriff of Glasgow gave way and rejected the landlords' cases. It has sometimes been suggested that this decision was taken on secret instructions from the Cabinet who could not afford to allow any losses to the rate of production in the shipyards.

Obviously the situation was reaching a crisis and government action would be needed if an outbreak of revolutionary activity was to be avoided.

Taking timely advantage of this turning point, Maclean telegraphed Asquith, the Prime Minister, threatening a general strike of the whole Clydeside region if no permanent solution was made available.

Rent Act

The Cabinet gave way to the workers' demands and Lloyd George drew up a Rent Act which held all rents at prewar levels.

This Act began the system of legal limitations over private sector rents, which became a permanent feature of housing policy in Britain and has often been the centre of furious debate.

At the time it was undeniably an enormous victory for the working class and one of the best examples of reforms being forced on the British ruling class by direct action by the workers.

However, rent controls alone were not the main concern of the political leaders of the action.

They had been campaigning for many years for the introduction of council housing as the provider of rented accommodation for the working class.

High point

One of the leaders, Wheatley, was to become Minister of Health in the 1924 MacDonald government, and brought in the 1924 Housing Act which made possible the great expansion of council house building in the 1920s.

The rent strike of 1915

was the high point of the militancy of the housing campaigns in the Clydeside.

There was a further one day general strike against rent increases introduced in 1920, but by the time of Chamberlain's 1923 Housing Act, which lifted the controls over many rents, there was little or no active resistance.

Rent strikes were not to be an important feature of the political scene again until the early 1930s.



Leeds 1934

After the wave of militancy against the Clydeside rent increases of 1915 had gradually died away there was no important rent strike in Britain until 1934 when Leeds saw a fairly large outbreak.

The important point about the Leeds rent strike is that it was directed against a reforming Labour council.

The council had drawn up a large scale clearance and redevelopment scheme for the slum area in the city centre, which needed a large council house building programme to accommodate the displaced slum dwellers.

This in turn meant a substantial rise in the rates to finance the interest costs and running costs of the new housing.

Leeds Council saw a difficulty here. In the period before the slums were cleared and the new housing occupied, which would be some ten years or more, the ratepayers left in the slums would in effect be subsidising the Council house tenants who had already been rehoused.

Economic cost

Hostility to this situation threatened the whole of the city centre redevelopment scheme.

The solution that they came up with was to increase the rent of the council houses up to the actual economic cost, that is to eliminate the existing pattern of subsidies, and to replace them with a scheme of rent rebates.

Means test

The rebates would be subject to a means test, so that the better off tenants would be granted smaller rebates. Many tenants objected to the indignity of the means test, and in April 1934 there was a rent strike.

The council issued eviction notices and the strike



Glasgow at the turn of the century



Glasgow tenants on the march 1915



Hospital Street, Gorbals in Glasgow

LEEDS

East London after the Second World War.

lapsed rapidly, leaving a handful of organisers to fight case through the Courts, where they were eventually ten.

However, the Council's story was short lived, because they were heavily defeated in the next municipal elections.

New pattern

The Leeds case is not only important in itself, but also shows the emergence of a new pattern of tenant struggles.

The central question was that many of the tenants could not afford the rent increases; what was objected was the imposition of the means test.

The question from the Council's point of view was not balancing the rent accounts but making possible a new wave of council building and slum clearance.

It was this pattern of struggle in Birmingham in 1939 that led to a remarkable victory for the tenants. The situation was in many respects similar to the Leeds tenants.

The Labour Council had played dealing with the problem of large privately owned slum areas in the city centre until it was forced to take some decision about clearance and rehousing. The scale of its difficulties was substantial; there were, for example, over 10,000 cases on the waiting list for housing.

The Council drew up a tested rent rebate scheme similar to the Leeds

scheme, hoping that this would persuade a large number of better off tenants to vacate council housing and either buy or rent in the private sector.

They hoped to obtain an additional 5,000 units for letting to slum dwellers to allow for demolitions by this method.

The Communist Party began organising estate committees in opposition to the Council's plan during December 1938, bringing these together in marches and demonstrations, and eventually fusing them into the Birmingham Municipal Tenants Association in the following spring.

Ballot

Faced with the refusal of the council to alter its policy the tenants held a ballot on the question of a rent strike.

Out of a total of 49,000 tenants, 15,700 voted, of whom 14,438 were in favour of the proposed action. When the strike began on May Day, it was in fact supported by 11,000 tenants.

In the course of the struggle there were nightly meetings of estates committees who sent daily reports to a central coordinating committee.

To keep the tenants together there were regular bus trips from one estate to another.

Remarkably, the buses were hired from the Corporation for these solidarity excursions.

There is some doubt about whether the Birmingham

rent strike had any industrial supporting action from Council employees.

In his book 'Not a Penny on the Rent', MacDonald claims that there was a supporting strike in the Housing Department, but there is no reference to this action in any other accounts, or in the surviving issues of the strike bulletin.

Rent offices

What is certain is that industrial action played no role in the ultimate victory of the strike.

The Council was making progress in wearing down the strike by setting up secret rent offices where rent could be paid without the strike organisers being aware of it. This same tactic was used against the rent and rate strikes called by the Republicans in the occupied six counties of Ireland during the 1970s.

By the time the strike ended there were 7,000 still withholding the rent, but even this reduced number were causing great financial damage to the Council, and this was the main factor in forcing the Council to reconsider the scheme.

Victory

In mid-June the strikers were able to beat off attempts by police and bailiffs to arrest strike organisers, and this victory in physical conflict allowed the tenants to force the Council to negotiate.

Most accounts of the

battles on the Birmingham estates agree that the burden of fighting and picketing fell mainly upon the working class women, because the authorities planned most of their attacks during the working day.

A curious compromise solution was worked out to bring an end to the strike.

The Council agreed to withdraw the means test scheme while the tenants themselves promised to undertake the job of finding 'rich tenants' and persuading them voluntarily to leave their council dwellings in favour of people needing rehousing from the slum clearance scheme.

Slum clearance

Although the Birmingham rent strike can be regarded as a victory for the tenants in that it prevented the implementation of a scheme which the tenants found obnoxious, it does not serve as a valuable example of workers' direct intervention into policy making by Labour Councils, because the outbreak of the Second World War prevented either side having to carry out its promises.

Within a year or two the slum clearance programme, and more besides, was undertaken by Hitler's Luftwaffe, and the Council carried out what rehousing it could under emergency powers.

Support Walsall Conference call

Leaders of the rent strike now being supported by thousands of council tenants in Walsall are calling for a national conference of tenants' organisations.

