

Socialist Organiser

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory



Mobilise for Labour democracy

by FRANCES MORRELL

A CAMPAIGN around a united front on Party Democracy was launched at Labour's one day Conference in Wembley last Saturday.

The campaign objectives are:

- ★ Mandatory reselection.
- ★ Election of the leader by the whole Party.
- ★ Defence of the present structure of the NEC.
- ★ The NEC to have the final say on the Manifesto.
- ★ An accountable Parliamentary Party with each member pledged to implement Party policy.

This common platform was endorsed by seven organisations: Campaign for Labour Party Democracy; Clause 4; Independent Labour Party; Institute of Workers' Control; Labour Coordinating Committee; National Org-

anisation of Labour Students; and the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, who set up an ad hoc Mobilising Committee composed of representatives from each organisation, to campaign together from now till October in support of this platform.

We are inviting other groups and organisations within the Party to support the programme and join us in our campaign. Our invitation goes out to all those who, however we may differ on policy, are united on the need for a democratic Party.

Ten thousand copies of a campaign broadsheet, 'Mobilise for Labour Democracy', have been printed. The broadsheet contains a major statement by Tony Benn, 'Conference and the Party in Parliament', and articles which make the case for the democratic reforms we are advocating.

We hope that party and trade union activists will:

- ★ get their GMCs and trade union branches to endorse the common programme and inform the Mobilisation Committee;
- ★ take bulk orders of 'Mobilise for Labour Democracy' and sell it to party workers as part of the campaign to win understanding and support;
- ★ organise meetings on Party democracy in their own area, before Party Conference.

The struggle for an accountable Parliamentary Labour Party could fundamentally alter the nature of British politics.

It is a struggle for a Party whose election promises are offered in good faith and whose bid for the vote of the working people is accompanied by an uncompromising loyalty to their interests.

Only if we all campaign unremittingly together can we hope to succeed.

Their Labour Party or ours



The Labour Party
March and Rally
**NUCLEAR ARMS NO
PEACE YES**

Assemble 12 noon Belvedere Road South Bank
Rally 3p.m. Hyde Park
Sunday 22 June

**Socialist Organiser says:
All Out June 22nd! Ban
the bomb! Out of NATO
now!**



Where we stand

SOCIALIST ORGANISER is the paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, an alliance of Labour and trade union activists sponsored by six Constituency Labour Parties, four Trades Councils, and several trade union branches and LPYS. We aim to build a class-struggle left-wing in the Labour Party and trade unions based on a revolutionary socialist platform.

- ★ Organise the left to beat back the Tories' attacks! No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket-line; no state interference in our unions!
- ★ No to any wage cuts. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions!
- ★ Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. The same should go for state benefits, grants and pensions.
- ★ Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector.
- ★ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs — share the work with no loss of pay. Start now with a 35-hour week and end to overtime.
- ★ All firms threatening closure should be nationalised under workers' control.
- ★ Make the bosses pay, not the working class. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'. Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.
- ★ Freeze rents and rates.
- ★ Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets.
- ★ Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence.
- ★ The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as the bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, M15, etc.), public accountability, etc.
- ★ Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.
- ★ Against attacks on gays by the State: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and to affirm their stance publicly.
- ★ The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.
- ★ The black working people of South Africa and of Zimbabwe should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles, and armed combat against the white supremacist regimes. South African goods and services should be blacked.
- ★ It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each parliament, and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.
- ★ The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control.
- ★ The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist system in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for the crumbs from the table of the bankers and bosses.

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No to Carter's war-drive!
No nuclear arms!
OUT OF NATO NOW!

THE WORLD is a tinderbox. The USA, Britain and other imperialist countries are building up their armaments, stocking up their arsenals and stepping up war mongering propaganda.

The 'limited war' which the USA talks of attempting in the Gulf or the Middle East could be a spark that would set off an inferno.

Carter's raid on Iran on April 24th and the USA's openly declared intention to bring out further raids, closer to nuclear holocaust, behind the cover of 'humanitarian concern' for the hostages, there lurks a bourgeois drive by the imperialist powers to reach the rest of the world's labour and resistance — at any price.

Thatcher has jumped behind the war drive, echoing US propaganda on Iran and Afghanistan and endorsing all Carter's threats and actions.

The Tories have increased forces' pay and military spending as they slash benefits and hospitals. They are welcoming Cruise nuclear missiles to Britain, and they are planning a new generation of even more destructive nuclear missiles to succeed Polaris.

The war drive in Britain is being carried out in the name of 'friendship' with the USA. But the 'friendship' is being together in the apparatuses of the capitalist class — the military, the police, the courts, the media of working people throughout the world.

To the shame of the labour movement, our leaders are supporting the war drive. USA when it proposed the murderous Shah of Iran. Now the Labour front bench has continued to back the NATO alliance, and the Tories have backed the Cruise missiles —

defying official Labour policy.

Labour's National Executive Committee has taken a record of the Parliamentary leaders — calling a national demonstration on Sunday June 22nd in London, against Cruise missiles being sent to Britain, against an increase in NATO spending.

We appeal for maximum support for this demonstration. We are also calling for a special contingent behind the banner saying: 'Unilateral disarmament now. Britain out of NATO. Thatcher out of office.'

The NEC should add up to saying that the war drive should go no further — that it should be checked at its present level. But it has already gone too far. Already the capitalist warmongers have enough destructive power to kill us all. We must go on the offensive, for socialism and for internationalism.

Labour Party Demonstration
Sun. June 22nd 12 noon
Belvedere Rd, South Bank, London

Socialist Organiser
5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

Socialist Organiser leaflet to mobilise for June 22. Order from Nik Barstow, c/o 5 Stamford Hill, London N16, at £7 per 1,000 including postage.



Iran: Thatcher follows Carter

Having backed and armed the Shah for 25 years, the British and US Governments are now attacking the new regime in Iran with economic sanctions and [from the US] military threats. A few Labour MPS voted against the sanctions. STAN NEWENS explains why.

I AM completely opposed to the imposition of sanctions against Iran. It will do no good. It won't get the hostages released.

The imposition of sanctions will only harden the determination of those holding the hostages to continue to hold them. I am opposed to the detention of the hostages and I think it is totally wrong for the present Muslim regime in Iran to persecute the Left in Iran as they are doing at present. I wrote a letter, signed by 50 Labour MPs who had all opposed the policy of support for the Shah's regime, to Dr Bani Sadr, asking him to observe the rights of the people, and pointing out that the detention of the hostages was

detracting attention from US policies in Iran — which I deplore.

I think the only reason the British Government is in favour of sanctions is not because they believe it will do any good, but to show solidarity with the American Government. I am in favour of British withdrawal from NATO.

It is deplorable that Britain should be drawn in supine fashion in the wake of American policy, which is itself dictated by the needs of Carter's campaign strategy in the American Presidential elections.



STAN NEWENS against sanctions

ALL OUT JUNE 22!

Sack Rodgers!



the armourers of both blocks — the SS20 as well as the Cruise missiles — and talking in new ways with Euro-Communists, neutralists, Eastern European dissidents; with the Swedes, Yugoslavs and Austrians, and with the trade unions and working people everywhere.

And the talking must start now. Tomorrow was too late.

Scrap the Bomb now!

JOHN BLOXAM, secretary of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, told SO why the SCLV is campaigning for CLPs and trade union branches to march with the slogans 'Unilateral nuclear disarmament now' and 'Britain out of NATO now', as well as the official demonstration slogans.

Callaghan and Rodgers are just trailing behind Thatcher, and Thatcher is trailing behind Carter. And Carter is ready to run the risk of war or even holocaust to back up his adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski's arrogant declaration: "Do not scoff at American power".

Carter's and NATO's military build-up reflect the basic mechanism of imperialism, which constantly seeks to expand its domination in its insatiable quest for profit. That quest, sooner or later, leads to war: for with the world tightly divided up, there is no way the expansionist drive can be satisfied peacefully.

The only way to fight the war threat is to mobilise the working class to disarm and overthrow imperialism. I do not think imperialism and the USSR can be put on the same level. The bureaucrats of the USSR and similar states are as vicious and irresponsible as Carter, but they rest on a different economic system, a system that does not have the same aggressive and exploitative drive as imperialism.

The USSR and similar states — however anti working class their present political regimes — have been won from imperialist domination. If imperialism were able to conquer them and restore capitalism there, that would be a defeat for the world working class.

In any case, the socialist principle for anti-war activity must be: the main enemy is in our own country. The job of British socialists is to deal with the warmongers in Whitehall and Westminster. The workers of the USSR will deal with the Kremlin bureaucrats.

