

# Socialist Challenge

**EXCLUSIVE**

## Daily Express pay-off to Healey — £8,616 a year

DENIS Healey, the deputy leader of the Labour Party, receives a substantial 'retainer' from Express Newspapers, publishers of the rabidly anti-labour *Daily Express*.

For the benefit of his services — a few articles a year — the Thatcherite newspaper group pays Healey £718 a month, amounting to an annual remuneration of £8,616.

The bankers' friend has disclosed this information to the London Freelance Branch of the National Union of Journalists, which he has applied to join. For years Healey has been a member of the anti-union Institute of Journalists, whose members regularly scab on NUJ strikes.

The Express group is headed by Victor Matthews, who was raised to the peerage by Thatcher for services to her party.

The latest contribution by the *Daily Express* to the Tory cause was its rubbishing last week of the People's March for Jobs, with the headline: 'How the spirit of Jarrow is being trampled shamelessly underfoot today'.

It was vicious enough for the march organisers to demand — and secure — the right of reply.



It was the *Express* which led the media trashing of the TUC's Day of Action last year, coining the 'Day of Shame' label, declaring that 'The unelected Lenin (sic) Murray and all the Bully Boys must be stopped from manipulating the people just for political aims', and finally taking the print unions to the High Court, in an effort to stop them striking on 14 May.

And, of course, the *Daily Express* resolutely supports Healey against Benn.

Given that the scale of Healey's retainer bears no relation to the fees normally paid for articles, his back-hander from Matthews is tantamount to a pay-off from the Tory Party itself.

Last Sunday he attempted to address the 150,000 people assembled in Hyde Park to join the People's March, and when they jeered him he attacked 'the handful of people trying to divide the movement'.

The unemployed will be pleased to know that coming on top of his parliamentary salary of £11,750, Healey's *Express* retainer gives him an annual income of over £20,000.

In the *Register of Members' Interests*, published by the House of Commons, Healey lists: 'Freelance journalist, writer, lecturer, broadcaster'.

He has yet to disclose the thousands he no doubt receives from these other activities — none of them undertaken in the interests of the working class.

**WE HAVE THE POWER...**

**MAGNIFICENT!** Despite the almost total lack of mobilising effort by the TUC, 150,000 people took to the streets last Sunday to support the People's March for Jobs.

It was a wonderful turnout, an impressive display of unity and determination. It underlined the deep working class hatred of Thatcher's government, and the depth of the demand for radical change.

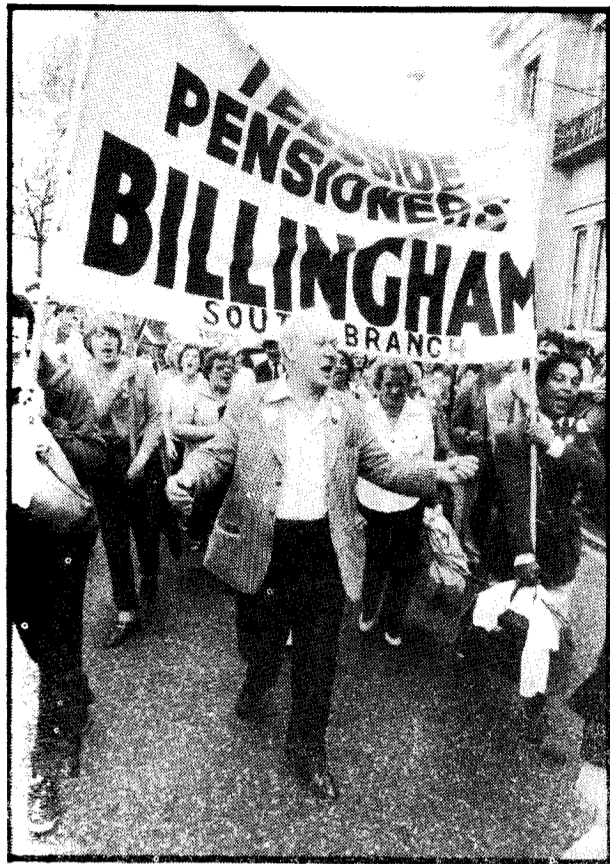
But one sad fact casts a shadow over all the efforts of the marchers, and the huge display of solidarity last Sunday. In itself, the People's March won't save a single job.

Only a determined campaign, led by the TUC and Labour Party, to mobilise the working class for industrial action to fight redundancy and bring down the Tories, can stem the flood of redundancies. Last Sunday showed we have the power to throw the Tories out. The leaders of our movement must see that it is used!

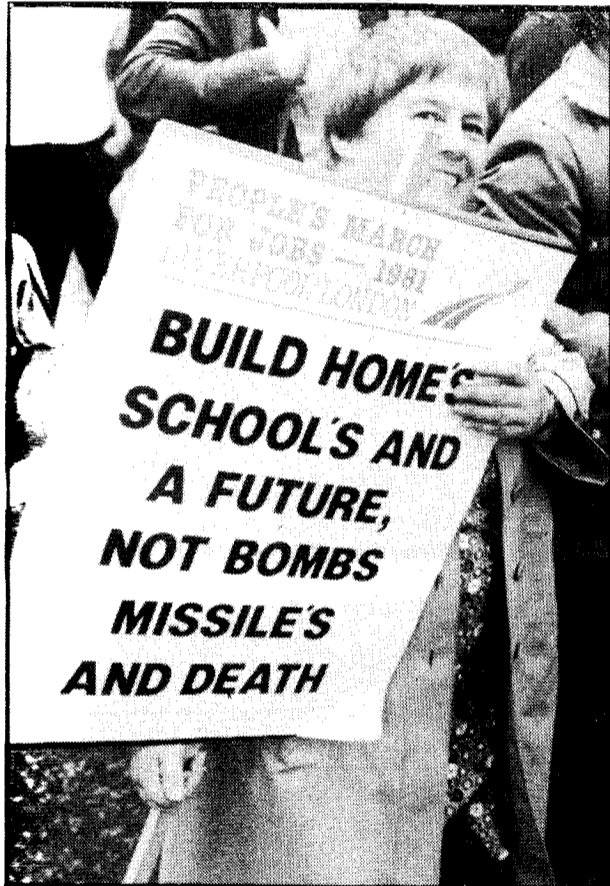
# KICK OUT THE TORIES

## Benn interview pages 7-9

# The beginning



Pensioners shout out 'Fension off Maggie!'



**ARTHUR Scargill stole the thunder at the People's March rally on Sunday afternoon with a triumphant call to occupy factories to protect jobs.**

The battle against the Tories would be won in the streets of Britain, he told the jubilant crowd.

The demonstration which greeted the People's Marchers was an overwhelming success not simply because it was the most enormous gathering since the rally against the Industrial Relations Act in 1972, reaching over 150,000 at its peak, not simply because every group of workers which has attempted to stand up to the government's monetarism was there, but because the climax of the march showed that a mass movement can be built now to bring down the government. However, the 500 marchers still return home this week without jobs.

## Argue

Tom Macafee from Gardner's recognised this when he pointed out that it was no easy task to argue for an occupation against redundancy with such odds as the CBI, the Engineering Employers Federation and the Tory government arrayed against you.

But it was vital to argue for that action. Macafee argued in order to turn the tide against unemployment and take on the political arguments that are raised on the shopfloor when redundancy is discussed.

For too long people have 'run away from the political arguments', he told the massive crowd.

It was a message the People's Marchers had been waiting to hear since



the send-off in Liverpool. We had demanded that the march went to people in struggle, like the UG Glass factory in Peasley, St Helens, the Laurence Scott workers in occupation at Manchester — to give them full support.

We, the marchers, had said that we wanted those fighting unemployment on our platforms, such as the Ansell's workers who had been locked out in their fight to protect jobs, and not those like Roy Hattersley and Dennis Healey who when in power pursued policies which cut jobs.

The crowd warmed to the People's Marchers' view. Denis Healey rightly got a rough ride in Hyde Park as had Roy Hattersley in Birmingham.