The rent strike takes the form of withholding the £3.25 increase imposed by the Labour council. But council leaders have publicly

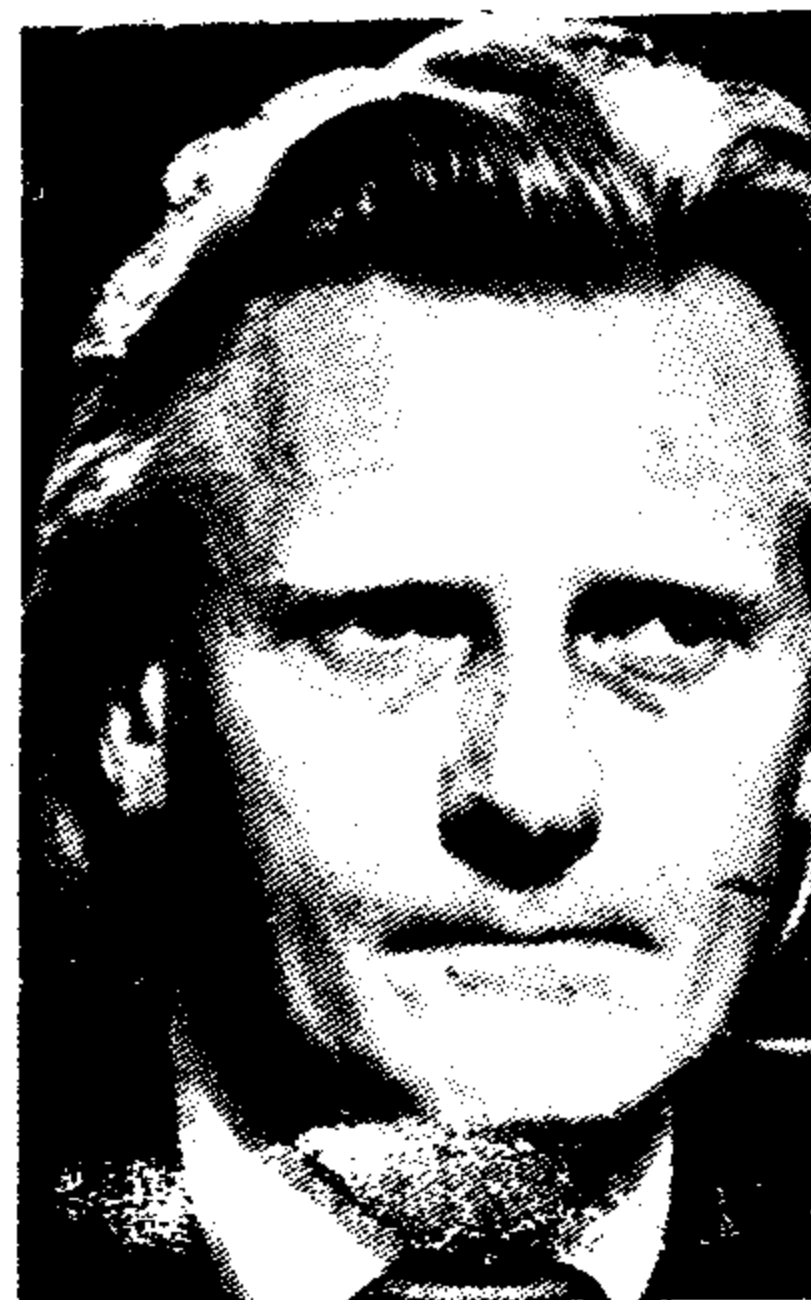
supported the action, claiming that it is only the danger of a Clay Cross-style victimisation that has held them back from defying Heseltine.

The Walsall Council House Tenants Association now claims growing support in the town—support increased by anger at high-handed council changes in the method of rent collection.

A 400-strong mass meet-

ing last weekend called on Labour's NEC to help organise a national conference on the rents issue.

While the Labour leaders are unlikely to be enthusiastic about such a prospect—having done nothing to fight the new Tory rent increases—the Walsall call should be welcomed by all socialists as an opportunity to drive forward the mobilisation of tenants.

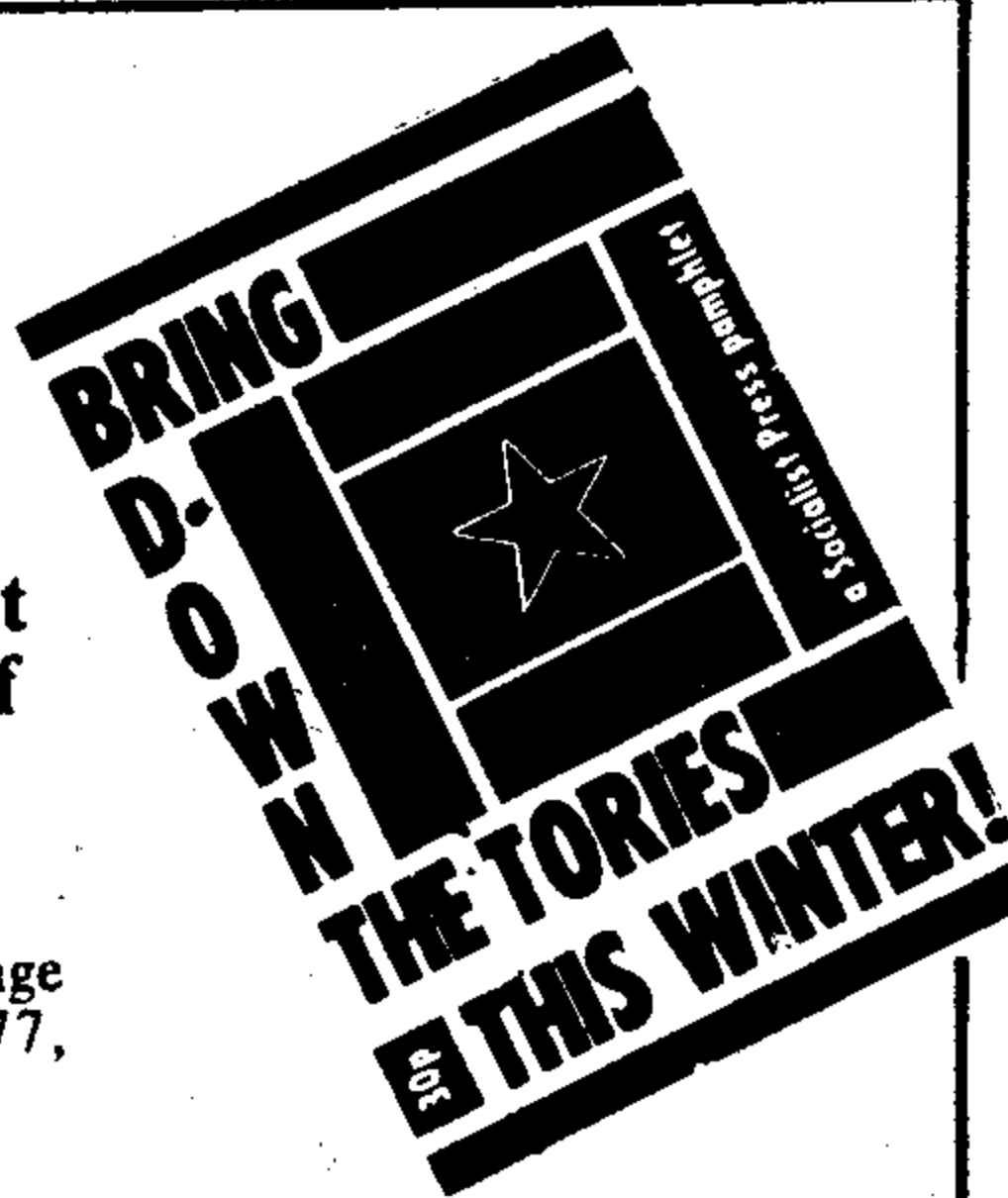


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Cynical and shady links of Social Democrats

By Terry Smith

Decked fittingly in patriotic red, white and blue, the Social Democratic Party set sail last month in a blaze of free media publicity. It now claims over 40,000 members.