ON JUNE 22nd the Labour Party is organising its first big demonstration on international issues since 1956 — a march to demand no Cruise missiles in Britain and no successor to Polaris.

Marxist historian E.P. THOMPSON, who has recently launched a "European Nuclear Disarmament" campaign, argues that if the demonstration is to be more than a gesture, it must be followed up by concerted action to make sure Labour's leaders actually pursue Labour policy — or get out.

Of course everyone must support Labour's Peace march: the bigger the better. But there is a big credibility problem.

Every ongoing Tory war policy is only an extension of previous Labour action in Government. The majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party have defied Labour's policies on nuclear disarmament, as declared by Conference and the NEC, and have been captive of NATO's consensus politics.

Callaghan's private inner Cabinet carried out the £1,000 million modernisation of Polaris, prepared for Trident, and in two debates this year have supported NATO modernisation and Cruise missiles.

The Cruise missiles haven't arrived yet, but Will Rodgers is here already, and if Callaghan is now undergoing a conversion, the way to prove it is to sack Rodgers as Labour's shadow spokesman for defence.

Without such action and without outright opposition to NATO's weapons policies, Labour's Great Crusade for Peace will turn into Callaghan's Campaign for Votes.

What Labour must do now is to break out of the old cold war Atlantic trap, and use its influence throughout Europe to get a new dialogue going between East and West for European nuclear disarmament.

This means confronting



JOAN MAYNARD, MP for Sheffield Brightside, talked to John Cunningham about what the Labour Party must do in the fight against the Tories.

What do you think the strategy of the Parliamentary Labour Party should be while in opposition? Is it doing enough in terms of blocking Tory legislation?

■ The best we can do inside Parliament is to 'gum up the works'. There is a lot of anti working class legislation in the pipeline — the Employment Bill, the sale of council houses, etc. If we can gum up the works enough we may force the Tories to withdraw one of the Bills, but there is little else we can do inside Parliament.

Our main job, in my opinion, is to give a lead to the struggle outside.

Take for example the Employment Bill, which is at the Report stage in the House. We must do much more than just vote against it in the commons — we must lead and help the struggle against it. I believe as a Labour MP I am only as strong as the support I have outside Parliament.

I hoped that the TUC would have given a clear lead on May 14th and called for an all-out strike, which would have been very good. The TUC and the Labour Party should lead the struggle against the Tories, who are not only the most vicious anti-working class government we've had in many years but also the most war-mongering.

People everywhere are

very worried about the possibility of war. If we can mobilise people against the cuts, against unemployment, and for peace, then we are on the road to defeating the Tories. The people are all-powerful when mobilised.

The decisions of the Brighton conference on democracy and accountability have 'opened up' the Labour Party considerably. How do you view the Party now, as opposed to before Brighton?

■ A qualitative change has taken place. The labour movement is determined not to have another Labour Government like the last one. We just can't afford that experience.

The failure of previous Labour governments to move towards socialism has led many workers to cynicism and demoralisation, and these are two of the elements that lead to Fascism. After all, if the working class cannot rely on the labour movement, who can it rely on?

The danger of Fascism is greatly enhanced in times of depression when people are driven to the right; usually people move to the left in periods of prosperity and expansion.

We've got to fight long and hard to retain and extend the gains of Brighton. The right wing are particularly relying on a change in the voting of the AUEW delegation at conference. But for the coming conference, I believe the AUEW delegation will be elected in the same way as before, so at least for this next conference we will probably be OK.

There is no doubt in my mind there will be a big attempt to overturn the Brighton decisions, but what will help us is what the Tories are doing — this will push many of the union delegates to the left and towards us.

Key

Activists in the Party are virtually unanimous that we don't want a return to Callaghan/Healey. How can we best ensure the right wing does not rule the roost when a Labour government is returned?

■ Mandatory re-selection is one of the key questions here. It is the main way in which Labour MPs can be made accountable.

It means in practice that Labour MPs who are elected on Labour's programme have to be committed to it and

WHERE LABOUR SHOULD BE With workers in struggle

parties. I answered that this would be a good thing!

On the issue of the selection of the party leader: I think everybody should elect the party leader. The PLP want to continue electing the leader. Many of the right wing have said that the PLP must have confidence in the party leader. What about the labour movement. They need someone who they can have confidence in!

I agree with the proposals that the manifesto should be written by the NEC, who after all are the elected leaders of the Party. Cabinet members should not have the right to veto the Manifesto.

Socialist Organiser believes that a future Labour government should break with the bosses and the bankers and pursue anti-capitalist policies. What do you think a future Labour government should do?

■ Briefly, a future government has got to control the land, money and the civil service. There are various power structures in our society — the legal set-up, education, etc. — all uphold the capitalist system, but how can we challenge them?

Past Labour governments never challenged capitalism, but when it is challenged we will have a battle on our hands, as the rich will not give up their wealth and priv-

ileges easily.

We must go for the public ownership of land, of the money supply, the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy. The civil service needs to be brought under control. And we need to deal with the media — though I am against censorship: I believe the workers in the media should take over.

We have to guard against highly bureaucratised structures. We need real workers' control and as much local control as possible, related to national plans and needs.

Class

What we need is a Labour government committed to its class in the same way as the Tory government is committed to its class. Whenever the Tories are confronted with a situation or a problem, the first question they ask is 'what is good for our class?' It is high time we showed the same class morality as the Tories.

Finally, we need more public control of North Sea Oil, both in terms of running it and in control of the revenue derived from it. In the last analysis, positive control means ownership.

In view of the introduction of new technology, we need

at least a 35 hour week, with fight for it. If they don't, then the local Party has the right to remove them.

I don't want the Labour Party to be just an electoral party. It must be a campaigning party, a party less committed to Parliamentaryism and more outward-looking, more grass-roots oriented. Mandatory re-selection is an important step in that direction.

Every single job and position we as MPs have is due to the support and hard work of the labour movement, therefore the labour movement has the right to expect and to get accountability. Accountability must mean, basically, the right to remove someone when they are consistently going against Labour's policy.

The ethos of our society means that authority is looked up to and revered, and we in the labour movement are affected by this as well. Local parties tend to be very loyal to their MPs, sometimes too loyal.

There is a lot of confusion between the government and the party. In the past, many accusations about disloyalty to the Labour government have been made against us on the left. My answer to these accusations has always been that it is my job to support the policy of the labour movement, not the government, which may be trying to put through very different policies.

The pressures on MPs in Parliament come from sources outside the labour movement. Mandatory re-selection means that pressure will come from the labour movement.

I remember when this whole question was being discussed on the National Executive Committee, one ex-Minister remarked that re-selection would mean that Labour MPs would be forever looking over their shoulders at their constituency

no reduction in pay, and retirement at 60.

How could a Labour government implementing the measures you have described prevent a right-wing backlash, possibly even a British version of the Chile experience?

■ There are two things here. Firstly, we need to democratise the armed forces and this would mean, in part, unionising the armed forces. Secondly, it is a fact that a conscript army is less likely to be a reactionary force than a volunteer professional army (like the one we have).

A conscript army would more likely be on our side. I would however be very reluctant to call for conscription. I am deeply committed to anti-militarism. It is a very important question we should discuss within the movement.

Steel

You have stressed the need for activity outside Parliament. How can we turn the party outwards?

■ Take the steel strike. We identify with their struggle and we try to help them all we can. The same with the low-paid workers who were on strike last winter but one. We should give them all our support irrespective of the position of the government.

It was very noticeable that those Labour ministers who attacked the picket lines were also the most vocal in their support for the proposal to raise MPs' wages by £95 a week.

There is no distinction between the political and the economic struggle, but the real strength of the working class is economic. It is necessary to link the two.

Factory branches of the Labour Party would help us to keep close to reality. It is so easy to get divorced from reality in Parliament, where MPs are cocooned from the struggles of workers.

Leaders in the labour movement should have the right kind of humility. They should respect the workers who have put them there, and not walk around like God Almighty. Where workers are involved in battle we should be there with them, in the forefront of the struggle — and not just be seen going around at election time asking for votes.



Steel strike: Labour must 'identify with their struggle and try to help them all we can'

Labour's special conference: what was missing

THE TORY PRESS had frothed and fussed about how left wing the National Executive statement for the special conference, 'Peace, Jobs, Freedom', was. But most of the delegates obviously did not agree.