The organisers, the North-west, the Midlands,

**By Valerie Coultas, People's marcher from Liverpool to London**

and the South-east regions of the TUC — backed strongly by the Communist Party had originally stressed the non-political nature of the march, but the massive swing to Labour in the council elections made it obvious to many that our argument was with the Tory government.

## Backing

When workers take a stand and fight unemployment they need the fullest backing of the official movement. That means effective action to prevent the movement of all goods even if it does challenge Jim Prior's employment legislation — unlike the Ansell's strike where officials refused to enforce a boycott.

But above all the TUC has to give a clear lead to all those threatened with

redundancy and unemployment. Only such a lead will unite all the unemployed in action — black and white, male and female, young and old with all those in work.

The TUC has had policy calling for a 35-hour week for years now. As Ken Gill general secretary of the technical engineers union, TASS, told the crowd last Sunday; if Mitterand can win an election promising a 35-hour week, it's about time the British TUC led a real fight for it.

The People's March has proved that the workers have the power. The TUC leaders should use that power to get Maggie out or step down for those who are prepared to use it.

Dennis Skinner, Labour MP for Bolsover, made his viewpoint crystal

clear when he pointed out the differential effects of the recession on the two classes in Britain.

'There'll be no recession on 29 July,' he told the sympathetic crowd. 'Of course this is a political march', and 'I'm not prepared to allow the Tories to trample over my class for the next five years,' he added.

In many ways Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and Arthur Scargill outdid the march organisers with the demagoguery of their speeches. They certainly told the crowd what they wanted to hear, but it has to be remembered that it's the TUC that holds the trump card.

## What next

It's the TUC at the moment that determines how the power of the working class will be used in the fight to defend jobs and force the Tories out of office. But what will they do after the march?

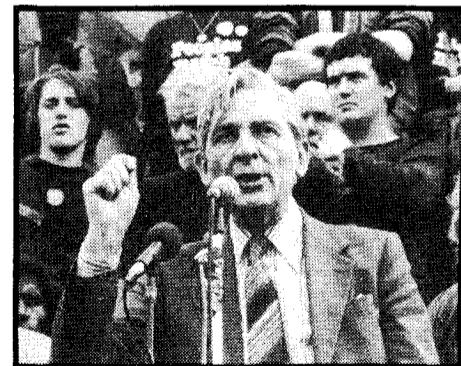
The South-east region is calling for a mass lobby of parliament when a new generation of school-leavers hits the dole queues in July. The TUC is talking of a march not of hundreds but of thousands to highlight further the plight of the jobless.

Unemployment centres are being opened in various towns, although TUC restrictions on their activities are cumbersome.

All protests and actions against unemployment must be welcomed, yet some are more useful than others. The unemployed themselves have to be allowed a voice within the trade union movement, so that they do not become isolated from those in work as they tended to in the 1930s.



Paul, one of the marchers says 'In Southall, Indian workers gave us a big welcome, gave us oranges and apples on the street — offered to take us home and feed us.'



Lee Jeans — 'They set an example to us all'

# of a tidal wave



Ellen Monaghan, Lee Jeans: 'We're here to fight unemployment. Think the turnout is marvellous — just what's needed to bring it home to the Tory government.'



Arthur Scargill, president of the Yorkshire miners says, 'This demonstration is part of the process of bringing to the nation the plight of unemployed. The next step is to win the fight on the streets, to campaign to force a general election to get rid of the Tory government.'

All photos by Graeme Cookson (Socialist Challenge)



Westminster ... not much satisfaction here. As Dennis Skinner says 'Biggest bunch of moonlighters in the country'.



Management gets clapped on way into Trafalgar Square as they chant '... good ... angry ... jobless'

# Union militants say: now the march is over...



Phil Davies on the People's March

**Phil Davies, Convenor at Schreiber's in Manchester has been on short-time for a year and now faces the threat of compulsory redundancy. He is an executive member of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades:**

'From the very start of this march we realised it was a political march because unemployment can only be solved by changing the government and getting a government in power that implements

proper socialist policies.

This is why I think the fight for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party is important and the policy debate behind it. Even though many people are still working, redundancies and short-time loom over their heads.

There's a tremendous feeling of resentment in the country — we've seen that as ordinary people have come out of their houses all the way along the route to support us.

It needs to be harnessed into a mass movement

to bring down the Tories.

I'm going to have a meeting with all the marchers when I get back to Manchester and we're going to put pressure on the trade unions to organise the unemployed. If the pressure is not kept up on the TUC and the Labour Party leaders after the march it'll all come to a full stop.

It's one thing to talk about unemployment from behind a desk in Congress house but it's quite another to get the TUC to spring into action.

**Neil Ward, unemployed executive member of the National Society of Metal Mechanics, from Birmingham:**

'I'm going to talk to my local Labour party in Erdington when I get back and NALGO, the local government union, which sponsored me, and tell them about the march.

**Mark Shaw, unemployed seaman from Liverpool who marched all the way:**

'I think the march has brought home to people how serious unemployment is. It's made people more aware of the plight of the unemployed especially down south.

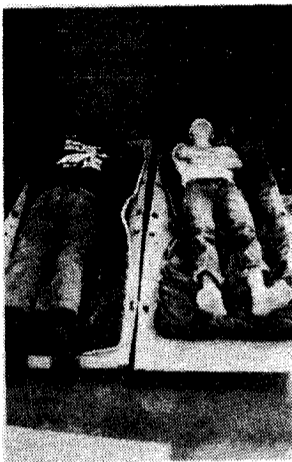
I want to set up an action committee to bring our sponsoring trade unions behind the unemployment campaign. I believe if you walk for a month and go home and do nothing you've failed in your object. You may as well just have stayed at home for a month.

It's made people on the march more politically aware. I've joined the 6/618 branch of the Transport union on the march and I intend to get actively involved in that.

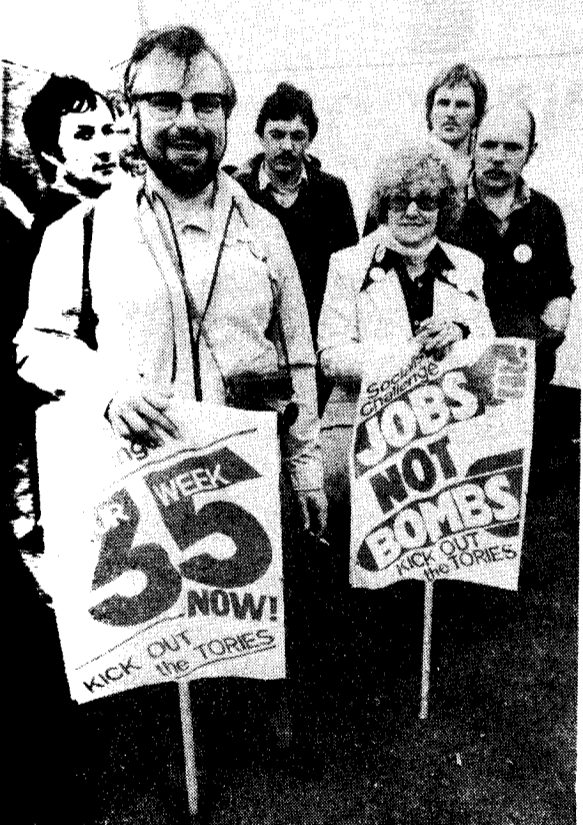
I think there's a lot of people who might get home and not bother. It's going to be hard to get an unemployed workers union off the ground but the unemployed have been ignored for too long.

We've been on the outside looking in and it's about time we came in from the cold and made our voices heard. I want to see an unemployed section in every union for a start.

It's only now that employed workers are beginning to show an interest in the unemployed because they realise it can happen to them any day.'



I'd like to see one-day national strikes starting with the miners, railway workers and then the power workers to bring down this government.'



## Post office engineers vote with their feet

THE Post Office Engineering Union's conference this week failed to debate a resolution urging support for Tony Benn.