But it is plain that the decision to launch the Party was no sudden whim, or fit of pique, on the part of Williams, Rodgers, Owen and Jenkins in the aftermath of their humiliating defeat at the Wembley conference.

The split had been discussed and planned in detail before the end of 1980.

A leaked internal document, probably written in late November by either Rodgers or Owen, has been published by *Labour Weekly* revealing the Social Democrats' strategy for a "clean break and the party launch" in the spring of 1981 regardless of the Wembley decision.

Free coverage

The document outlines the need to utilise the opportunity for endless free media coverage prior to and following the conference.

"... for every week we wait in February and March we lose momentum, lose the feeling we know where we are going and why, lose the justification of the Special Conference as the break point. We need therefore decisions early in January so that we escalate the significance of the Conference... and put the issue to the forefront of the public's mind, particularly between 1 January to 12 January when Parliament is not sitting."

Such timing is also regarded as ideal because it came before growing numbers of would-be defectors among the right wing PLP faced the embarrassment of reselection conferences in their constituencies, which might make the new party seem like "a home for rejects".

Other problems discussed in the document include how to handle Roy Jenkins' return from Brussels, since some of the Social Democrats' supporters understandably recognise him as:

"a liability, linked to the Liberal-Centre party concept and not a Social Democrat".

Harm identity

The author speculates on the possibility that the media might not be fully enthusiastic about the new Party, and that:

"those in the media who wish us ill will be only too happy to portray him (Jenkins) as the leader, sensing he will do harm to the identity of Social Democracy."

In their efforts to avoid this, the Social Democrats evolved their much-vaunted "collective leadership" structure.

And the document advocates that the new party should avoid overt links with David Steel and the Liberal Party until January 1982, although "private, personal contacts would, of course, continue (!) and be useful."

At this point of time of course Shirley Williams and Tom Bradley were both still on the Labour Party's NEC,



Rodgers and Owen planned split well in advance

and Williams was publicly denying as late as February that she was or had been planning to launch a new party.

The SDP's plans gathered most momentum however, in the aftermath of the miners' strike—at a point where the potential vulnerability of the Thatcher government to militant working class action had been sharply exposed.

Worried sections of capitalists and their assistants in the media turned eagerly towards the Social Democrats as a means of offering a possible Parliamentary coalition partner to a beleaguered Tory government—and as a possible means of splitting the Labour vote in the next General Election.

Lavish resources were provided for endless interviews and "news" coverage as the Social Democrats limbered up prior to the official party launch.

The political basis for this is also contained within the leaked document.

The anonymous "Gangster" voices the view that:

"... the unacceptability of allowing Britain to have after 25 years a further ten years of bad government outweigh the real danger that splitting the left could allow the right a sustained period of government, longer than the 13 years between 1951 and 1964. The question then is how to split, timing is a tactical decision ..."

Tory rule

The Social Democrats therefore quite easily embrace the prospect that their split could precipitate 13 years of Tory rule.

And with precisely this

goal in mind, their cause drew in the backing of the press barons and many of the more astute sections of the capitalist class and their propagandists.

Nor is it the first time that the right wing has looked to Rodgers and his right wing Labourite cronies as a stalking horse for their anti-socialist politics.

Rodgers in particular was spotted in the late 1950s as a useful organiser for extreme right wing causes within the Labour Party.

His talents came to light in a period in which many of Labour's leading right wingers had become involved with CIA-backed anti-communist intellectual front organisations.

CIA-backed

In the late 1950s Hugh Gaitskell, Anthony Crosland and Denis Healey were among those attending functions of the CIA-sponsored "Congress for Cultural Freedom".

Gaitskell and Healey also went as guests of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands to attend sessions of the "Bildberg Group", organised by an influential American, Joseph Reiting, who also arranged US Marshall Aid funding for the European Movement.

Dick Taverne, the renegade Lincoln Labourite, was also both a leading figure in the Bilderberg Group and an active member of the European Parliament.

Sponsorship for the European Movement also came from the nefarious "American Committee for a United Europe", whose members included the former head of the CIA's forerunner, the OSS: Lucius D. Clay, a founder of Radio

Free Europe; and CIA men Allen Dulles and Tom Braden.

While the living was easy for the Labourite lured onto such binges, the CIA funds were put to good use. Gaitskell, together with his cabal of right wingers including Roy Jenkins, Crosland and Douglas Jay, took the occasion of Labour's electoral defeat in 1959 to launch a fight to delete Clause IV—the call for nationalisation—from Labour's constitution.

A mysteriously-financed opinion poll was commissioned to back up a propaganda campaign against nationalisation. As the Tory press joined in, so did William Rodgers, who as General Secretary of the Fabian Society began to rally support for Gaitskell.

But the 1960 Labour conference registered a body blow to their campaign. An increasingly militant working class had made its impact even on the bureaucratic

leadership of the trade unions—and block votes were cast to defeat Gaitskell not only on the Clause IV issue but also on the issue of nuclear weapons with the endorsement of a call for unilateral disarmament and a break from NATO.

Gaitskell declared that he would "fight, fight and fight again" against socialist policies. He was backed by the Tory press—and by William Rodgers and a gang of right wingers.

Reactionary interests chipped in willingly. A large sum of money from an "anonymous" source enabled Rodgers to set up an office and a full time staff for his "Campaign for Democratic Socialism".

Local organisers were hired, with travelling expenses, lavishly printed pamphlets and boundless supplies of the CDS Manifesto. A regular bulletin was posted free of charge to a huge list of ward secretaries and party members.



Jenkins: recognised as a liability

In the event the unilateral policy on nuclear weapons was overturned by the block vote in 1961—while the unresolved Clause IV issue was left on one side, and successive Labour leaders opted simply to ignore it (together with decisions of conference with which they disagree).

But Rodgers' campaign served to stiffen the core of Labour's extreme right wing in preparation for what was to be their return to government in 1964.

George Brown, Denis Healey, Crosland and Roy Jenkins were to be leading figures in the Wilson cabinet, while Rodgers himself had emerged as a leading figure with influential contacts in the media and elsewhere.

To this day Social Democrats and their allies continue to be involved in shady anti-Communist front organisations.

SDP MPs Mike Thomas and Neville Sandelson for instance, together with Dick Taverne and Social Democratic Alliance leaders Stephen Haseler and Douglas Eden are all members of the so-called "Campaign for a Free World", dozens of whose members have a history of involvement with CIA-backed "cultural" fronts and think tanks.

Their fellow members include Sir James Goldsmith, Peregrine Worsethorpe, Robert Moss, Paul Johnson—and EETPU leader Frank Chapple!