One speech after another from the floor hammered at the inadequacies of the document: no socialist lead; no mention of fighting the Tories to bring them down before the end of their term of office; no mention of support for Labour councils taking a stand against the Tories; and no mention of the struggle of the Irish people for the release of their country from British domination.

It was also clear that the delegates would have none of the right wing nonsense that Callaghan and Owen came out with. Callaghan was given very mild applause and David Owen was heckled all

through his speech. Denis Healey was loudly booed too.

But the fact that no amendments could be put to the NEC document meant that the conference could never come to grips with any of the issues. As one delegate from Scotland said to *Socialist Organiser*, 'I don't see much point in this conference. If I vote against the document, then I'll just be counted as part of the right wing, but I can't vote for it because I don't think it gives the lead forward from the left that is required just now.'

by JO THWAITES

"After all, the major fight in the party is for democracy and accountability, but the basic democracy of being able to amend a conference document is missing here."

The platform blithely

agreed that there were many inadequacies in the document. But at this stage, they said, that didn't matter very much, as it could be used as the basis for a fight against the Tories.

All the speeches criticising the document were quietly soaked up by the sponge-like platform. Even Eric Heffer and Tony Benn went along with the mood, saying how right delegates were to criticise the document, but insisting that the conference was a step forward and that the document provided the basis for a socialist fight against the Tories.

There were loud jeers when David Owen tried to argue against the NEC document's opposition to Cruise missiles, but many delegates obviously felt that the document itself was inadequate. Sue Reeves, from Hertford and Stevenage CLP, pointed out that the

message that came across was rather confused.

In practice, Labour leaders say that anything that Carter does must be ok as the US is holding out against the threat of world communism posed by the Soviet Union.

Socialists in Britain should not concern themselves with the defence of American imperialism, Reeves argued, as it could well be left to Carter and his ilk. The Labour Party should commit itself to getting all US bases out of Britain.

Several other speakers told conference that there is only one war worth fighting. That is the class war, and socialists in the Labour Party should get on with fighting that.

Three delegates called for British troops to be pulled out of Ireland, pointing out how easy it had been for the platform and the conference document to go round

the world criticising this and that country's imperialism, without even mentioning the little colony that Britain has on its own doorstep.



Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council, and Tony Fields from the Fire Brigades Union both insisted that we can't afford to wait for four years till the next general election. By that time there will be nothing left for the Labour Party to defend. Action has to be taken against the Tories now, or not at all.

Many delegates raised the issue of how we fight the Tories. Accountability of MPs is not some abstract idea, but a practical issue. As the delegate from Monmouth CLP said, no-one is interested in returning a Labour Government which is just

going to continue to uphold the capitalist system.

Steel workers all over the country can see what's wrong. Unless the Labour Party leadership acts according to the wishes of the people who actually do the work for the party, any talk about socialism means nothing.

Although many delegates obviously felt that nowhere near enough is being done by the Labour Party as a whole in the fight against the Tories, the special conference was not able to map out a strategy of practical action.

To translate the militancy of the delegates on May 31st into effective action by the whole Labour Party, we need a Party structure which is democratic and accountable enough to force the leaders to be guided by the views of the rank and file — or to get out.

TWO MONTHS AGO the riots in St Pauls pushed Bristol unexpectedly into the headlines. Since then the police, community groups, left groups, the Labour Party and many others have been continuously active in the area.

Ian Hollingworth interviewed FRANCIS SALANDY of the United Defence Committee, which is based in Grosvenor Road, a few doors down from the Black and White Cafe, where the trouble started.

■ ■ Soon after the events, police were taking out warrants for whole streets at a time. How many people did they pick up and what were the charges?

□ □ Although 160 people were actually interviewed by police in the days following April 2nd, only about 30 were charged with offences connected with the looting. Of the rest, about 30 were referred to the juvenile bureau, 30 were told to report back in June while their cases were referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the rest were released unchanged.

■ ■ How has the United Defence Committee organised against the charges?

□ □ We have helped arrange bail and defence lawyers; we have also organised people to go to the court in support of the defendants when necessary. Most of the cases, though, are not coming up till the 16th and 17th of June. We have raised £1000 with almost as much

BLACKS IN ST PAULS SAY: Don't investigate us - investigate the oppressors!

again in the pipeline. The Students' Union has given us £300.

■ ■ Tell us a bit about the Parliamentary Enquiry that took place in St Pauls last week. What was your response to it?

□ □ The Defence Committee was quite clear in urging a boycott of the Select Committee which came down to "investigate the disadvantage" in St Pauls. We influenced other local groups to take a similar line and we found that the Asian groups had come to the same conclusion. As a result the Commission for Racial Equality here was forced to fall into line.

The reasons given for the boycott basically fell into two types. First of all there were those who said that the Select Committee was not allowing itself enough time to do its job properly. For our part, though, we said that the terms of reference of the Committee were offensive to us.

We said that they should be looking at those who create disadvantage, not those who are suffering from it; there are already volumes

of evidence of disadvantage in existence. We saw their terms of reference as a ploy to defuse the situation.

■ ■ Bristol Trades Council has considered the possibility of setting up a labour movement enquiry into St Pauls. What, then, is your attitude to that?

□ □ If people find disadvantage offensive and want to investigate it, then fine. But how it strikes us sometimes is that with so many groups involved there are some who are trying to "cash in" politically on the situation. Now this may not be altogether fair; they are all involved in struggle in their own way, and I'm certainly not accusing the Trades Council of this. But this is the feeling we sometimes get.

■ ■ The Labour Party recently held a public meeting in the area. They say they want to step up the work they are doing in the area. Are you saying you want to be left alone?

□ □ Not "left alone" — that's too negative. But it is necessary for people to understand the nature of racism. It's no good coming

among black people to find the causes of racism, it's almost like blaming them for it. There is a danger that this approach can degenerate into a kind of benevolent role — which is not what we want. People in the Labour Party can help us by fighting where they are as well as by coming down here.

■ ■ Finally, what's your reaction to the verdict on

Blair Peach of "death by misadventure"?

□ □ What else could the jury have said? The implications of any other decision are too threatening to the system. The fact that this verdict was returned after the evidence of coshes and all the rest of it in the SPG lockers gives you some idea of what we're up against.



Youth in St Pauls don't want police harassment — and they don't want the Whitelaw Whitewash either

ON NOVEMBER 21st 1979 an incident took place at a bus stop in Moss Side, Manchester, in which one school student from St Bede's School, Moss Side, was allegedly assaulted by one of a group of students from Wilbraham High and Chorlton High.

There is long-standing hostility between such groups of students since those who attend St Bede's come mostly from outside Moss Side, and treat those from Wilbraham High and Chorlton High with open contempt.

Following this incident, the deputy head of Wilbraham Lower School accompanied plainclothes CID men to identify students getting off the bus, and a number of black youths were questioned. One thirteen-year old was arrested and detained at Moss Side Police Station for several hours before being released without being charged, the victim of "wrong identification".

MOSS SIDE: Schools turn in their pupils to the cops

A few days later, parents of some students from the two schools were visited by CID men and asked to take their children to Moss Side Police Station.

Five school students, 12 to 14 years old, were eventually charged with assault and actual bodily harm. Of the three who pleaded guilty, two received one year's conditional

discharge and the third sent to a detention centre.

Two of the youths were advised by their solicitors to plead guilty just because they were present at the incident, and the police offered no real evidence to connect them with the assault.

Two of the youths have pleaded not guilty and the parents of one, Stephen Locke, aged 12, are not

taking any chances with solicitors after hearing how the three had been persuaded to plead guilty.

Stephen's parents and supporters of his case have condemned the actions of the schools staff and the police in getting together to harass young people, and are demanding that the charges are dropped; the removal of a detective constable involved; and the

dismissal of the deputy head of Wilbraham Lower School and the head of Chorlton High.

The campaign's demands are to stop the schools bringing in the police to harass school students, and to stop their harassment of black students like Stephen Locke. Schools should be accountable to parents and to school students.

Stephen's case comes up at Manchester Juvenile Court on June 9th, and it is vital that a vigorous campaign is mounted around it. In Moss Side, many cases of police harassment of black youth go unnoticed — they're everyday events that people are too scared to talk about.

This time a family has decided to fight back, and it needs support. Moss Side LPYS is taking up the case.

Further information from Kath Locke (Chairperson), Stephen Locke Action Committee, 5 Crowcombe Walk, Manchester M16.

MICK WOODS

Blair Peach inquest lets off SPG's LEGALISED THUGS

by JO THWAITES

DESPITE THE FACT that several witnesses testified in court to having seen Blair Peach being hit by a policeman, the jury at the inquest decided unanimously that he had met his death by misadventure.