With 700 delegates attending a fringe meeting for Tony Benn and only 200 at a meeting with Denis Healey, the union executive rejected the conference motion on the deputy leadership issue. All motions on the Labour Party were talked out and the executive was forced to withdraw its proposition to overturn the Wembley decision.

ROCK CAMPBELL, branch secretary of City branch of the POEU and chairperson of the National Broad Left spoke to Socialist Challenge after the conference debate on the Labour Party.

In the light of important decisions facing the Labour Party, the POEU leadership did its usual thing and made sure that we did not reach the important issues — the

Labour Party deputy and the Wembley decision — that most delegates wanted to vote on.

'The two fringe meetings with Benn and Healey obviously indicated to the leadership how the delegates viewed the importance of these issues and in the traditional manner of that elected body they failed to face the issue.

'As far as I'm concerned it is essential that we mount a campaign throughout all branches of the POEU giving them all the facts on these issues, and asking them through the democratic procedure of their branches to write to Head Office to inform it of their decision on how the union should vote at any future Labour conference.'

## £15m for Rover's — a joke, but a dangerous one

By Patrick Sikorski

THE £15m offer for Rover Solihull BL car plant from a consortium of Midlands' business people led by the Conservative MP for the Birmingham constituency of Yardley, Mr Gilroy-Bevan, is a joke in terms of the sort of money needed in the car industry these days.

But if this consortium is serious it can only mean bad news for the Rover workers. This offer either means buying up the Rover name on the cheap, massively rationalising the workforce and producing small numbers of luxury cars or pure and simple asset stripping.

Shipbuilders declared itself bankrupt, having failed to get government money to prop it up.

## Victim

It was the biggest victim of the Heath government's 'lame duck' policy. The 8,449 workers occupied against the closure and began a work-in.

The stewards called for nationalisation or failing that, for a private buyer to take over all four yards without loss of jobs.

But when a Texan businessman Wayne Harbin put in an offer for the Clydebank yard the stewards pushed through a separate deal creating the Marathon yard. The other

three yards were later formed into a company called Govan Shipbuilders.

The private speculators got a bargain and the workers picked up the bill.

## Cut

Within a year of the end of the dispute the workforce had been cut by 25 per cent with the loss of 2,449 jobs.

Under the deal signed by the shop stewards with Marathon all unofficial strikes were banned for 4 years and a system of binding arbitration was introduced resulting in large loss of earnings for those taking action outside of procedure.

At the Govan group the shop stewards agreed to a 120 per cent increase in productivity.

At both Govan and Marathon demarcation lines were smashed and despite having already suffered a pay freeze for 18 months a pay deal of only half the initial amount demanded was agreed.

Rover workers have no interest in putting Mr. Gilroy-Bevan in clover for the rest of his life but every interest in saving each and every job at Solihull.

## Pave

Involvement of the Rover unions in talks with alternative buyers will pave the way for more redundancies. One of the most famous fights against job loss proves the point.

In June 1971 a consortium of four shipbuilding yards called Upper Clyde



UCS: one of the last Tory government's 'lame ducks'



## Laurence Scott occupation

Frank Stubbs says on behalf of the Laurence Scott Electromotors' shop stewards: 'We collected £1661 on the People's March for our occupation and want to thank Socialist Challenge and its supporters for all the help they gave us.'

LSE workers are stepping up their fight for jobs after talks with management came to nothing. file name caps

**NATIONAL MARCH AND RALLY AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT**

**CARDIFF 4 JULY**

ASSEMBLE: 11 AM NATIONAL MUSEUM  
RALLY: 1.15 PM PONTCANNIA PARK



# Ireland the No.1 Issue

By Geoff Bell

ACCORDING to Margaret Thatcher, speaking in Belfast last Thursday, the Provisional IRA has a 'discredited cause' and is playing 'what may well be its last card'.

Thatcher is, by all accounts, something of an optimist, and in making these pronouncements she is following a long line of British politicians who have over several years declared that the IRA is as good as dead.

Any balanced assessment of the progress of the cause of the Provisional IRA would have to conclude that its campaign for a re-unified Ireland, free of all British interference, has rarely looked so promising.

media.

In one respect it was Margaret Thatcher herself who testified to one breakthrough. This concerned the talks she had in December with Ireland's premier, Charlie Haughey.

Many different interpretations were placed on these talks, on what was discussed and on where they would lead. But the fact that they took place was the first open acknowledgement by a British politician for many years that the situation in the north of Ireland was of interest to the southern government, and that a search had to be made for new 'institutional structures' which at least paid lip service to the fact that Ireland was one nation.

When Labour's Roy Mason was in charge of



Nationalist youth have led the struggle against British imperialism

the British regime in the north of Ireland the emphasis was on a 'military solution'. The lie was that the fighters against British imperialism in Ireland were mere 'criminals' and 'godfathers'. Although Thatcher has repeated such nonsense over the hunger strike issue she and her north of Ireland secretary, Humphrey Atkins, have not left it there.

Interviewed in the United States on 6 May, Atkins said: 'I believe everyone who is concerned about the future of Nor-

thern Ireland ought to get together and really sit down and think how we can find a way forward to the problems that have been here for 60 years.'

Such statements are evidence that despite everything Britain has thrown at the fighters for Irish self-determination, these last 12 years — from the SAS to internment; from murder to torture; from a compliant British

media, to in this country, the Prevention of Terrorism Act — the struggle for Irish national liberation has continued. It is

now pulling British society by the scruff of the neck, shaking its complacency, and demanding attention.

The credit for this goes — without reservation — to the anti-imperialist movement in Ireland.

It might persuade Britain, as it has done, to try and limit its own military involvement by transferring some responsibility to the Ulster Defence Regiment and the RUC.

These points are not made in an attempt to preach from the sidelines of the British left.

are held by important sections of the Catholic working class. Fergus O'Hara, also a member of the National H Block Committee, won no less than 45 per cent of the nationalist vote cast in his area.

It is easy to talk of 'turning points' but there is no doubt that the H Block struggle has reached a crucial phase. For most of the 20 years, Socialist Challenge's Irish coverage has concentrated on at least alerting our readers to the simple fact that a war was going on in Ireland and that the British are the villains in that war.

**Socialist Challenge**

**TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!**

**NOW!**

An example is a front page 'news analysis' in the *International Herald Tribune* last Friday which was headlined 'Britons Again Questioning Role in Ulster'.

It reported the opinion polls in Britain which had supported withdrawal of troops; Tony Benn's statements on Ireland, and 'the fact that Bobby Sands, the first of the hunger strikers to die, was elected to parliament during his fast was a major blow to the Thatcher government's contention that the IRA guerrillas have no widespread support among Catholics'.

There is no point disguising that such developments have been some time in coming. An example can be taken from the very first issue of *Socialist Challenge*.

This reported, exclusively, information about the career of one Tim Creasey, who had just been appointed the British army's General Officer Commanding in the north of Ireland.

The story disclosed that while commander of the Sultan of Oman's armed forces from 1972-75, Creasey had been accused of overseeing the widespread torture of political prisoners, accusations which had been testified to by the Middle East equivalent of the Red Cross.

If such a story were released today it would at least get a mention on the front page of the *International Herald Tribune*. Certainly, it would receive considerably more coverage than it did in 1977. *Ireland is no longer the 200th issue, either in British politics or in the priorities of the world's*



The funeral of Francis Hughes brought out tens of thousands of mourners

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**IRELAND TORTURED**

Scream as loud as you like - Europe won't listen

The Provisional IRA which started as a right-wing political grouping, now proclaim themselves revolutionary socialists. While the H Block campaign has been inspired by the heroism of the individual prisoners, its political clout has come from the mass nature of the campaign.

For the world at large, the 100,000 people who took part in Bobby Sands' funeral procession, silent though they were, spoke louder than the mightiest bomb which has been planted in the north of Ireland.

This is not to suggest that the IRA should now dump their guns. The memory of the civil rights movement and how it was batoned and shot off the streets by the Unionists and then the British army should never be forgotten.