Haseler's connections to the ultra-right are even more unambiguous. For over five years he has been closely connected to the Heritage Foundation in the USA, which is funded with help from the boss of the union-busting Coors Brewery, and is directly associated with

Ronald Reagan's election campaign and political advisors.

Mike Thomas and Wigglesworth's brush with CIA front organisations began when as executive members of the National Union of Students they opposed to the last attempt to disaffiliate from the CIA-funded International Student Conference in 1960s.

Only when the body hopelessly exposed and credited did the NUS leave the ISC.

David Owen, on other hand has, together with Tom Bradley William Rodgers remains a member of the so-called Labour Committee Transatlantic Understanding a NATO-funded front organisation whose members include ubiquitous Frank Chapple and which issues a bulletin to British trade union journals.

Rockefeller

And only last month Owen visited the USA as a member of the Trilateral Commission.

The Trilateral Commission was set up on initiative of a group of leading American capitalists headed by multi-millionaire David Rockefeller.

Its initial recruits were from the US bourgeoisie and its immediate team of ideologists. But it was expanded to draw in highly picked reactionaries from Europe and from Japan (hence the title Trilateral).

Anti-communist drive provided by cold war warriors such as Henry Kissinger Zbigniew Brzezinski. And the list of invited guests pro-imperialist US union leaders.

Owen brings up the case for the British Social Democrats, together with fellow Labourite Evan Luard.

The influence of the Trilateral Commission waned somewhat with passing of the Carter administration in the US—which one point boasted no more than 16 TC members in its ranks.

Stabilise

But it continues to debate the best strategies for the defence and stabilisation of imperialist rule.

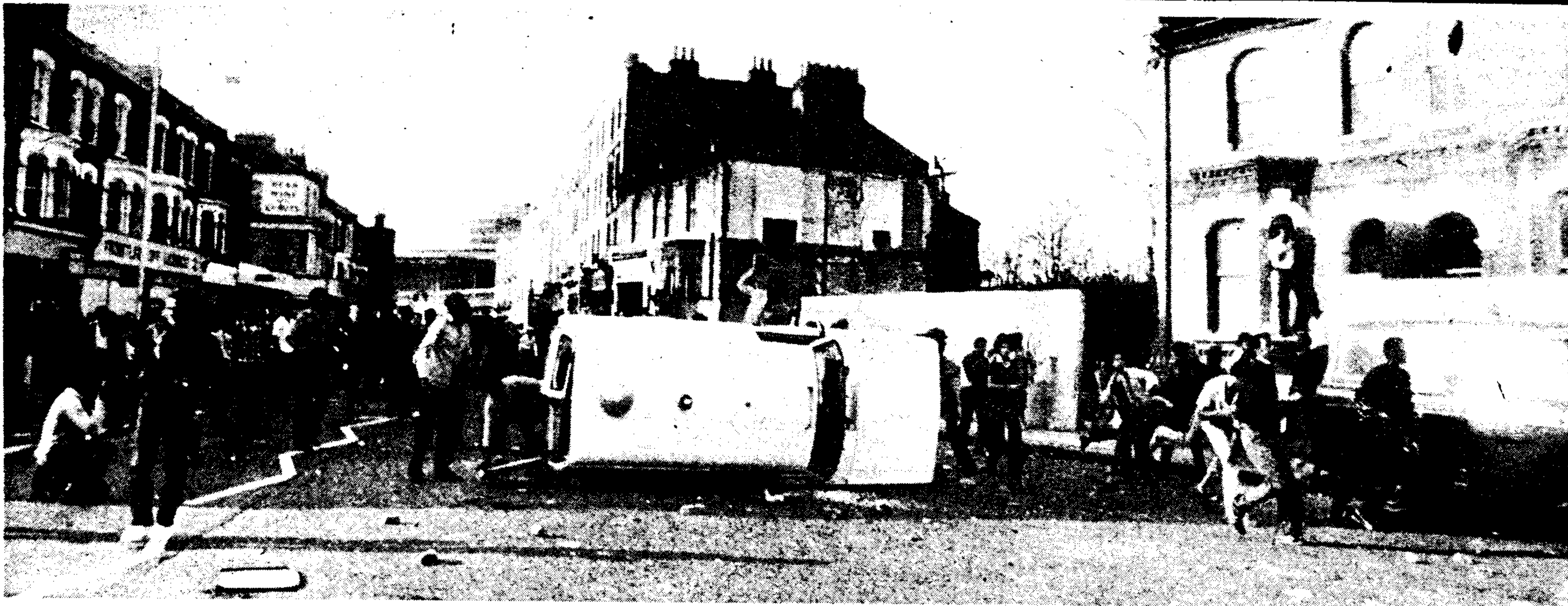
Significantly a 1975 study on "The Government of Democracy" laments the "excessive demands" being raised in "democratic" count leading to a crisis of political authority.

"The effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and involvement on the part of some individuals and groups".

Owen plainly upholds such positions today in launching of the SDP.

By turning to mobilise the anti-working class practices of well-heeled layers of the middle class in their campaign to keep Labour out of office and the right wing SDP make a virtue of "apathy" of sections of Labour rank and file.

Their reactionary enterprise will no doubt continue to attract the support of Trilateralists, cold warriors the CIA and the ERM media—not to mention the eager backing of American Express!



Youth build a barricade against police attack



Police chief McNe

Cops out of Brixton!

By Henry Phillips

Brixton continues "under an army of occupation". Steps are being taken "to set up the same apparatus as in concentration camps."

The dramatic words are not those of any "outside extremist" but of the leader of Lambeth council, Ted Knight.

His angry speech was made at the first major public meeting to be held in Brixton since the uprising against the police on April 11 and 12.

The meeting was called by the Labour Party Young Socialists and was attended by 400 people, about equal numbers of black and white and drew together a very broad political and social cross section of the people of Brixton.

The large attendance at the meeting and its militant atmosphere expressed the near insurrectionary atmosphere which the police occupation of Brixton has provoked.

Many experiences of this occupation were brought into the meeting by contributions from the floor (for which too little time was allowed): the Operation Swamp 81 in which the police had raided many

Brixton homes in the two weeks before the uprising and questioned 1,000 people in a week; the possible link between the police and the fascists; the fact that of over 200 arrested the Defence Committee could still only account for the whereabouts of 80.

Despite these and other accounts of the repression of black people, there was in the meeting, as there had been in the rioting on the streets, a complete absence of racial hostility.

Provocative

The anger of both blacks and whites remained focussed on the vast and provocative police presence.

One of the most vocally supported demands of the meeting was for the complete withdrawal of the police from the area and the dropping of all the charges.

Ted Knight told of the arrogant reply of the chief of police to his own demand for the withdrawal of the police. The commander claimed that by his saturation policing he had "returned the area to normal".

Ted Knight also reported on his unsuccessful request to Heseltine for government

money to repair the damage. Heseltine had said: "My cabinet colleagues don't like you or Lambeth and they wouldn't trust you with any money"; the cabinet "would have me certified if I gave you any money".

Knight put the blame for Lambeth's problems on the Tories. "They're responsible. The system's responsible." His answer was for a political fight to organise and mobilise the people of Lambeth and to link them with mobilised people elsewhere, especially in inner city areas.