What does that mean? — That Blair Peach should not have been in Southall on April 23rd last year, "rioting"? (as the police and the media call demonstrating against the fascist National Front). That since he was, he deserved everything that was coming to him?

That is how the argument goes. Anyone who finds himself in a situation which the police term a riot can expect to be killed by the police.

And that applies to the entire population of Southall — all of whom, because they were black, were liable to be considered as rioters and brutally beaten and arrested. Many in Southall were sur-

prised there were not more people killed that day as the police ran berserk through their community.

The jury's verdict had a few riders, including the suggestion that SPG officers should control their men a bit better, and that police on demonstrations like Southall should have maps to help them find their way about.

The suggestion for maps seems to be a response to the somewhat suspect evidence that the SPG officers from Metropolitan Unit No.1, under the command of Inspector Alan Murray, gave to the inquest. Several of them could not remember exactly where they were or what street they were in around the time that the fatal blow to Peach's

head was struck.

But what they need is perhaps not more maps, nor even better memories, but a bit more honesty.

The talk of controlling the SPG is brought down to earth by an article in the Sunday Times on June 1st by Inspector Alan Murray, the former commander of Metropolitan Unit No.1 of the SPG, who has now resigned from the police force.

He boasts that his unit wore T-shirts off duty with "Premier Unit Cobras" written across the front. To rile other SPG units they would arrive on duty humming the Dambusters March.

In Murray's first year as head of Unit No.1, the arrest rate trebled to almost 900

In Brixton, where they descended to 'control street crime', they became known as the "cowboys" or "Billy Smart's Circus".

Murray refers throughout the article to violent situations as 'tasty situations'. On his evidence, the SPG are little more than legitimised thugs, and there's no reason to suppose that his unit is particularly exceptional — simply that this lot actually managed to kill someone.

But no-one is to be charged with murder, despite all the evidence that one of Unit No.1 must have killed Blair Peach.

The Friends of Blair Peach are continuing with the campaign and are deciding at the moment whether to appeal. They still want a full public enquiry and call for the disbanding of the SPG.

The trials of the Southall defendants are still not over. In July, several serious cases are coming up in the Crown Court. There will be a jury, but they could get much heavier sentences than the people tried in magistrates' courts. The labour movement must not forget that the Southall prisoners and should demand that the charges are dropped.



SPG commander Alan Murray: the people of Brixton called his unit 'the cowboys'

Brent Labour acts against police swoop on Asians

by PETE FIRMIN

A POLICE swoop on a North London cash and carry rounded up 70 Asian workers on a pretext of "looking for illegal immigrants".

Asians were not picked up by the police, who claimed to be from the 'Immigration Branch of New Scotland Yard'.

The swoop was the second of its kind on the Bestways Cash and Carry on the giant Park Royal Industrial Estate. The previous Friday (May 9th) they had surrounded the building, but as many workers were away, only asked questions about identities.

Following this exercise, they picked up the Asian Director from the Marble Arch branch and questioned him at Kilburn Police Station before releasing him.

32 of the 70 Asians picked up on Monday 12th were taken to the new, fortress-like Kilburn Police Station, locked in cells and in the dormitory, refused food or drink and questioned individually about their status as immigrants. They were refused phone calls, and the Bestways solicitor was unable to get any information from the police. None of them was taken home to collect their passports in order to establish their legal status.

It was not until after 8 that evening that the police began to release people, one by one and without any money to get home; their own money was still in lockers at work. Despite pleas, only one man, who threatened to sue the police, was given transport.

Seven of the 32 were detained longer, supposedly due to "lack of proper immigrant status", and information as to their whereabouts was withheld or mis-stated by police for several days, until they were released.

At a meeting between Brent East Labour Party activists and Manibhai Patel and Subash Patel of the Brent Indian Association on June 19th, a protest picket of Kilburn Police Station was agreed, and backing for a Brent Indian Association leaflet pointing out that there is no legal requirement that people carry their passports with them.

This and similar operations by the police are indicative of an increased attempt to harass immigrants, even before the Tories pass any new laws. The labour movement as a whole has to show its opposition to such action, refusing to accept any status of 'illegal' immigrant — anyone resident here should be entitled to stay.

Picket

End police harassment — picket Kilburn Police Station (corner of Salisbury and Harvist Roads, NW6; Queens Park tube/BR station) 10am on Saturday 7th June. Sponsored by Brent Indian Association, Brent East Labour Party, Brent South Labour Party, Brent Trades Council, Harlesden Advice Centre, Anti-Nazi League.

Islington LP says: SACK THIS LABOUR GROUP

by JANE ANDREWS
[Islington Central CLP]

FOR THE LAST two years, there has been an ever-widening gap between the policies of Islington Council's ruling Labour Group and the people who put them there, the three Islington Constituency Labour Parties.

Even before the Tory Government took office last year, Islington Labour Council was implementing severe cuts in expenditure on housing and social services. The leadership of the Labour Group not only attacked the interests of the working class in the borough

by pre-empting the Tories in their attack on the welfare state, but they also consistently ignored resolution after resolution passed by the Labour Party Wards, General Management Committees and the Local Government Committee, opposing what they were doing.

Motions of censure were passed against individual Councillors — who ignored them. Motions were passed calling on the Labour Group to carry out Party policy — and they were ignored. A borough conference of Labour Party members condemned the Labour Group — who just continued to pay no attention at all to the policies of the Party that they were supposed to represent.

This contempt on the part of the Labour councillors for the Labour Party poses a

constitutional problem which is as significant as that of the accountability of Labour MPs. The final insult to Labour Party members came when the leadership of the Labour Group proposed to sell off 150 council houses on the open market — in the words of the Chairman of the Housing Committee, "to speculative builders". These were houses which were bought for rehabilitation and would have provided about 300 homes when converted. There are 11,500 people on Islington housing waiting list and the list is growing at the rate of 110 a week.

The leadership could not get this policy through the Labour Group — the vote was 23 for and 23 against the sale. So they relied on the two Tory councillors'

votes to get it through the following night's council meeting.

This sale of council houses is not only against national and local Labour Party but it is a stab in the back of those Labour councils who will be trying to resist the Tories' new housing legislation which attempts to force Labour councils to sell off council houses.

If the Greater London Regional Council's recommendations for the manifesto for next year's GLC election are adopted, then members of Islington Labour Party will be campaigning in that election against Council house sales when our own Labour council has already implemented this Tory policy.

Out of this situation has come a demand from a number of wards and from two

of the three General Management Committees for the Islington Local Government Committee to "re-form the Labour Group to include only those Labour councillors who are willing to abide by the policies of the Labour Party on the sale of Council houses".

Central Islington GMC was told by George Page, General Secretary of the GLRC, that the LGC didn't have the power to do this, but so great was the frustration of the GMC delegates that the motion was passed unanimously. George Page has offered to chair a joint meeting between the leadership of the Labour Group and the LGC Executive Committee, and this offer has been accepted by the LGC. But the general feeling is that such a meeting will yield

no solution. What is clear is that the local Labour Parties cannot sit back and allow councillors who they put in the council chamber to turn a blind eye to the fact that they are elected to carry out Labour Party, not Tory Party policy.

In 1982, the dissident majority of Islington's Labour Group will be asking us to select them again as Labour Party candidates in the local elections and to go out on the doorstep to campaign to put them back in the Town Hall. Not only do we wish to make clear to them that we will not re-select councillors who carry out Tory policies, but that we do not wish the Labour Party in Islington to suffer irrevocable damage in the next two years by being associated with such people.

Royal Northern wins reprieve

by JENNY MORRIS
[Camden and Islington Campaign Against Health Cuts]

THE CAMPAIGN against the closure of the Royal Northern Hospital's Casualty Department has won a partial victory. Gerard Vaughan, the Health Minister, announced on 6th May that the Casualty Department would be totally closed as soon as possible. So on the 12th May, hospital workers and local residents went to the Area Health Authority meeting to demand that their Casualty Department should be kept open.

It was clear that the Area Health Authority had no information about how the proposed closure would affect the local community, or how the Whittington Hospital, the other hospital in the area, would be affected. The Royal Northern Campaign maintains that the

Whittington would not be able to cope with the 40,000 people who used the Royal Northern Casualty last year, and that, in spite of Dr Vaughan's misinformed claims to the contrary, the closure of the Casualty Department would mean the death of the Royal Northern as an acute general hospital.