The fact that Thatcher allowed an elected member of parliament to die shows what scant regard the imperialists have for the democratic process when it goes against them.

It can also be said that some of the spectacular military achievements of the IRA have made the British sit up and take notice, and that the majority opinion in Britain for troop withdrawal, as reflected in many opinion polls, does stem from a sense of 'war-weariness'.

But a military struggle, by itself, will not free Ireland of imperialist domination, even though

## Action

It should be acknowledged that through the H Block movement the Republicans have taken part in a campaign which has consciously subordinated the armed struggle to the masses in action.

Whatever the outcome now of the H Block issue, the way it has been fought has reactivated many Irish militants and has politically educated thousands of Irish people, especially the youth who were not around during the mass campaigns of the late 1960s and early '70s.

The Irish Trotskyist organisation People's Democracy, in alliance with Bernadette McAliskey, has argued for this strategy for some years. The thread of this approach can be seen running through the Coalisland conference against repression in 1977, Bernadette's European election campaign, and the Burntollet Commemoration march.

Bernadette is internationally respected as the leading figure of the H

**Socialist Challenge**

**BOBBY SANDS MP**

In memory of Bobby Sands

'We the risen people will turn tragedy into triumph'

**FREEDOM FIGHTER**

Block campaign, and her considerable political influence has been a vital factor in the successes of the campaign.

The recent election of two PD members as councillors in Belfast illustrates the respect in which they

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Amnesty International report on Northern Ireland

**BRITISH TORTURE**

Socialist Challenge has never disguised the fact that it is firmly on the side of the anti-imperialists.

That is why we reject half-baked notions such as the deployment of UN troops in the north; it means asserting more forcefully than ever that neither Tony Benn, nor a partnership of Thatcher and Haughey can decide the future of Ireland, but only the Irish people themselves.

No one can now say that the opportunities for spreading the acceptance of such principles in the British labour movement are not there. Although the words 'Sinn Fein' are translated as 'ourselves alone', the anti-imperialists in Ireland must not be seen to stand alone in the coming weeks and months.

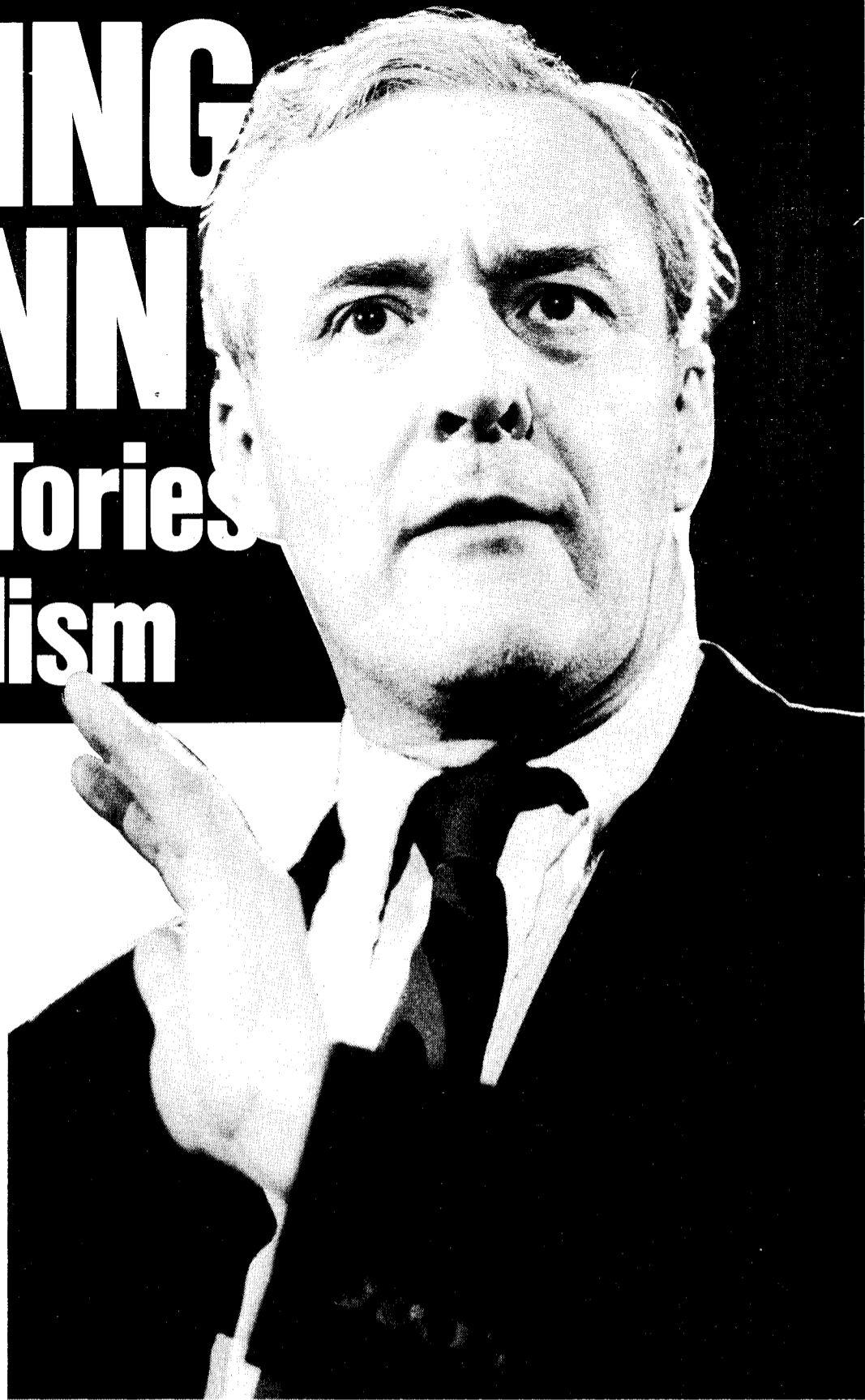
*By fighting on for the years they have, in spite of setbacks, confusions and the world's disinterest they have emerged from the darkness. Now, it's time we did our bit.*

Photo: REPUBLICAN NEWS



# QUESTIONING TONY BENN

## From fighting the Tories to winning socialism



**Why are you standing for deputy leader of the Labour Party? What have the successes of the campaign been so far?**

Officially it is to elect a deputy leader. It's the first election on a wider franchise and people fought very hard to get a wider franchise, to get greater accountability. We arrived on a wider franchise which I personally supported, 40-30-30, and I think that is a good franchise.

It's testing that mechanism, but the real advantage is two or three quite separate things.

First of all it is opening up policy. Policy is being discussed, primarily at union conference, where it isn't always discussed, because they have a choice to make. Secondly, the constituencies now there is a focus for the discussion of principle party policies.

Next, to some extent it anticipates the Clause 5 Manifesto meeting because if the party

**'Blowing out some of the smoke from the smoke-filled rooms has been a good thing'**

really does go for implementation of conference policy through its choice of deputy leader, it will be extremely difficult for anyone to veto it.

I would be very surprised if the ripples of this year's democratic exercise within the trade union movement didn't spread far beyond the confines of the deputy leadership.

It has also exposed what many people had suspected, that there is a body of opinion in the upper echelons of the party who actually agreed that there wouldn't be an election, who didn't want an election. Blowing out some of the smoke from the smoke-filled rooms has been a good thing.

**Given Clive Jenkins' statement about the leadership battle, you must be very encouraged by the decision of the conference of the Association of Scientific, Technical, Managerial and Supervisory Staff (ASTMS) to support you.**

I am really. It's logical, because ASTMS supports the policies in my election platform. As the union conferences progress, you're getting better decisions on policy as a result of the political agitation and discussion. For example, USDAW came out for unilateral nuclear

Last weekend at a meeting of the right-wing Labour Solidarity Campaign, Leo Abse MP accused Tony Benn of having a 'lust for power' and that he was challenging the sovereignty of parliament. This theme is, of course, amplified by the mass media.