The fight must also be organised in the Labour Party to get rid of people like Roy Hattersley who had supported the police presence. "People like that shouldn't be allowed to lead the labour movement... We have to see that the Labour Party represents the working class."

Not answerable

Returning to the question of the police, Knight said that "we want to break the Metropolitan Police because it is no longer answerable to anyone but itself."

"We don't want a little watch committee... we

want a police force answerable to the elected representatives of the labour movement."

And concluding, in answer to a question, Knight said "We won't vote out capitalists and exploiters. We can only throw them out physically. We are revolutionaries."

Workers' inquiry

Like virtually the whole meeting Knight expressed himself in favour of a labour movement inquiry into the Brixton events.

Only John Tilley, the Lambeth Central MP thought that, as well, there should be cooperation with the old, white, male judge Scarman "or it will be used against us". He got no support in the meeting for this position.

If the speeches made at this meeting were to be taken seriously by the large and expectant audience then they would have high expectations of the Lambeth Labour Party.

It is crucially important that these expectations should be fulfilled and not betrayed.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that the meeting missed the opportunity to do three

things which are essential if the Brixton uprising is to grow into a successful political movement against oppression rather than be dissipated into despair and disillusion.

The first thing is that concrete steps should be taken at once to organise a labour movement and black movement public inquiry.

The meeting approved a resolution to that effect and launched a petition in favour of it but failed to take further steps which are needed at once.

Second, the organisers of the meeting made no call for a demonstration or any further mass action against the police occupation of Brixton. They accepted the cancellation of the proposed Easter Sunday rally by Rudi Narayan and the other leaders of the Brixton Defence Committee under intimidatory threats from the police.

Divisions

And third, no concrete steps were launched to break down the black/white organisational division of Lambeth politics. Given the composition of the audience something could have been done towards this urgent aim.

Also the meeting failed to allow enough time for floor discussion, especially of the next steps and some efforts to intervene on this were cut down with unnecessary bureaucracy from the platform.

But these errors and missed opportunities are not enough to dampen the

militant resistance shown by the attendance.

It is now the urgent task of socialists in the Lambeth labour and black movements to see that that resistance is channelled into a massive political fight against Thatcher and her police.



Face to face with the law

Benn backs fight to defend labour movement press

By Sean Matgamna

The WRP's legal persecution of Socialist Organiser continues.

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

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

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

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

inserts.

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

But everything is not going well for the WRP. The Leveller magazine reprinted one of the two allegedly libellous sentences from Socialist Organiser. The Observer last Sunday repeated the essential points and words of the same allegedly libellous paragraph.

Momentum

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

Meanwhile SO's drive for political and financial support is gaining momentum. We got very widespread support at the National Union

of Journalists conference. A lobby of SO and Socialist Press supporters outside the Equity conference met with a lot of sympathy from Equity left wingers, despite the strong influence of the WRP in that union.

Organisations

A number of labour movement organisations, including the BL Works Committee at Leyland, Lancashire, have promised or sent donations (though not enough unfortunately!) Many comrades of Socialist Organiser have sent donations too (again, not enough!).

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

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

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

Raise money for SO. Write to Socialist Challenge, Socialist Worker and Militant asking them to take a stand.

Defend the free labour movement press!

Signatories so far of the appeal 'A Labour Inquiry, not the Courts' include: Tony Benn MP, Reg Race MP, Ernie Roberts MP, Dennis Skinner MP, Paul Moore, Neil Turner, Matthew Warburton (Lambeth Labour councillors), Dick North, Vanessa Wiseman, Jackie North, Hilary Tarr, John Esterson (victimised members of Lambeth

NUT), John East (Acting President, Lambeth NUT), Wendy Hewing (vice-president, Lambeth NUT), Chris Sutton (secretary, Lambeth Trades Union Council), Graham Norwood, Harry Stannard.

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

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

38 members at the Equity annual general meeting.

Victor Schonfield, Vladimir Derer, Peter Willsman, Vera Derer (Campaign for Labour Party Democracy), Jon Lansman (secretary, Rank and File Mobilising Committee), Rav Apps (Brighton Kempston CLP), Tony Banks

(Tooting CLP), Ken Livingstone (Greater London Council), Chris Mullin (Vauxhall CLP), Nigel Stanley, John Denham, Graham Bash (Ilford South CLP), Pat Kane, Keith Veness (Islington Central CLP), Amanda Leon (Southwark NUT), Bernard Reagan (Westminster NUT), John Ford (Deptford CLP) and 62 others.

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No end yet to recession

Eleventh hour in fight for print unity

By Peter McIntyre

After the Lord Mayor's Show—the dustcart.

Even before echoes from rhetoric about print unity have died away from the National Union of Journalists' conference earlier this month, the grim reality of print disunity is being rammed down the throat of the union's members.

NUJ General Secretary Ken Ashton, assured the journalists' union that NGA leader Joe Wade had asked for a declaration of intent, and on the strength of that won a 12 month perspective towards fusion of the two unions.

But fusion talks, bureaucrat-style, mean that you do not hinder their progress with embarrassing questions about picket lines.

Two crucial disputes have brought flat refusals of support from NGA officials.

At Pergamon Press in Oxford the same NGA official who has been promising NUJ officials the earth has now declared that NGA members are not entitled to black journalists' work.

He claimed that the union could not bear the

cost of support if Robert Maxwell took retaliatory action against NGA members.

Yet Maxwell's attack on the right to strike and the right to any independent unions in his company will prove fatal to NGA members if it succeeds.

The struggle against the closure of the Camden Journal, which now encompasses strike action by journalists in three centres in the Midlands and at two centres in Wales is also being squeezed of life by the NGA instructions to members to 'work normally'—by which they mean carry on scabbing.

The Save the Camden Journal paper being run by strikers in London has been receiving regular advertisements of support from the London Regional Council of SOGAT and from the NGA, but in reality both unions have abandoned the sacked workers to their fate.

There can be no moves towards print unity while the print unions, in dispute



Fighting for NGA support: journalists picket gates in their last pay dispute

after dispute, take the side of the employers. Unity between general secretaries is of no benefit to members.

Like Olympian gods the NGA officials have now offered to convene a meeting

with the employers for the NUJ and sit on the sidelines.

The NUJ, which has fought the closure with tenacity and has called out provincial members in London on a series of rolling

one day strikes, has had no choice but to accept the NGA offer in the vain hope of demonstrating that only supporting action will win the day.

The NGA on the other hand will use the talks to

twist the NUJ's arms to accept simply a higher rate of redundancy pay.

In both disputes members have now been sacked for standing up to vicious managements. The print unions, which have been organising meetings on the union-busting Employment Act and trumpeting verbal opposition to it are in practice helping its provisions to be implemented.

Selling jobs

This attitude will bring down disaster on their own members.

Even while they are refusing to support the NUJ's fight against Robert Maxwell in Oxford, the leaders of all the print unions are busy selling their members' jobs throughout BPC which Maxwell has just bought.