The Campaign has been fighting closure for some months now. The Area Health Authority decided last autumn to close down the Casualty Department, but 60,000 signatures on a petition, and the threat of occupation by Casualty staff won a delay and an enquiry by a DHSS official, who, however, never published his report or presented it to the AHA.

At the beginning of the AHA meeting on 12th May it looked as if there would be at least partial immediate closure of the Casualty Department. But after much heckling from the Campaign, a TUC-appointed member of the AHA who had previously been very much in favour of

closure, responded to the hecklers and proposed that the AHA should not close Casualty at all until the full consultation procedure had been carried out. This is a process which will take between six months and a year, so the Royal Northern Campaign felt it had won a significant victory.

There was, however, also a feeling of having gone one step forward and two steps backwards. Dr Vaughan has also announced that the planned redevelopment of the Whittington Hospital as a District General Hospital will not now go ahead. It is also possible that the AHA may reverse its decision on the Royal Northern Casualty at its next meeting.

The Campaign therefore intends to keep fighting against these cuts in the health service and will be drawing up a 'People's Plan' for the health service in Islington.

For further information, contact Candy Unwin (485 3800) or Jenny Morris (226 7079).



The Royal Northern Campaign in action on the streets

Birmingham Labour moves against the cuts

by SIMON TEMPLE

AFTER ALL the excitement of winning the Council election on May 1st, Labour Party members in Birmingham are asking themselves "Will anything very much change?". The Labour group is still quite solidly right-wing and the leader, Clive Wilkinson, is national chairman of the right-wing 'Campaign for Labour Victory'.

The group is supposed to be committed to restoring the cuts announced in April by the Tories. But some dubious manoeuvring seems to be going on.

When the cuts, and increases in charges for services were announced, it was estimated that they would 'save' around £7 million. Miraculously, restoring these cuts is now going to cost only £3½ million!

We already know that part of the difference will be made up by going ahead with raising the cost of school meals by 10p next month, although a further increase planned for November will be cancelled.

Unfortunately, the campaign against cuts has not got very far in Birmingham yet. This is partly because they have been less severe than in many areas.



Roy Hattersley

There is a long tradition of relatively high-spending municipal Toryism in the city and the outgoing administration, in a desperate attempt to stay in power, decided to spend all £10 million in the council reserve fund rather than make further cuts.

And the Labour leadership has done nothing to organise a fight. Attempts to hammer out a serious policy at District Labour Party meetings have been thwarted by filibustering. Even where initiatives have been taken, the right-wing have ensured that they haven't come to anything.

Some months ago, a committee was set up by the Trades Council and the District Party to organise

against cuts. It consisted of five members of the Executive of each, and included Wilkinson and District Party Secretary Dick Knowles, who has publicly stated that he will not implement Party decisions he disagrees with.

In the event, the only thing it has organised was a "rally" on a rubbish tip before the election. It was an utter farce. There was no publicity except a letter to ward secretaries urging "armchair socialists" who had done nothing else in the campaign to come along!

Not surprisingly less than 30 — including kids and stray dogs — turned up to be told by Roy Hattersley that the Tories wanted to go back to the Dark Ages. Apart from asking us to go canvassing, the only proposal came from ex-minister of disasters, Dennis Howell. He told us to hold workplace collections to send the British Olympic team to Moscow!

But attempts are being made to remedy things. Birmingham Labour against the Cuts (a group of activists mainly in the Labour Party) is trying to organise a fight against the right-wing.

Before the election every Labour councillor and candidate was circulated. We asked them to pledge themselves to oppose cuts, staff

cuts, and rent rises for council tenants and to support trade union action against the cuts.

Within 48 hours Knowles sent round a circular warning candidates that we were an unofficial body and advising them, if they replied, to say only that they would follow District Party policy. It remains to be seen if he will be so keen on this when the District Party adopts a real policy of fighting the cuts.

In the event, 24 replies were received out of 83 letters sent, 14 were broadly favourable. 12 of the 14 are now councillors and they could provide the beginnings of a left opposition within the group.

But the most promising development came on May 8th, when the Trades Council agreed to organise a delegate conference in September. It will include representatives from trade union and political organisations, as well as community groups, and will elect a committee to continue the fight.

There is no doubt that a major priority for the next few months will be to ensure that the conference is as representative as possible that it adopts a clear "No cuts, no rate rises" policy, and that it lays serious plans to fight for that policy.

London conference to plan cuts fightback



by JEREMY CORBYN

IN A DETERMINED effort to unite Labour councillors in London in a concerted attack on Government policy, the London Labour Party has launched an appeal to the labour movement with the support of over 70 Labour councillors and 8 regional executive members.

The appeal asks the labour movement to note these points:

■ The current Tory Government is bent on a policy of attacking public services and expenditure in an unprecedented way. The effect of these cuts has been disastrous on employment for thousands of people and has led to real suffering and hardship for those members of the community least able to defend themselves.

■ That part of this attack poses a real threat to the powers won by local authorities over the last fifty years to provide services on a local basis. Now the "Heseltine formula" threatens most Labour authorities with a penalty for not making enough cuts!

■ That massive cuts in housing, particularly in the HIP money, means the almost total demise of housing programmes in many boroughs. These new proposals on housing and finance must be opposed by the whole Labour movement.

■ That it is not sufficient simply to oppose the Tory cuts but that a coherent strategy of opposition must be forged by the Labour Party and the trade unions.

The conference will be on July 5th, from 10 to 5 at Hampstead Town Hall and will be chaired by the chairman of the London Labour Party, Arthur Latham. It will be opened by Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight and GLC councillor Ken Livingstone.

The conference will include four workshops: on the GLC election and manifesto; building a trade union/Labour alliance; housing and HIP cuts; and local strategy, democracy and control.

Delegation fee is £1, available from London Labour Briefing, 155 Green Lanes, London N16.

CHRYSLER [now called Talbot] was the one example of a 'planning agreement' actually made by the last Labour government. But the 'planning' has been a farce, reports STAN CROOKE — and no sort of substitute for workers' control and nationalisation.

ON TUESDAY, May 20, management at the Talbot car factory at Linwood announced their intention of sacking 1,325 workers within the next 90 days. This comes less than six months after a previous batch of 1,250 redundancies.

Four years ago, 9,000 worked at the factory. If this latest attack is successful, the number will be down to 5,000, and the complete closure of the factory — which shopfloor militants see as the bosses' overall goal — will have been brought a step nearer.

The successive attacks date from the 'rescue deal' done by the Labour government in late 1975, when £135 million was pumped into Linwood, mostly in the form of loans for new investment and re-tooling. The 'rescue deal' was a white elephant. A new paint plant was installed, and production of the Avenger was moved up to Linwood. But 1800 redundancies took place in January 1976.

Value

In 1978 Chrysler was taken over by the viciously anti-union combine of Peugeot-Citroën, and renamed Talbot. In 1979, the first batch of 1,325 redundancies was announced. The joint shop stewards' committee argued for opposition to the sackings, and for work-sharing with no loss of pay. But they

Talbot: 'Rescued' 1976, still drowning in 1980

were defeated in a vote at a mass meeting.

The bosses' 'justification' for the sackings was that the firm was inefficient and not selling enough cars. The workers took these words at face value. Production increased by 8% over the winter months. There were no strikes. Production targets set by management were reached month after month.

And in public statements the bosses expressed their 'quiet confidence' about how well the factory was doing.

But workers became increasingly uneasy. They knew that the Tories' attacks on living standards meant falling car sales (in April this year, there were only 46,000 new registrations).

More and more cars were seen stockpiled around the factory. Rumours about redundancies and short-time working began to circulate. But the shop stewards received only evasive answers when they approached management to ask about forward planning.

Fight

At the beginning of May, part of Linwood struck in opposition to the transfer of four men from one section to another. Now, with the benefit of hindsight, it seems clear that the strike was engineered by the bosses to test the water for redundancies. They won. After nine

days the shop stewards recommended a return to work on the grounds that they did not feel they had the support of the shopfloor to escalate the dispute by pulling out the other workers.

Scarcely a week later came the announcement of the new redundancies.

The prospects for a fight-back look grim, not that the union leadership is thinking in terms of a fight-back anyway. Scottish TUC general secretary Jimmy Milne could do no more than call for... import controls.

When trade union officials Ken Cure (AUEW) and Granville Hawley (TGWU) met Talbot bosses in Coventry on Thursday 22nd, they could only plead with the



The Labour Government 'rescued' the Chrysler bosses in 1976. Chrysler workers have been paying the price ever since

bosses to start production of a new model at Linwood.