The *Observer's* political correspondent made a more sober assessment on Sunday. Describing Benn's call for Labour governments to be bound by conference decisions as a 'seductive and appealing message not only to the constituency activists but also to many in the unions', Adam Raphael added that Denis Healey 'looks more and more like a great whale stranded on a hostile beach'.

The *Observer's* headline asked: 'Is the Benn tide unstoppable?' — a remarkable turnabout from the derision which greeted Benn's decision to challenge Healey announced barely two months ago.

The large majority of socialists have enthusiastically backed Benn's election campaign, without necessarily agreeing with his policies. In an hour-long interview, published on this and the following two pages, PHIL HEARSE and BRIAN HERON questioned Tony Benn on major aspects of these policies. On pages 10 and 11 we publish our critique of Benn's positions.

disarmament and APEX came out for national executive control of the Labour Party election manifesto.

So the union contribution to the debate is being radicalised by the discussions. In some cases, because they have to make a choice on the deputy leadership question.

**Trade union militants are thus getting involved in the internal struggles of the Labour Party, particularly to push forward the fight for democracy and to support your campaign. Don't you think that leaders of the Labour Party, particularly leaders of the left, should get involved in supporting the industrial struggles of workers? Don't you think that leaders of the Labour Party should be calling for industrial action to fight the threat of unemployment and redundancy?**

Well, if you say involved in in-

dustrial struggles, then I have all my time. I was up in the Lee Jeans factory the other day, I've just sent a message to the Laurence Scott workers — from UCS, to the River Don, right the way through.

I've always regarded that as the function of a Labour MP — I'm a trade unionist as well. But I don't think it's for the parliamentary leadership to tell people what to do.

It's very easy for someone who's not directly involved in a dispute to call on others to make great sacrifices. I think they have to determine that, and the role of the Labour Party is to support them.

**As a leader of the movement as a whole, don't you think there is a place to make an appeal for action to take on the government?**

The People's March for Jobs was important because it came out of the North-west; it wasn't even demanded by the TUC

General Council — they came in rather late.

I don't think it would have been helpful if the NEC of the Labour Party had issued a call for a People's March for Jobs.

I think the role of leadership is to analyse, to explain, to encourage, to support, but not to order or call in that sense. That has to be done by the people directly involved.

Otherwise if things go wrong, the people who are actually engaged in doing it are doing it under instructions, and they're not doing it out of their own discussion and motivation.

I think that is, dare I say it, an elitist illusion of the left — the idea that you've got to look to the top. On everything else the left says the rank and file has the primary role, but on this question we expect you to give a call. Now there's a certain dilemma here...

**Can we put it the other way round? At the base there are many militants who think that a national lead at this time is absolutely essential if they're going to have effective action. For example, at the Rover plant they are prepared to take action, they have decided that officially in their resolutions, but they are very well aware that isolated and alone they don't stand as much chance as if they've a national call...**

Well I agree... but then you have to...

**...and then they look to the national leaders...**

Then you have to make connecting links across. The tri-partite arrangement between coal and steel and transport is useful, as are joint shop stewards committees, but if in the end you are saying we should replace the government by industrial

**'That is an elitist illusion of the left — the idea that you've got to look to the top'**

action, my own opinion is that without winning the argument you can't build socialism. Because that is done by a coup, and coups can never build support.

So whereas I would be strongly in favour of a general strike to defend a gain, the idea that there is a short-cut to socialism through industrial action is one of the great illusions.

When a Labour government is elected with a radical programme, enormous pressure will be put on it by the international community, by the bankers and so on, and unless you can rely on the overwhelming support of working people, you won't be able to stand the strain.

This short cut to power via industrial action is, I think, revolutionist talk, it's not revolutionary. Here I might

disagree with Socialist Challenge, but my own view is that you have to do it by consent, and support people in struggle but not try to establish a leadership role which tells people you go on strike, you defy the government over local government finance — that is quite wrong.

**But don't you think people's ideas are changed through action and not just through argument...**

Yes, but I'm not arguing against action.

**But the miners' strikes which took place recently had the potential of bringing down the government, if the Tories had stood out against them, that was a real possibility. Do you think that was a good thing or a bad thing, do you think it should be supported? Or put it another way. In 1974 there's no doubt that the miners' strike did bring down the government and created the basis for the government being defeated in the general election. Don't you think that should have been supported by Labour MPs?**

Well, I did support the miners in 1974 and 1972, but I think

continued on next page

you are seriously deceiving people if there is revolutionist talk, when only a minority of people in this country have got hold of a socialist analysis.

They get it through action and struggle, that is not the same as telling other people to go into the battle to replace the electoral system, in the hope you could build socialism — you'd end up with Stalinism.

**You mentioned that the next Labour government elected on a radical programme should attempt to fulfill the 1974 Manifesto, including a fundamental shift of power and wealth to working people and their families. Surely this is going to put you in massive conflict with the banks, finance houses, IMF and so on. And although we can see the point that you will need massive popular support...**

You sure will.

**Surely you will need something else as well, which is your hands on the actual power, the money, the finance, the big monopolies, the key levers from that point of view? In other words, surely the first step is to take these things over?**

Then you've got to argue about the policy of the Labour Party. It's no good me saying that it's got to be that way, I've got to persuade the Labour Party.

**But you yourself stand for that?**

I support Clause 4. I think that the process by which you bring about Clause 4 has to be first of all the persuasion of the Party of the relevance of socialism, and for thirty years no one has talked about socialism.

On the whole I think socialist ideas are probably stronger now, a lot of socialist agitation has gone on in the country over the last few years.

The experience of office will create the demand for radical change, and if you say, and I think you're right, that the international financial community might try to bring enormous pressure upon a freshly elected Labour government, you then

**'If you're saying this is the Allende question... I call that revolutionist tittle tattle'**

have to rely on the support of the trade unions, the Labour Party and the public who voted for you.

But if you're saying that this is the Allende question, then I wouldn't be bothering about any of this policy making I would be out in the fields at night drilling. I call that revolutionist tittle tattle.

If one abandons persuasion for the pursuit of arms then you're talking about a different ball-game.

The difficulty for the socialist analysts is this: they have to analyse where power is — the banks, landowners, military, civil service, media, multinationals, Brussels.

But you mustn't use their analysis of the centres of power on the other side as an instrument for spreading pessimism and hopelessness among people....

**On the contrary...**

...because actually there is the power to win, of course there's the power to win.

# QUESTIONING TONY BENN

## From fighting the Tories to winning socialism



**But let's take that point. It was a major battle for the 1945-51 Labour government to nationalise steel. It was a major battle that was lost even to nationalise the Tate and Lyle sugar company.**

**Is it not the case that taking over sections of the commanding heights of industry and finance, to implement your programme, is going to put you at loggerheads with those people?**

I think it is. But I think a determined government with public support can carry the day. If there was an attempt at a military coup against a military government trying to do what it was elected to do, then I think the case for industrial action to restore democracy would be overwhelming.

This whole argument — are you a reformist or a revolutionary, are you parliamentary or extra-parliamentary is a highly theoretical area, with very little real meaning.

What is presented as revolutionary is really, I think, a critique not of reform having been tried and failed, but reform not having been tried.

**But surely the difference between being a revolutionary and a reformist, is that the revolutionaries think that a test of strength between a government which genuinely wants to carry through what you would call reforms, what we call revolutionary measures, and the capitalist class, is inevitable and that the capitalist class won't give up its power, the big monopolies, the finance houses and the banks...**

...without violence

**...without violence, without attempting to use its state apparatus.**

I'm not sure about that. Wasn't it Marx who said that the United Kingdom was one country where you might bring about socialism by peaceful means?

**Only to reverse it later.**

Maybe, but that was a first stage, and I think the inevitability of violence which is really what you're saying, if I believed it, and I don't for a moment, it would lead me to abandon politics and get out my old tin hat and find a second hand rifle and go out and drill.