While thousands of their own members are being dumped on the scrap heap the small flames of a real struggle against the employers are an embarrassing and dangerous accusation.

That is why they seek to smother them.

Claims from both employers and the government that the recession is now "flattening out" should not fool workers into thinking things will get any better.

The CBI has deliberately avoided using the term "bottoming out", since all the figures indicate is that the rate of actual decline has slackened. There is still no sign of any upturn.

The small rise in industrial production in February was accompanied by a continued surge of closures and redundancies and further pressure to hold down wages.

Insofar as retail sales and production do begin to pick up once again it seems certain that employers who have found it impossible to raise prices in a plunging market will all hasten to whack in price rises to make good their losses—producing a huge leap in inflation.

And increased production does not necessarily mean increased employment—since in every industry management are pursuing an all-out drive for speed-up, new technology and rationalisation designed to maximise the exploitation of the workforce.

It is of course not impossible that the present generalised capitalist recession could find room for periodic upturns.

But what is excluded is that the working class should benefit.

The only way jobs and living standards can be secured is through the establishment of a planned, socialist economy. And neither the CBI nor Thatcher is forecasting that!

Pergamon strike -at the sharp end

Trade union support for the six week-old strike by NUJ members at Pergamon Press, Oxford, has continued to grow.

The nine NUJ members were sacked two days after walking out on official strike in pursuit of an improved house agreement.

24 NUJ branches and chapels have now provided financial support and donations have also come from TGWU branches. TGWU General Secretary Moss Evans has called on Midland branches to support the Pergamon strike and respect the picket line.

In London the Fleet Street branch of the AUEW has sent a donation and message of support. Donations have come from Fleet Street journalists in the Central London NUJ Branch, and the Times NUJ chapel has written a letter of protest to Pergamon's union-busting "socialist" owner Robert Maxwell—with a copy to Labour Weekly.

Maxwell is—scandalously—a member of ASTMS. But last week his own union branch, the Oxford General branch of ASTMS voted to support the strike, following the earlier support voted by the Oxford Publishing and Oxford Health Service

branches. Repeated attempts within ASTMS to challenge the right of Maxwell, as a notorious anti-union employer, to remain in the union, have so far all been blocked by Assistant General Secretary Muriel Turner.

But it is plain that this fight must now be stepped up in order to isolate Maxwell from his influential cronies in the top layers of the trade union and Labour bureaucracy.

Progress

Within the Labour Party, too, the moves to isolate Maxwell are making progress. Party leader Michael Foot has declared support for the strike and agreed to bring pressure to bear on Maxwell.

And even more embarrassingly for both Maxwell and his supporters in the Oxford City Labour Party, a meeting of the GC—of which Maxwell is a member—last Monday voted with none against to support the Pergamon strike—and to donate £20 to the strike fund!

But the major problem in the dispute remains the refusal of print union leaders to give official backing to this strike—which is fundamental to the long-term

defence of jobs and union rights at Pergamon.

Even while the strike is on, new computerised equipment is being installed in the Headington offices that could potentially destroy jobs of NGA members at Pergamon.

One of the outstanding demands in the NUJ house agreement is a clause restricting the introduction of new technology.

Yet NGA officials have declared that they will give no support to the strike and have rejected appeals that their members should black work on the journals normally produced by the victimised strikers.

This example of union leaders fiddling while their members' jobs burn is echoed by SOGAT. Oxford branch secretary Beal has refused to lift a finger to prevent SOGAT drivers from another Maxwell plant—Express Litho in Cowley—crossing NUJ picket lines to deliver scab supplies to the strike-bound Headington office.

Call the police

And when strikers asked for the opportunity to address a SOGAT committee meeting, Beal refused and threatened to call the police against any attempt to lobby the committee members!

Both SOGAT and NGA officials are plainly seeking to minimise the losses among their own membership in Maxwell's savage redundancy programme, involving the loss of 2,500 jobs in BPC.

They are obviously prepared to sacrifice nine NUJ members and the future of the 70-strong NGA chapel at Pergamon in the hopes of persuading Maxwell that they are "reliable" partners in his efforts to speed up and strip down the BPC workforce.

This cynical stitch-up must be exposed and fought. The scabbing between print unions must be brought to an end if the employers' offensive is to be driven back. The Pergamon strike emerges as crucial in this fight.

We urge readers to seek every means to mobilise concrete support—to approach militants in the print unions and find ways to force the NGA into active solidarity.

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

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STALINISTS AID NUT CARVE-UP

The annual conference of the National Union of Teachers is possibly one of the less likely places to find the politics of the Communist Party dominant.

Recent events inside the NUT, notably the witch-hunt of the left in Lambeth (which was at crucial points spearheaded by the CP) have however made the role of the Stalinists as the major prop of the right wing totally central to this year's conference at Eastbourne.

The first day of the conference began with the *Morning Star* boasting an exclusive article by NUT President Jack Chambers. And it then proceeded with the same Chambers orchestrating the carve-up of union democracy and the assault on the left, amidst mounting anger from delegates.

The flashpoint was an emergency motion from the Executive. The motion read: "Conference welcomes the determination of the officers of the union to protect the membership against the actions of those who show contempt for the union's rules and procedures and who undermine the

policies and objectives of the union as agreed by annual conference."

This was a thinly-veiled declaration of war on the left in the NUT. In fact it is the NUT Executive who have shown contempt for union policy throughout the last year.

They have refused to organise any action whatever against the cuts. It is precisely to prevent a backlash developing in the union against their own backsliding that the NUT leaders mounted the witch-hunt in Lambeth.

Support

In moving the suspension of standing orders to take the motion, Des Winters for the Executive said the officers needed to know they have the support of the membership.

In fact what they want is a licence for a pogrom of the left.

Chambers ruled from the chair that no speaker could be taken against the motion for suspending standing orders, since no speakers' cards had been received.

When this was challenged from the floor by mem-

bers of the Croydon association who had put in a speakers' card Chambers claimed that it had been 'lost' and was therefore not valid!

Worse to come

If this made delegates wonder about democracy in the NUT, worse was to come.

When the suspension of standing orders was put to the vote there was a clear split vote—with nowhere near the necessary two-thirds majority. Chambers, however, ruled the motion "carried".

Amidst uproar, delegates immediately rose for the card vote. Challenged from the floor by Rother Valley over the absence of a two-thirds majority, Chambers then ruled that there would be no card vote, that the motion was declared carried and would be put on Monday.

Out of order

He then proceeded to rule out of order an emergency motion from the Lambeth association supporting the disciplined ILTA 8 and

urging support for the reinstatement of the victimised Lambeth branch officers.

Chambers claimed that conference could not overturn disciplinary committee hearings.

When challenged from the floor that conference was the highest body of the union, making the union's policy, he ruled the speaker out of order, and bureaucratically moved next business.

This type of bureaucratic carve-up by the union leadership—aided and abetted by the CP—flies clearly in the face of the movement to the left within the NUT at local level.

This movement was shown in the voting on disarmament where the NUT rejected the urgings of the Executive, and for the first time came out against the bomb and in favour of disarmament.

Again, however, the right wing and the CP conspired to prevent any of the amendments from the left (calling for affiliation to CND) from being taken.