And many workers had resigned themselves to redundancies, accepting the bosses' logic that if no cars are being sold, then jobs will have to go. With no leadership for a fight coming from the union officials, two batches of redundancies already having been pushed through, and the defeat in the recent strike over the transfers, the workers could see how the odds were stacked.

The shop stewards' committee discussed the redundancies on Thursday 22nd. The Socialist Workers' Party shop stewards argued for a fight; the Communist Party argued for accepting them on the grounds that the workers would probably lose a fight and that would discredit the stewards. But as one member of the SWP pointed out: 'With 2000 jobs already gone, what credibility have we got to lose?'

The final decision of the committee was to recommend acceptance of the redundancies, but demand better redundancy terms. On Friday 23rd, a mass meeting voted for acceptance.

The 'solutions' of the union bureaucrats had nothing to do with defending workers' interests. Jimmy Milne's call for import controls means trying to export unemployment. The call for a new model to be produced at Linwood simply accepts the bosses' logic and draws the unions into haggling about the profitability of different models and different sites. And mixed in with these quack remedies is a strong element of chauvinism. Peugeot-Citroën supposedly have it in for British workers just because they are French.

Plead

Any fight against the redundancies has to take as its starting point the defence of workers' jobs and conditions, both here and internationally. This means rejecting import controls, or pleas with the bosses to keep production in one factory rather than another. It means fighting for work-sharing with no loss of pay, and nationalisation of the entire car and components industry under workers' control.



Phil Cordell

June 13 action call over dole office victimisation

ON JUNE 13th many Civil and Public Services Association members will be taking action against the sacking of two CPSA Branch officers, Phil Cordell and Richard Cleverly from Brixton dole office in South London.

The Department of Employment, headed by Jim Prior, is pushing ahead with this witchhunt on the grounds that Cordell and Cleverly were on 'unauthorised absences' when supporting the lobby against Corrie's Bill and when lobbying the CPSA National Executive Committee at the height of the pay fight in 1979. They are also being witchhunted for signing an advert against the National Front during the 1979 General Election.

Already a powerful rank and file campaign has been organised, calling for industrial action to stop the sackings. So far the new right wing NEC has timidly agreed to give limited backing to this move, and every effort will be made to force the NEC to organise and authorise more extensive industrial action.

The lessons from the failure to mount even a limited fight to prevent Derek Robinson from being sacked have been learnt. The defence campaign argues for no reliance on the appeals system, or industrial tribunals to force reinstatement; instead, it aims to build up awareness of the need to defend trade unionists and trade unions from this new wave of victim-

isations, particularly in the Civil Service.

Norwood CLP has invited a speaker from the defence campaign and is demanding that the Greater London Regional Council and the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party give their full support to the fight for reinstatement.

Stuart Holland, with other MPs, is endorsing the campaign and coordinating the sympathetic Labour MPs to assist in building up pressure on Prior and the Tories — recognising how the Tories' Employment Bill could make victimisation of this sort more and more common in the next few years.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

Victory at Kleins

THE DICKENSIAN management at Kleins in Salford has been dragged into the 20th century.

It capitulated last Wednesday after 10 hours of negotiations with the National Union of Textile and Garment Workers and agreed to accept the decision of a secret ballot organised by ACAS: a decision that ensures the recognition of the union.

This is a significant victory for only the second official strike in the last 10 years by the NUTGW, and at a time when much of the industry is on short-time working.

Many other sweatshops in the area have been watching this dispute from both sides, and the victory may cause a rash of recognition disputes in an industry which is only 50% organised.

NUTGW official Derek Cattell told delegates to Manchester's Trades Council last Wednesday that the Kleins victory was due to the tremendous support given from the local labour movement. Over £6,000 in donations was collected, including over £75 in five minutes outside Adamson's Containers, where workers were themselves on strike for 22 weeks to defend their convenor.

It is crucial that the NUTGW now makes a drive to organise the combativity and anger of garment workers — home-workers and factory workers, full-time and part-time — to build a fighting union in the rag trade.

MICK WOODS

Glasgow strikers plan to tour for support

"THE BASTARDS — they've voted over two to one not to come back!" This was manager George Smith's reaction to the meeting of the TGWU factory branch of Harshaw Chemicals in Glasgow, held May 24th.

TGWU members at the factory have been on strike since April 30th in support of their convenor Gerry Haughey who was sacked for attending a union meeting while off sick. An industrial tribunal recommended reinstatement, but the bosses refused to carry out the decision, so the workers have gone on strike.

The branch meeting had been called by some TGWU members who wanted to ditch their convenor by going back

to work. But no sooner had the idea of a return to work been floated at the meeting than the following motion was proposed and passed with a two-thirds majority: 'To stay on strike and back our convenor until he has been reinstated by the Harshaw management'.

Scare

Smith had been banking on the meeting voting for a return to work. Maintenance staff, laid off on the Tuesday before the meeting, had been told to be ready to start work again on the Monday; and the day before the meeting Smith had announced that redundancies

would be inevitable if the strike continued, in an attempt to scare the strikers into going back.

The strike has been running since April 28th. Nothing has been going in or out of the factory (except for the scabs on the office staff); production is at a standstill; Smith's attempts to intimidate workers with the threat of redundancies has failed; and so too has his attempt to buy off Gerry Haughey by offering him money rather than reinstatement.

The local labour movement has gradually ground into action to support the strikers. Strikers have been visiting factories, bus depots, fire stations, meetings etc in and

around Glasgow to explain the strike and raise support and money.

£100 was donated by the Talbot factory at Linwood, a 50p levy on workers at United Glass in operation, Caterpillar Tractors has donated £30 with a promise of more on the way, and a meeting of the Labour Club at the university raised £18.

Spread

To help coordinate support for the strike one of the strikers is now based in Glasgow's Trade Union Centre (041-429 3774) and the campaign for Gerry Haughey's reinstatement will soon be spread to

England as well. One of the local TGWU full-timers has promised to supply the strikers with a list of TGWU branches throughout England, and in a week's time strikers will be touring factories in London, Manchester and Birmingham to build support for their strike.

After the sacking of Derek Robinson, and the current attempts to victimise militants elsewhere, victory for the Harshaw workers is essential. In order to win they need support from the labour movement nationally. Messages of support and money should be sent to: TGWU Harshaw Chemicals, c/o Trade Union Centre, 83 Carlton Place, Glasgow. STAN CROOKE

Isle of Grain: a test case for union-bashing

by JOHN BLOXAM

AT THE ISLE of Grain, Kent on Tuesday May 27, the mass picket of over 500 ladders from all over the country was the latest stage in a 9 month dispute on the site of the largest oil-fired power station in Europe. The numbers involved in the dispute are small — 27 GMWU ladders and their 33 mates. But the issues are very big.

The immediate issue is an attempt by the Central Electricity Generating Board to impose a single site agreement, including a ceiling on bonus earnings. The ceiling has been proposed at the level achieved by most workers — except the ladders, for whom it would involve a wage cut of about £50 a week.

For the employers, however, much more is at stake. The CEBG, backed by a powerful network of leading employers involved in the construction engineering industry, see defeating the ladders as the key to getting a national wages and conditions agreement, nego-

tiated and policed by the trade union bureaucracy, and defeating strong site organisation.

The Tory government have been directly involved in this. They've taken a back-seat recently, but they can afford to — given the open support for the bosses by a section of the trade union bureaucracy 'representing' 4 million workers, and particularly Baldwin (AUEW Construction Section) and Hammond (EEPTU).

The CEBG with its programme of starting to build 10 new nuclear power stations in the 10 years from 1982, to be completed in 6-7 years at an estimated cost of £1 billion a year, was the obvious front-runner for the bosses. And the Isle of Grain was the obvious test case.

Planned

With the CEBG's existing overcapacity, oil prices rising sharply and strong union organisation on sections of the site, "It didn't cost very much to do what they wanted, to put the boot in". (Sunday Times journalist on

ITV's 'London Programme').

The attack was well planned. The present ladders' strike was obviously provoked, with the Board



insisting on breaking two existing agreements — the first on lay-offs, and then on the bonus system — and then followed by systematic strike-breaking efforts, jointly with the leaders of the site's other unions.

The ladders' immediate employer was sacked and another lagging contractor engaged under the terms of the new site agreement; first parts and then the whole of the site was closed down and the workers made redundant, with the ladders being directly blamed; then black-legs were given a week's training and started on the site. The site partly reopened and 1400 workers were bussed through the picket line.