If you did that you would



'It was the electoral process which brought Heath down' — above: the miners' picket at Saltley Gate

enormously strengthen the right. It wouldn't be serious, but it would be serious enough to frighten people.

It would divert the Labour Party and the trade unions from their real task. Where the trade union movement is very strong, as you said before, it played a part, not in destroying the government — this is a great mistake that the far left and the Tories both make — it was the British people who defeated Heath, because they were not prepared to back him in a conflict with the British working class movement.

If Heath had won the election, do you imagine the miners would have been in a strong position — not at all. So it was the electoral process which brought Heath down.

**The election of Mitterand in France is tremendously encouraging. One of the things which he's promised is the immediate introduction of a 35-hour week.**

**Do you think a Labour government should legislate for a 35-hour week, and don't you think that this would again put you into conflict with the bosses?**

Well let's be clear. Everything that we wanted to do in our

manifesto is going to bring us into conflict with the Pentagon, with Washington, with the bankers, sections of the civil service and so on, so you can take that for read.

We fudged it in the '79 manifesto; we said we were in favour of a 35-hour week but it would have to be on a European scale, which was another way of saying that we wouldn't do it unless other people did.

The pressure now for the shorter working week, for work sharing, as an element — not the dominant element — in dealing with unemployment is of great importance.

I couldn't tell you with any authority what the next Labour government will do about anything, because so far we haven't succeeded in dealing with the problem of the manifesto.

That's why we're spending so much time on party democracy. Until we've sorted that out there is no knowledge until three weeks before polling day what commitment there is, and there's no certainty that what commitment there is will be implemented.

**For us, the 35-hour week is important both from the point of view of solving unemployment, and also as a means of driving against**

**import controls, which imply an alliance between sections of the trade unions and the employers.**

I don't think that import controls would solve the crisis in Britain, any more than devaluation or wage controls. I have never said so. But I don't find any socialist theory which leads me to the belief that the free movement of goods and capital is an integral part of international socialism.

We have import controls at the moment — a poor person can't afford to buy from abroad. And the planning of trade, and production seems to be perfectly logical.

The left critique of import controls, which I fully understand because I'm an internationalist — that you use it to export your unemployment, depends entirely on how you do it. If you plan your trade in such a way that you return to full employment, world trade rises. But if you do it in such a way as to export unemployment, you are damaging the French or the Japanese or the South African working class.

If you have nationalised industry, with workers' control and compensation according to need, some multinational company can bring in cheap goods to destroy that industry under

the guise of free trade — and when it's been destroyed it can raise its prices again.

**Surely the context that you're talking about is one where there is generalised workers' control — a planned economy — while the context in which many of the trade union leaders and many of the leaders of the CBI are raising the demand is quite different.**

In that case let's talk about what I'm talking about, and not take the view that trade protection will solve the crisis. Some of the critique of the role of trade planning in the Labour socialist industrial strategy seems as if it's just what the CBI might argue, but it's not.

**One of the points in the five-point programme you have put forward for your election campaign is the idea that we should not accept Cruise or Trident missiles, and that we should have a non-nuclear policy.**

**This implies that we should stay in NATO. Do you support the resolution carried at the ASTMS conference that Britain should withdraw from NATO?**

I am basing myself on conference policy. The conference rejected a request to leave NATO, but said that we should have a non-nuclear policy, like Canada's. That is a perfectly possible position. The Labour Party's present position on NATO is that we should aim to dissolve the alliance and the Warsaw Pact and create a European security system.

I don't think that nuclear weapons are really a defence strategy. The Tories are destroying the navy to produce the Trident, so we are seeing defence reduced in order to produce a weapon which could never be used without the destruction of our country. I think the non-nuclear defence strategy and being a non-nuclear member of NATO is a perfectly logical position.

Maybe the Labour Party will go beyond it and say we should leave NATO. I think it's unlikely, because there are a lot of people of my age-group who remember the pre-war years when the attempt by the left to get collective security against fascism led to the attempt to maintain the League of Nations and all the rest of it.

My generation couldn't possibly sit back and say whatever happens anywhere else doesn't concern us anymore.





policy. I didn't make much of it publicly, but I put it forward in the Shadow Cabinet and in the Tribune group, and got no support. At that stage, when the man was dying, it didn't seem to me to offer anything immediately, but it did highlight the fact that the British policy was totally inadequate.

We say to them you can't shoot. You shouldn't starve yourself to death. You shouldn't stand, and if you do stand in an election you can't serve. The whole blanketing out of a political breakthrough was highlighted.

I pointed out that the whole of British imperial history was littered with people who began in British prisons and ended up

**'The real question is how do you break out of a situation of which at least a major part is caused by the presence of British troops, who are alleged to be there to solve the situation'**

as prime ministers having tea with the Queen, including Mugabe, the most recent example, who went from terrorism to statesman via an election.

That argument didn't carry much weight with colleagues because they didn't want to face the real question, which is how do you break out of a situation of which at least a major part is caused by the presence of British troops who are alleged to be there to solve the situation.

**Perhaps the first step in breaking out, as you put it, is to break from bi-partisanship, at least at the level of suggesting that there is an alternative policy. The leadership of the Labour Party rapidly moved to shore up the bi-partisan policy.**

I don't want to comment on other people. Undoubtedly the election of Sands was extremely significant, apart from anything else because it was intelligible internationally. People saw it as the death of a British MP in protest against his prison conditions.

The fact that the secretary-general of the United Nations, Mrs Gandhi, the Pope, and the European Commission of Human Rights came in began the process. I think my interview, my speeches, and the Labour Committee on Ireland meeting helped to break the shell.

One can see the whole thing on the move. It takes a little time for that deep feeling to express itself, not only in the Labour Party. You mustn't think nothing is happening — it is happening. By the end of the year, maybe by this conference, you'll find Labour Party policy totally different.

**The struggle which has gone on in the Labour Party has made positive advances and looks like making more. But surely in the end that depends on the organisation and support of millions of working people. Those fighting for democracy have to reach out and identify themselves with the struggles going on.**

If you put it like that, I'm with you 100 per cent of the way.

I don't want my argument about revolutionary language against reformist language to confuse the fact; we cannot build socialism in Britain without the solid support of millions of working class people. When we have that, nothing on earth can stop us.

*always agree with the methods they use.*

**What do you think of Don Concannon's action in going to see Bobby Sands when he was dying, to tell him to abandon his hunger strike?**

I won't comment on another colleague. My argument on the prison issue is that it is a way of narrowing the argument.

If all that we are allowed to discuss on Northern Ireland at the moment is the prison regime, the supposition is that the future of Northern Ireland will continue to be one where the prison population will continue in its present form, and that the key question is how they dress and what their status is.

My own opinion is that it's a political question and that one of the incredible tragedies of the present situation is that the labour movement has not really been allowed to vote on Ireland.

The Labour Cabinet hardly ever discussed Ireland — I think it discussed it during the Ulster workers' strike. I tried to get a discussion on Ireland in the Cabinet, including the prisoners question, without success. When we discussed the manifesto we were told it was

**'The Labour Cabinet hardly ever discussed Ireland'**

too late for us to say anything, so it wasn't in.

When we set up a study group, we had a small preliminary group of members of the NEC, and I and others got an agreement that the objective was to bring about a united and independent Ireland. That was ruled out in favour of a whole range of solutions. When Tony Saunois (the Labour Party Young Socialists representative on the NEC) brought his resolutions on prison conditions, which were not limited simply to the IRA prisoners, it was defeated.

I think we now have to go for the whole thing; that the Six Counties were born out of violence — 75 of the 105 MPs elected in 1918 were in favour of independence, and partition was brought about by violence. I've always concentrated on this aspect. I think the rest is too narrow. It doesn't get to the real guts of the problem.

**Yet the prison issue is the focal point of the campaign to establish that it is a political struggle.**

I understand that, but my job is to transmit that message; not to get involved in the trigger to get that message understood.