The NUT leadership are clearly determined to use their control of action under Rule 8 and their powers to interpret the rules in order

to physically smash the growing left forces in the NUT, who now present an alternative pole to the Executive's retreats on cuts and wages.

NUT members must retaliate by taking up now the fight for union democracy, breaking the stranglehold of Rule 8, and opening the way for action in defence of jobs and services.

Immediately, support must be built for the Haringey initiative in calling a conference on union democracy and the fight against the cuts.

This must be used to build an alternative leadership in NUT which can defeat the witch-hunters who refuse to fight the Tories.

BACKING FOR BENN

THE Yorkshire NUM have moved an amendment to a Derbyshire conference resolution on the election of the Labour Party leadership.

Their amendment calls on the NUM to fight to uphold January's Wembley Conference decision on the method of elections and to support Benn against Healey.



Nursery occupiers dig in

Parents, children and supporters from Beal St. Play Centre lobbied County Hall last Wednesday in their battle to keep the play centre open.

Then we crowded into the committee room to hear the case discussed by the Social Services Committee.

Brian Rice, director of Social Services, presented the case for a self-help scheme and warned that if parents did not agree to this they would take legal action to evict the occupiers.

The two Labour councillors argued for it to stay on as before with two qualified staff but this was voted down by the Tory majority on the committee.

The parents who attended the meeting seem to be unanimous in the view that attending the meeting had been very instructive in how decisions were made.

Statements by the Tory majority underlined their philosophy:

"We do far too much for these people. Let them do it for themselves and then in six months time they'll look back with pride at what they've achieved."

The voting was a farce. The chairman didn't know which was the proposal and which the amendment. The Tory councillors were nudging each other to put their hands up to vote; one councillor asked "what have we just voted on" and another walked in half way through and was heard to say "I've just been asleep. What's happening? What day is it?"

The agenda contains its usual list of motions on import controls, which of course have the full support of the leadership. But there is not a single motion on women's rights, equal pay or equal opportunities. One motion on workplace nurseries provides the only discussion of the problems faced by women.

Yet for the first time the conference itself will have a creche. A big step forward over previous years when conference literature referred throughout to "delegates and their wives".

There are eleven resolutions on Ireland. This is more than usual, but not many given the large membership the TGWU has in the six counties. Four of them call for Troops Out—and of those, three are from the Oxford area.

An amendment from the 5/293 branch refers to the success of Bobby Sands in the Fermanagh by-election and points to his 30,000 votes as proof of the popular support for the anti-imperialist struggle in the republican community.

There are only ten resolutions on cuts in public expenditure, and only three of them all from the Oxford area call for occupations to defend jobs and call for TGWU support for councils who refuse to implement the cuts or put up rents or rates.

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The following day, no doubt to further the campaign for self-help, the director arranged with the *Leicester Mercury* to send parents to visit a self-help nursery to see how it is done and selected the Phoenix Nursery in Nottingham.

A year ago this Social Services nursery also faced closure by a Tory council and after parents mounted a huge campaign were offered the building and £8,000 to run it themselves.

Beal Street occupiers include members of Leicester Nursery Campaign who had previously forged strong links with Nottingham and who had together with Oxford and Wandsworth produced the booklet "Nurseries: How and Why to Fight for Them" which has proved invaluable for the smooth running of the Beal St. occupation.

Link maintained

This link has been continued through the National Child Care Campaign. So the *Mercury* didn't quite get the story they'd expected. The parents/staff at the Phoenix made it clear that self help was only a temporary measure until the local elections in May when almost certainly a Labour majority will be returned. The Labour Party is already pledged to financing and staffing this nursery as it was previously.

In fact other Nottingham campaigners also said that they would have occupied if they'd had the same support and didn't think we were demanding enough staff.

Although no summons has yet been served, it seems certain that the council has already taken steps towards a court order.

With the elections so close it is difficult to say whether or not they will risk the bad publicity that would surround an eviction.

The question now for Beal Street occupiers is to consolidate trade union, Labour Party and community support into direct action to prevent an eviction.

Messages of support and donations to the occupation fund should be sent to: Beal Street Occupation Committee, 1 Pegasus Close, Leicester.

New opposition needed

The 442 motions on the agenda of the TGWU 29th Biennial Delegate Conference (Brighton, June 22-26) provide enough fighting policies to produce a strategy to defend the working class against the Tory government.

Unfortunately such a strategy is not likely to emerge from the conference unless an effective opposition to the platform can be developed in support of the key left wing motions.

If the politics of the delegates reflects those of the motions sent in by the branches, there is little sign of any significant political development in the union over the last year to the left of the Communist Party—who have a very cosy relationship with the Moss Evans leadership.

Some important motions however could gain wide

in TGWU



Evans

support in the conference.

An amendment to the General Executive Council motion on support for the Labour Party has been submitted by the 5/293 (BL

Cowley Assembly Plant) branch, which calls upon the TGWU to support Benn in the election for deputy leader.

This is contrary to the present position of Evans and Kitson and could prove decisive in the leadership election itself.

The left vote and speeches of the TGWU at the Labour Party Special Conference in January have produced a crop of motions on the democratic control of the block vote.

Most of them are from the right wing who suddenly object to the bureaucratic use of the block vote when it goes against them.

But it will provide an important debate on how block votes should be democratically controlled.

Of the 33 motions on pay policy, 16 call for free collective bargaining and two for a prices and incomes policy. Three motions call for cost of living clauses—only half as many as two years ago when the policy was the subject of a major debate.

There are 35 motions on unemployment, which is surprisingly few, given the mass unemployment created by the Tories and its effect on reducing TGWU membership to well below the 2 million mark.

Several motions call for a General Strike to bring down the Tories, for the union to stop selling jobs and one for sit-in strikes.

There are 34 motions against nuclear weapons, 14 of them calling on the TGWU to maintain its policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

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Strike for march

Liverpool Trades Council are calling for a city-wide strike on May 1, the day the Peoples' March starts on its way to London.

This class action in Liverpool, like that planned for Sheffield, is very important. It is important because the march itself is gathering massive support and it is clear that not only will the march have more than 1,000 participants, but the final day of the march, Sunday 31 May, will be one of the biggest demonstrations in history.

All over the contry support committees are organising, not only in the towns and cities on the route.

The response is tremendous, particularly from the unemployed. It is even getting civic receptions from some Labour councils.

Opposed to strikes

Until now the policy of the Communist Party has been, according to EC member Peter Carter, to oppose strikes since they fear that they would antagonise the churches that are supporting the march.

It is clear that the churchmen and Stalinists would like the march to be a moral protest as would the march organisers who have called on the government to change its policy rather than fight for action to kick them

out. In Oxford, the CP on the support committee opposed the support committee participating in the Trades Council's May Day March—because they objected to the slogan "Kick the Tories Out".

The Oxford organising committee is going for a local Day of Action on May 27 with a march and rally in the Town Hall and activities during the day.

The leaflets for these activities oppose redundancies, compulsory and "voluntary", and calls for local actions in defence of jobs. But they too avoid any call to kick out the Tories.