A TUC compromise deal, got together in March, was simply rejected out of hand.

Certainly by February, it was clear what was at stake. Malcolm Collar, one of the ladders' shop stewards, said "Whatever happens here is going to affect power stations for the next 20 years."

The ladders have got particularly high piece-rates — in an industry involving long periods of unemp-

loyment went to ladders, who represent 0.6% of the total membership.

If the joint union-management scabbing operation is successful, it will also mean breaking the GMWU as the TUC recognised union for ladders in England and Wales (the TGWU is recognised in Scotland).

Identical

The CEBG has already launched a virtually identical attack on the ladders at the Peterhead power station (Scotland); and at the two sites at Milford Haven, GMWU ladders are not being taken on until they agree to the employer's demands on wages and bonus payments.

For the GMWU the dispute has been official for most of the time — but this has not stopped the union leadership from desperately

At the delegate conference of ladders' shop stewards last Thursday, they headed off calls for an immediate national ladders strike. Faced with a network of determined bosses, spear-headed by the CEBG, and open scabbing by the unions organising the majority of workers in the industry, the GMWU is hoping the TUC will bail them out... before they are forced to escalate the dispute or be forced out of the industry.

Escalation is necessary — though to defend site organisation rather than the GMWU bureaucracy. And the escalation at this stage must be in the form of an immediate national ladders strike.

Given the stakes, that must be the first weapon, not one promised in a month's time, closer to the summer holidays, with the initiative still in the bosses' and the scabbing unions' hands.

And it needs to be spread immediately beyond the 500 ladders on CEBG sites to the 6000 ladders nationally. The other employers are directly involved and also taking the initiative, and they will go beyond the already agreed scabbing plans organised by the CEBG and union leaders like Baldwin.

The present dispute, and any escalation of it, should get the full support of all trade unionists and socialists. This includes the Communist Party — whose contribution to date has been mealy-mouthed cries of despair about the 'complexity' of the issues and pleas for unity, which have been a not very effective smoke-screen to hide the fact that its members and people associated with it have been involved in the strike-breaking.

The support needed includes both directly aiding the strikers and organising in the different unions to bring the strike breaking leaderships to account.

Gays: organising in the Civil Service

ERIC HINTON talked to SO about the gay caucus recently organised in the civil service unions.

AT THE 1978 CPSA conference a number of gays met and discussed the problem of discrimination in the Civil Service. In October 1978 the CPSA Gay Group was formally set up. As the group widened out to include members of other unions, in early 1979 the name was changed to 'Civil and Public Services Gay Group' (CPSGG).

Almost immediately the group was active in defending Richard, a civil servant who had promotion withdrawn because of his sexual orientation. Security vetting is one of the most serious obstacles faced by gay civil servants, since homosexuality is considered by the heads of the civil service to be a 'character defect' which disqualifies gays from many senior jobs.

Richard's appeal was unsuccessful and he was moved to another job, with a substantial loss of pay.

All civil servants are vulnerable to victimisation, since if they are convicted of any offence, it has to be reported to their department. Gay civil servants are thus put at risk by police harassment of gay

social venues and the frequent convictions of male gays for 'cottageing'.

One of the CPSGG's immediate campaigns is to get rid of this 'Big Brother' set-up.

Another important aspect of the CPSGG's work is to provide support and encouragement for gays 'coming out', i.e. personally and publicly proclaiming their sexuality.

The group's aims and existence have been advertised in the two Civil Service union journals, Red Tape and Opinion. From the debate which arose in their pages, over a dozen members were gained for the gay group, whose overall membership now stands at about 300.

Individual members of the group are active in other campaigns for gay rights such as CHE, Gay Activists Alliance, etc. As a whole the group is work as part of the newly set up Gay Rights at Work campaign, an umbrella organisation grouping many different gay groups with a specific orientation towards the trade union movement.

The Gay Rights at Work campaign is currently active in defence of John Saunders, a youth care worker who was recently sacked on the sole grounds of his homosexuality, and had the sacking later upheld by an industrial tribunal.

For further information on the CPSGG, contact Eric Hinton, 18 Highbury Terrace, London N5 1UR.

GRAHAM NORWOOD reviews the case for positive discrimination.

THE LABOUR Party is all about positive discrimination. When in Government, we — the rank and file — expect Labour to legislate in favour of working class people. We expect the alleviation of poverty, the removal of private property rights, improved working conditions, and many more measures directly benefiting working people. That the string of Labour Governments so far this century have not initiated positive discrimination in favour of the working class has been the main bone of contention between Labour and socialists.

But if we expect Labour to push these ideas in the country, why do we still have no positive discrimination within the Labour Party?

Why is it still true to say that, instead of getting working class people into Parliament, the Labour Party still reflects the deferential society by letting the silvery-tongued, professional, white, middle-aged and middle-class male dominate each selection conference up and down the country? Look, for proof of this, at the amazing condition of the Parliamentary Labour Party... fewer union-sponsored MPs than before, and fewer and fewer women, too.

Now there are just 11 female Labour Members of Parliament — scarcely the representation we want in a party which supposedly reflects the condition and

Making equality real

proportion of working people in Britain!

A new American book illustrates the necessity of positive discrimination. "The Bakke Case: The Politics of Inequality" concerns the famous legal case in which Allan Paul Bakke was granted the right to be admitted to the Davis Medical School in the University of California.

Bakke, a white professional, disputed the University's original decision not to admit him, because he found out that the course had 16 places set aside for those from "economically and educationally deprived groups" — which effectively meant ethnic groups in conditions of poverty and deprivation. Those 16 places were allocated not solely on academic qualification — so Bakke knew that his ability was greater than that of the 16 reserved-place students.

The American Supreme Court ambiguously found that Bakke should be admitted, but that positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged groups should continue to be used in setting the criterion for admission to institutes and educational establishments. This totally ambiguous and contradictory

result set the issue of positive discrimination back in the United States.

After it was initially advocated by well-meaning liberals in the 1960's, it was soon abandoned when affluence subsided into the normal capitalist existence of all-against-all in the race for jobs.

The value of this book to socialists in the Labour Party is not that it simply indicates the need to take account of race, nor that it discusses the value of American law. Instead, it is important because it illustrates in stark form the relationship between 'educational opportunity' and the nature of the capitalist economy. That relationship is inevitably soured by the nature of capitalism, where only a few can be winners in the occupational stakes. The fierce competition for the type of education that led to middle-class occupations, which arose once the economy contracted in America, quickly saw the liberals reneging on their commitment to affirmative action.

But is it not possible to see here, too, that groups are discriminated against — even inside the Labour Party?

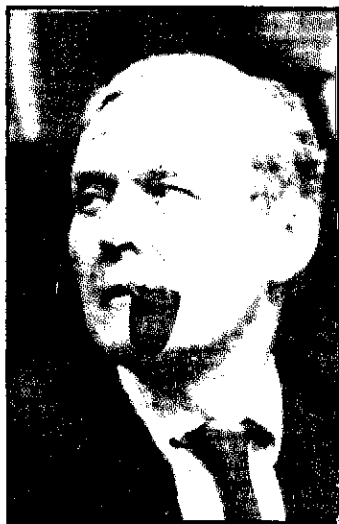
The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy therefore suggests a remedy which is only temporary but nonetheless necessary. It advocates the compulsory inclusion of at least one manual worker and one woman on each constituency short-list for Parliamentary selection. That means that at last every constituency will be forced to at least interview one person from each of these groups (and after all, there are more women than men in Britain, and more people from the working class than from any other socio-economic group.)

Naturally, one day the Labour Party will itself be socialist and will not reflect the deferential nature of capitalism — but in the meantime let us put positive discrimination high on our list of internal sophistications for the Labour Party.

And when the area reflects different ethnic communities, include those too on the shortlist for a Parliamentary candidate. In fact, why not let the constituency Labour Party compile a selection conference reflecting the community that candidate will fight to serve in Parliament?

Positive discrimination aims to give each individual an equal chance in the fight for the limited privileged occupations. It does not aim to give everyone a chance to develop their capacities — to do that a far more radical change in society would be needed. But the concept, by bringing into every sphere of society members of underprivileged groups with different social experiences and outlooks, would certainly play a part in changing matters.

Socialist Organiser



Speaking at the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy meeting at Labour's Special Conference, TONY BENN argued that the struggle of the new Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy is like 're-founding the Labour Representation Committee'. Jo Thwaites reports.