I did strongly urge the



Photo: Dave Hampshire

**Isn't there a forceful argument that being a non-nuclear part of NATO means that you base yourself on the nuclear part of NATO for Britain's defence — in effect, on the United States?**

The Daily Mirror commented on the Labour Party decision that it made no sense; that once you abandon nuclear policy, you abandon the basis on the NATO alliance.

Rubbish. You could put it to me the other way. If I'm against nuclear weapons, why am I in favour of high explosives which kill thousands of people? That's another argument that's used; that anything short of pacifism is illogical.

We have to try to work out what is the most sensible way of resolving the choices open to us. I am in favour of defence and of the idea of collective defence. I am not in favour of a nuclear defence strategy, and I'm certainly not in favour of the United States power system converting us into a colonial airbase.

I think a lot of people are now coming to this view. If we move towards a nuclear-free zone in Europe we really could turn the tide, which would otherwise lead to nuclear war.

**In Britain and internationally over the past few years we've seen a series of attacks on abortion rights. What can we do to stop these attacks?**

Do you think that Labour MPs should continue to have an individual right of conscience on the issue, or should they be obliged to support Labour Party policy, which is for free abortion on demand?

I support the conference policy. I think the women's movement quite rightly puts control of their own bodies very high on their list, and not being dominated by a male parliament on issues which are for them.

I'm not in favour of expelling MPs because they may on individual matters find it hard to go along with party policy. The great characteristic of the left — as compared to the right when it dominated the party — is that it's not always out for blood if everyone doesn't come into line.

I have an element of personal tolerance in these matters towards others with whom I disagree. Ultimately, as on everything else, you've got to win the support of people. The Italian referendum shows that's possible.

**Among others, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy argues that in any reselection list a woman and a black candidate should be included among those put forward; that there should be positive discrimination. What is your position on this?**

It's a difficult one. I am interested in socialism and if I were obliged to put a right-wing black and a right-wing woman on the list and select them against a left-wing man, I would find that difficult.

The women's movement and the black movement should affiliate to the Labour Party and have people at every selection conference. They should see that the rights of women and of the black communities are represented in the party when the selection is made.

I think affiliation is what we should go for — just as the miners are affiliated. We don't have a quota for miners. Miners are there in parliament because in areas where the miners are strongest and they have a strong delegation on the general committee they put a miner in. In areas where the blacks are strongest you'd expect

a black to come in, and in areas where the women's group is strongly organised you'd expect a woman to come in.

I don't rule out a quota, but I think it's a by-passing of the

**'If I were obliged to put a right-wing black and a right-wing woman on the list and select them against a left-wing man, I would find that difficult'**

real issue, which is how to get a united, autonomous working-class and socialist movement to express itself institutionally through a single political party, linked to the unions, in the House of Commons and elsewhere.

**Do you think the far left should be affiliated to the Labour Party, and if so, is there any practical possibility that this could occur?**

They can join the party individually, but I don't think you can affiliate a group that puts up candidates. You can't have people who are in the party but at the same time, if they don't like a person who has

been put up as a candidate, fight an election.

The rule about non-candidatures is an important one, but there are a mass of groups and tendencies in the Labour Party and there's no problem about their having their own papers. Look at the ILP; once they abandoned their role as a political party and came under Labour publications, they reaffiliated.

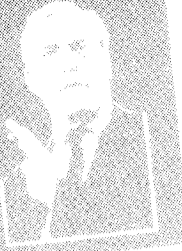
Many of the far left groups came into being and grew in strength because of the manifest failure of the non-socialist years of the Labour Party, from 1951. It was a judgement by a generation of socialists on the Parliamentary Labour Party during the years of revisionism.

I think it's significant now that there is a coming together. If the left joins the Labour Party, as it were, then the influence of the left for socialism within the Labour Party is stronger, and I think that is the right way of doing it.

**Why haven't you come out in support of the struggle of the prisoners in H Block? After all, the fundamental thing they say — that they are engaged in a political struggle — is manifestly true, even if one doesn't**

## QUESTIONING TONY BENN

From leading the Tories  
to winning socialism



**SOCIALIST CHALLENGE** supports and has championed Tony Benn's campaign for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party.

As he rightly points out in the interview, the campaign has opened up a debate on policy and democracy in the Labour Party, and especially in the trade unions. This can only be welcomed.

But we believe that Benn's programme is quite inadequate, either as an immediate way forward for the British workers' movement in the struggle against the Tory government, or as a long-term plan for achieving socialism.

Support for Benn's campaign has to go hand-in-hand with criticisms of his political programme. The interview makes clear the deep gulf which exists between Benn's brand of left reformism and any form of revolutionary socialist politics.

### The role of working class leadership

Benn explains that in his view the role of Labour leaders is to 'support struggle', but not to 'order or call' it. Leaders of the movement, he says, should 'analyse, explain, support', but not directly call for mass action of the working class.

In our view this is a travesty of the role working class leaders should play.

To say to workers faced with Tory attacks and mass redundancy: 'Do your own thing, if you take action we'll support you' is inadequate. The movement has to be given a lead about what kind of action can actually defeat the ruling class attacks.

Workers in a factory faced with redundancy are much less likely to take militant action such as occupying if no one else in the country will take similar action. The Labour Party and the trade unions can play an invaluable role in generalising and popularising the most effective means of struggle.

No one, of course, should order a group of workers into action. They will only take mass action if they are convinced that this is the best way forward. But if the Labour leaders were going around the country hammering home the case for such action, the role of militants who want to fight, who want to mobilise against the Tories, would be immeasurably strengthened.

It is the *working class* which has to have the power and sovereignty — not parliament. Allowing that sovereignty to remain in the hands of the capitalist state — even one with a socialist government at its centre — is to put the power of life or death into the hands of your executioner.

### Winning socialism

Tony Benn's suspicion of mass working class action as the *decisive* motor force of socialist advance is reflected in his positions on how to go about winning socialism.

First, he is extremely reticent about nationalising the monopolies, the banks and the finance houses as the first crucial step which a Labour government committed to socialist change would have to take.

It's good that he supports Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution, which pledges control of the commanding heights of the economy. But then he says 'the experience of office will create the demand

for change', implying a more gradual strategy.

Previously Benn has been associated with the notion of planning agreements with the big monopolies. This would involve a Labour government working with firms to plan investment, but it would stop short of full nationalisation.

The overwhelming impression is that he considers that the nationalisation of the decisive sectors of the economy would be a prolonged and drawn out process. But this would be a disastrous strategy. To create full employment and to plan the economy it is necessary to have control of industry and finance from the beginning.

The ruling class and the multinationals would take advantage of any delay to use their continued control of the economy to sabotage the actions of a left government. Capital would flee the country; an investment strike would take place; the multinationals would transfer production to other 'safer' countries; the building societies and the banks would refuse finance for investment.

More importantly, all these forces would use any hint of delay to launch a tremendous counter-offensive to politically de-stabilise the government and try to overthrow it.

The only way to keep and build mass popular support — as Chile showed — would be to make sure that gains for the working class in terms of rising living standards and more equality were registered rapidly. It would imply a strategy of centring power in the hands of the workers' organisations.

The view that it's the role of the workers to take action and the task of the Labour Party simply to support them is a classic repetition of the old industrial/political division that has plagued the movement.

In other countries the workers' parties often organise directly in the factories — why not in Britain? Together with the unions, the Labour Party could set out a programme of action to mobilise the movement against the Tories.

### Industrial action to bring down the Tories

Tony Benn argues forcefully against industrial action to bring down the Tories. He says that it would amount to a 'coup' and that we have to rely on persuasion and 'mass support'. The implication is that we should wait for the general election in 1984.

Benn is setting up a false counterposition. If it were to threaten the Tories, a wave of



# Our differences with



Above: The battle of Saltley Gate in the '72 miners' strike — 'Workers have to rely on their own organisation'; left: 'The movement has to be given a lead'; below: import controls in action — American workers wreck a Japanese car; right: Polaris — 'There can be no socialism in alliance with imperialism'.



industrial strike action, potentially leading to a general strike, would involve hundreds of thousands of workers. It would have to draw in millions more to be effective. Political ideas would rapidly advance in such a dynamic situation. This is quite different from a 'coup' carried out by a small minority.