Skilled men end strike

The 600 toolmakers and millwrights at the British Leyland Cowley Body Plant voted overwhelmingly to return to work last Tuesday.

This came as no surprise as they had an executive instruction to do so and the District Secretary, Malcolm Young, and convenor Roy Fraser, both recommended a return.

The mass meeting voted to end the strike but institute a work to rule. The issue is demarcation and the

members are refusing to learn another job, or teach others their jobs.

An indication of the attitude of the leadership of the AUEW came in the statement of executive member Ken Cure in reply to the toolmakers claim:

"They want assurances which no firm could give in a recession. Not even the blue chip companies will give guarantees of no redundancies."

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Longbridge: new sell-out RIGGED 'INQUIRY' WON'T REINSTATE THE EIGHT!



Strike now to stop Edwardes!

SOCIALIST PRESS ★

Extend civil service strikes

Yet again last week the half million unionised workers in the civil service gave a clear answer to the latest example of government provocation.

With the dispute in its sixth week Thatcher decided to deploy the navy as a strike-breaking force to refit the Polaris nuclear submarine at Faslane, where key civil servants have been on indefinite strike since March 9.

The following day every area of the government machine was paralysed as over 400,000 workers walked out.

The key demand must now be to extend the periods of all out strike action.

Rank and file members are becoming more and more conscious of the limitations of half-day and one-day protests.

They can see that the Tories are unlikely to be moved by such limited walk-outs or by the campaign of selective indefinite strikes.

If the leadership of the nine civil service unions does not call widespread all out action within the next two weeks then there must be a clear danger of demoralisation setting in.

This would obviously create ideal conditions for the bureaucracy to sell out the fight by accepting the 7% in return for vague promises of future pay agreements.

One of the major effects of the pay campaign so far has been the massive increase in confidence shown by the membership in areas of the civil service trade unions not normally known for their militancy—the IRSF (Inland Revenue Staff Federation) is probably the prime example.

The lessons of the campaign so far have hit home to a whole new layer of activists and young low-paid workers.

Well established groupings such as the Broad Left in the CPSA must seek to build permanent links with militants in the other unions and fight to draw in fresh forces.

This is particularly important at the moment with the CPSA (the largest union) moving into the annual election period.

Ken Thomas, the General Secretary of the CPSA, has already made an abject plea to all members to suppress any criticism of the union's right wing leadership whilst the pay campaign is on. This talk of sham "unity" must be firmly rejected.

Broad Left speakers at branch meetings over the next two weeks must fight to expose the inadequacies of leadership shown up in the pay campaign so far.

Kick out the right wing! Fight to extend the strikes!

No sell-out on 15%!



HANDS OFF EL SALVADOR!

News is emerging of a fresh massacre carried out by the military junta in El Salvador.

Over 1500 refugees—including 600 children as well as old people—were fleeing towards the Honduran

border to escape the "cleaning operations" being carried out by the Salvadorean army.

They sought shelter in caves known as 'La Pintada' between the two municipalities of Yaruleta and Santa Elena.

But when the Army received reports of people hiding in the caves they immediately surrounded them and pumped in poison gas. Anyone trying to escape was shot. All 1,500 men, women and children were killed.

This is a small taste of

the real character of the brutal regime propped up by huge economic and military aid from Reagan's US administration, with the eager backing of the Thatcher government.

The civilian head of the junta, Duarte, has estimated that some 300,000 killings may be necessary to "pacify" El Salvador by crushing the militant resistance of the working class and rural poor.

The Salvadorean armed forces have been able to count on growing US military support in setting

about this slaughter.

American "advisors" including teams of the psychopathic Green Berets have been playing an increasingly prominent role in moves to defeat the left wing guerrilla forces fighting under the banner of the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

The latest US tactic is the so-called 'Operation Herod', which involves the creation of a free fire zone down the entire width of the country. Villages in the zone are to be burned to the ground and anyone who resists gunned

down.

In the towns, the right wing murder squads under the protection of the junta continue to slaughter up to a thousand workers and left wingers every month.

Yet the junta has been unable to cow the resistance of the masses. And more and more capitalist governments and social democratic leaders in Europe are now attempting to persuade the Reagan regime to abandon its military intervention and instead seek a political agreement with the bourgeois leaders of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR).

It is vital that the British working class plays its role in opposing imperialist repression in El Salvador, which is firmly rejecting any attempt to pressurise the masses of Salvador into a political compromise.

*US hands off El Salvador!

*Support for revolutionary struggles throughout Central America.

*Demand blacking strikes and all other necessary action to halt arms aid to the junta!

*Down with the Duarte dictatorship!

*For a workers' and peasants' government in El Salvador!

SPECIAL FUND

After a strong start to the £2,500 Special Fund, only £45 arrived last week. But it was still enough to take us to our first £1,000. In fact the total stands at £1012.00 and that means we have £1488 to find between now and the start of the WSL International

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Derry Day of Action

Three thousand workers supported the Derry march in support of the hunger strikers on Wednesday 15 April.

The march was part of an Industrial Day of Action in which several hundred workers walked out of factories, shops and other workplaces to join the march.

Among the workplaces involved were Denim Factory, City Factory, Essex Factory and Wellworths—mainly women workers.

Teachers, office staff and post office workers were also represented.

Also present were the Youth Against Oppression group and delegates of school students from St. Columbs College and Thornhill College as well as Women Against Oppression. Notably absent was

Derry Trades Council (dominated by the Militant group and the Official Republicans of Sinn Fein, the Workers Party) and contingents from the official trade union movement.

An important feature of the march was the presence of British trade union delegations.

There were banners from Greenwich Trades Council, Hackney Trades Council, Camden Trades Council, Wandsworth and Battersea Trades Council, Edinburgh Trades Council, Hackney Labour Party and AUEW Ashford No. 2 branch.

The rally at the end of the march was addressed by Paddy Logue (Derry H Blocks/Armagh Committee), Sean Keenan (Veteran Republican), Liam Gallagher (AUEW), Dave Hallsworth (Tameside Trades Council), the Assistant Secretary of

Edinburgh Trades Council and Eamonn McCann.

Feeling at the rally was very strong and it was clear that hunger striker Bobby Sands' election victory has given an enormous boost to the campaign for political status.

Several speakers were critical of SDLP MP John Hume who was now demanding that Sands come off the hunger strike and take his case to the European Commission for Human Rights.

This was soundly rejected and a call was made for the SDLP to support the hunger strike—and for SDLP councillors to come off all councils and public bodies until the hunger strike was resolved.

There was also a call for a trade union inquiry into the H Blocks and Armagh Jail.

The Northern Ireland trade union leaders were heavily criticised for their silence on the hunger strike.

The biggest applause was for Dave Hallsworth, Tameside Trades Council, whose speech focussed the solidarity work being carried out in the labour movement in Britain and the history of Tameside Trades Council's disaffiliation from the TUC.

Hallsworth's contribution and the delegates from British trade union movement gave political strength to the rally and Day of Action.

It is important that solidarity work in Britain continues and that resolutions in support of Bobby Sands and the hunger strikers are brought urgently into trade union and Labour Party branches.