"THE STAKES are extraordinarily high. We must not fail, or Thatcher will win", Reg Race told over 500 people at the packed Campaign for Labour Party Democracy meeting at Labour's special conference. He was calling for a massive mobilisation of the entire labour movement to defend the gains of mandatory re-

selection and National Executive Committee control of the Manifesto, won at Brighton last year. All the indications are that the right wing is aiming to rescind those gains at the Blackpool Conference this year. Outlining right wing plans from groups like the Campaign for Labour Victory (with noted 'radicals' in it like William Rodgers and David Owen), Race pointed out who according to their plans would replace whom on the NEC... Jo Richardson, Joan Lester out... pipsqueak Healey in... Tony Benn and Eric Heffer out... David

Owen, Roy Mason in... It is quite obvious what the right wing is about, and it certainly isn't democracy and accountability. Bob Wright from the AUEW spoke on the need to take the fight for democracy in the Labour Party into the trade unions. Both together form the labour movement, and democracy in one will mean nothing unless there is a fight for democracy in the other. The need to organise all the forces on the left of the party to fight to defend the gains of Brighton was taken up by Frances Morrell in

a speech launching the new Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy. We face a serious situation, she said, and time is very short. In the three months before annual conference, the left has to win massive support in the party for the principles of democracy and accountability. The support must be not just passive agreement, but a commitment to take copies of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee broadsheet to sell and to convince all activists in the party of the arguments. We face big

THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY MEANS

Re-founding Labour representation

setbacks, not only in the Party but in the fight against the Tories if we do not win on democracy.

Morrell concluded by insisting that the Left must not be afraid of witchhunts. The right wing is prepared to use any tactic against us, and we must stand together.

Tony Benn made the final speech. The press, he said, has been reporting the fight for democracy and accountability as if it were a personal vendetta between him and the right wing. We are not looking for scapegoats — we are determined to make the Parliamentary Labour Party accountable to the working class, and to represent its wishes.

A break has arisen between the leadership of the party and the working class... it is the task of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy to remedy this and make sure it can't happen again.

He concentrated on five points:-

* That MPs must stop thinking that it is their god-given right to be reselected every General Election. They should stop thinking about the constituency that they represent as being 'their' constituency, and recognise that every GMC must be free to choose whom it wants to represent it every year.

* That members of the PLP should begin to consider themselves as Labour Party members as well. They must not think of themselves as being any different, or having any more rights in the Party, than any other Labour Party member.

* The leader of the Party must be elected by the whole Party and must be responsible to the whole Party,

not to the PLP.

* Patronage must be eliminated. "It's wrong that ministers are chosen as if they were the lords of a feudal monarchy". Government departments should publish minutes of meetings and there should be a Freedom of Information Act.

* Policy must be drawn up by the whole Party — not by the MPs or the Cabinet, but by annual conference — without any veto for the leader of the PLP.

Time is short, said Benn. He called for a massive number of meetings to re-educate the movement in the importance and relevance of democracy. We also have to counter the right wing argument that this is all simply an arid constitutional issue — "That's what they said about the Suffragettes and votes for women. The fact is that to get the democracy we need in the Party, the constitution has to be changed."

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy, Benn said, cannot simply be an *ad hoc* committee.

Benn concluded: "This campaign must represent the re-founding of the Labour Representation Committee" — the committee formed to represent the interests of the working class in Parliament at the beginning of this century which was the forerunner of the Labour Party.

Socialist Organiser supporters will be fighting to make sure this re-founding takes place — and takes place on the basis of socialist policies of class war, not the crippling social democratic theories of class harmony which have so often misled the labour movement.

LABOUR DEMOCRACY, UNION DEMOCRACY:

One battle, two fronts

by BRUCE ROBINSON

THE FIGHT for Labour democracy is about more than rule changes. If the decisions of last year's conference are defended and extended, if socialists bring the Labour leaders and MPs to account and impose policies in the interests of the working class, then the next Labour government will not be the stable pro-capitalist government we saw in 1974-79.

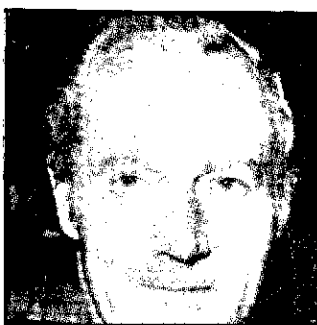
The right realises what is at stake and is fighting hard to maintain the status quo. It wants to reverse last year's decisions on reselection of MPs and the manifesto, and to reduce the left to impotence, so that they can carry on as before — Callaghan and Healey are already talking about the next Labour government introducing incomes policies.

They have large reservoirs of strength within bourgeois society — they have the support of the press, large sections of the trade union bureaucracy, and sections of the state apparatus. They are also trying to mobilise the passive Labour voters against the party activists. If they win at Blackpool, they are likely to step up witchhunting against the left.

Those fighting for accountability can only depend on



To beat the Labour Party autocrats, we must also defeat the union autocrats like Duffy and Basnett.



the rank and file activists in the trade unions and CLPs — the people who have a real interest in fighting the right wing policies and leadership of the party. They must now be rallied to take on the Right's offensive.

That is why the SCLV took the initiative in approaching other left wing groups committed to Labour democracy to start a campaign to defend and extend the gains of last year's conference. The Rank and File Mobilising Committee will not just be trying to win votes at the Blackpool conference, but also to mobilise and organise the left to take on the right, head-on. 4.

If we lose at Blackpool, it will probably be because one of the large unions (such as the AUEW) shifts its block vote against party democracy. Many on the left argue that the solution is to get rid of the block vote

altogether or to increase the CLPs voting power at the expense of the unions.

What is wrong with the block vote — and the way the unions are run generally — is that power is wielded by the full-time officials and union leaders who rarely take account of the feelings of their own members. Many of them are not even elected, let alone subject to recall. Politically, many have links with the Labour right. Their standard of living, way of life and daily associations make them much closer to the right wing Parliamentary politicians than to the rank and file.

In reality, particularly given the role of the unions in formulating Labour Party policy, trade union democracy and Labour Party democracy are inseparable. For example, Duffy of the AUEW is not just spearheading the counter-attack

of the right in the Labour Party: he is also attacking democracy in the AUEW with a proposal to install 200 appointed full-time branch officials; he also gave the Leyland bosses the green light to attack shop steward organisation when Derek Robinson was sacked.

Without democracy in the unions, democracy cannot be won in the Labour Party. Without a strong fighting left wing in the unions, left wing policies in the Labour Party are impotent, because only the industrially based power of working class direct action can defeat the bitter and violent resistance which the capitalists and their state machine would organise against socialist policies.

Just as Labour Party activists should orientate towards the industrial struggle going on around them, so we should also take up the fight for union democracy.

Even if the Right wins at Blackpool, our campaign will continue. In Galt'skell's words, "we will fight, fight and fight again!"

The battle to restructure and renovate our whole movement is a life and death question if we are to fight back the Tory attacks, bring down Thatcher and replace the Tories with a government that doesn't just consist of the Tories within our own ranks.

MOBILISE FOR LABOUR DEMOCRACY

1

Defend mandatory reselection

2

DEFEND THE NEC

3

NEC must decide the manifesto

4

The Party must elect the Leader

5

MAKE THE PLP ACCOUNTABLE

Rank & File Mobilising Committee

Launched by:

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Clause 4, Independent Labour Publications, Institute for Workers' Control, Labour Coordinating Committee, National Organisation of Labour Students, Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

Contributors include:

Tony Benn, Vladimir Derer, Rachel Lever, Ken Livingstone, Frances Morrell, Reg Race, Brian Sedgmore, Audrey Wise, Bob Wright

20p

"I BELIEVE we've got two Parties", Tony Benn writes in the new *Mobilise for Labour Democracy* broadsheet, "the Parliamentary Party and the Labour Party... the Party as a Party is squeezed out when we're in office..." Democracy in the Labour Party is vital, he argues, "if we are going to mobilise our full strength to change society, as distinct from sending some people into Government as Ministers..."

Other contributors include Vladimir Derer, Rachel Lever, Ken Livingstone, Frances Morrell, Reg Race, Brian Sedgmore, Audrey Wise, and Bob Wright. And an article from the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory explains why SCLV took the initiative to launch the Mobilising Committee

The broadsheet can be ordered at the rate of 20 for £2 plus 75p postage (or 20p plus 10p for individual copies), from the Mobilising Committee, c/o 10 Park Drive, London NW11. Or phone John Bloxam (01-607 7182), Jon Lansman (01-440 9396), David Smith (01-985 8635), or Barry Winter (0532 703664).