The Tories are now facing a wave of almost unprecedented unpopularity. They are hated by millions upon millions of workers, resulting in crushing defeats in the county council elections. They have no mandate to carry on with the destruction of British industry and mass unemployment. They have no mandate to rule.

Benn's argument is effectively that industrial action used for political ends challenges the norms of the political game, the rules of parliamentary democracy.

But he himself makes the point that the ruling class does not primarily rely on parlia-

ment and elections. So why should the workers abide by the bosses' rules?

In Tony Benn's account, the mobilisation of the workers becomes subordinate to the constitution — the ruling class' state machine. Bitter experience, from Saltley to Santiago, has shown that the workers have to rely on their own organisation to carry out socialist measures, be they in the battle against the Tories now or in the implementation of the laws of a socialist government.

Unless such action were taken, the 'experience of office' would create alienation, confusion and disorganisation in the workers' movement and give the initiative back to the right wing.

Tony Benn's arguments on the state also have major weaknesses. In the interview Socialist Challenge pointed out that any left government trying to carry out socialist measures

would inevitably face a showdown with the existing state apparatus.

Tony Benn says this means the inevitability of violence, and if he believed that he would give up politics and 'drill with a rifle in the fields'. He counterposes 'mass public support' for a 'determined' socialist government. This scenario gets everything upside down.

In Chile in 1973, the Allende government undoubtedly had mass public support. Just eight days before the coup, a demonstration of 1½ million workers took place in Santiago to support the government against reaction. But despite this mass support, the government was easily overthrown by the armed forces.

For revolutionary socialists, the inevitability of a showdown with the ruling class — which, as Benn says, rules directly through its control of

decisive institutions (army, police, courts, monopolies) and not just through parliament — means that the workers must be prepared beforehand for this inevitable confrontation.

Tony Benn says he would support industrial action to restore democracy against a military coup. But by then it would be too late.

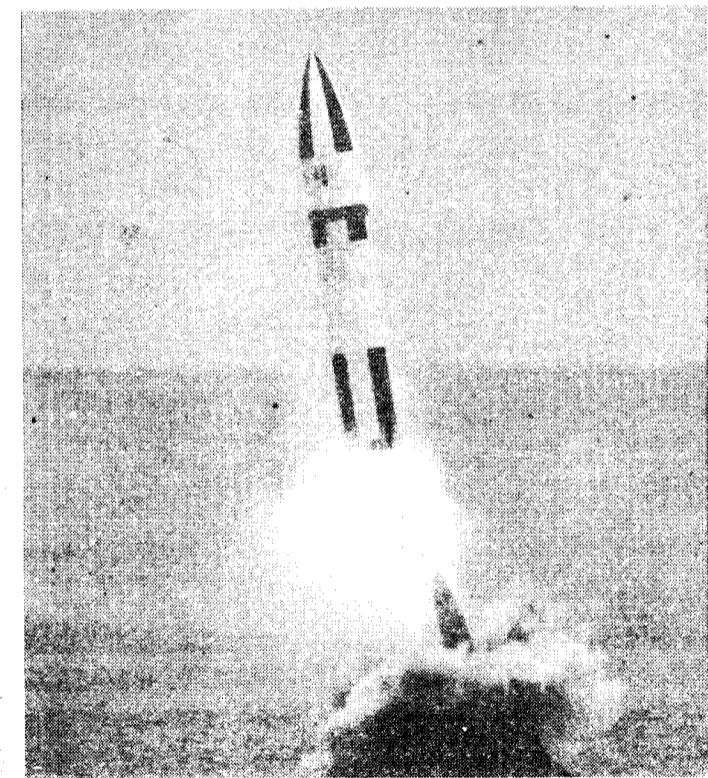
Preparing for a confrontation means organising workers' control of the factories right from the beginning. It means breaking up the police force, the army, the courts, and the civil service. If this is not done, these institutions will obstruct socialist advance every inch of the way.

And it means organising the workers to resist any attempted coup, with force if necessary, as an integral part of socialist strategy.

A 'decisive confrontation' doesn't necessarily mean massive violence. In Britain the armed forces and police



# Tony Benn



## NATO and nuclear weapons

Nothing in Tony Benn's argumentation is more illogical than his position on nuclear weapons and NATO.

If Britain were a 'non-nuclear' member of NATO, we would still be effectively under the American nuclear umbrella, just as Canada is. It would be impossible to break with the 'American power system' if we were still in NATO, whether we had nuclear weapons or not.

There's a major issue at stake here.

NATO is an imperialist alliance. There's no question of a joint alliance between a socialist Britain and US imperialism's international police force. Even if for one moment it were desirable to have an alliance against the Soviet Union, which it isn't, it would be impossible to have it with a force which is anti-socialist and anti-working class in its whole intention.

A socialist Britain could only survive by developing a socialist international policy, which would have to include increased trade and a completely new relationship with the Soviet Union and East Europe.

If anything, NATO forces would be used to threaten and crush a socialist Britain. There can be no socialism in alliance with imperialism. There can be no socialism which plots with imperialism against the Soviet Union.

We support the opposition to Cruise and Trident, and the demand for the withdrawal of American bases. But we oppose root and branch any idea of a 'non-nuclear defence policy' if this means an alliance with imperialism. A socialist defence policy would be aimed *against* imperialism.

## Positive action and abortion

We strongly disagree with Tony Benn over positive action and abortion.

He says that although he supports party policy for free abortion on demand, he is not in favour of taking any action against MPs who on an 'important issue of conscience' vote against it in parliament.

This is in contrast to the view of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, which put forward the vote on abortion as one of the key issues for re-selection. We stand for the view that abortion is a class issue, one of fundamental democratic rights which all Labour MPs must stand for.

In Italy the recent referendum on abortion became a vital test of strength between the workers' movement and right-wing reaction. In Britain, any equivocation in the labour movement can only lead to disastrous divisions through which the united strength of the movement can be dispersed.

Abortion comes under regular attack. Last time the TUC led a huge demonstration against the Corrie anti-abortion bill. The policy of the labour movement should be to defend and extend the '67 Act and fight for the necessary resources and facilities that do, genuinely, mean a woman's right to choose.

Benn hedges his support for positive action with qualifications that there are, after all,

right-wing blacks and anti-abortion women.

Obviously there are. But that misses the point.

These sections of society are structurally discriminated against. Their coming to the fore in the Labour Party will express the *radicalisation* of that party. More blacks and women won't mean a more right-wing or anti-abortionist party, but a more radical party.

## Ireland

The question of political status for the hunger strikers concentrates all the issues posed in the struggle in the north of Ireland. But Tony Benn does not back their demands.

Support for the hunger strikers has demonstrated to the world the political nature of the struggle, and that the Republican inmates of Long Kesh are prisoners of an army fighting for national liberation.

The six-county Northern Ireland state, created by British imperialism, is rejected by a large number of its citizens, who want a united Ireland. That much is evident from Sands' election and the voting in the recent council elections.

The future of Ireland is thus a question to be decided by the Irish people themselves. The British state has no right to imprison Irish freedom fighters, to occupy any part of Ireland with its troops, or to send in troops from anywhere else, including under United Nations auspices.

The silence of the British Labour left on the hunger strike, and the open support of the Tories by the Labour leadership, is a major scandal and disgrace.

It's good that Benn has taken issue with the bi-partisan policy of his party leadership. His record is better than many. But he still fudges the vital issue of support for the key aspect of the struggle going on in the north of Ireland and the fundamental question of the right of the Irish people to decide their own future.

## March separately, strike together

*While Socialist Challenge agrees with some individual points in Benn's programme, it is clear from what we have said that overall we think that it is wrong. Yet Benn's campaign to deputy leader of the Labour Party has the inestimable merit of taking on the right wing, and of organising a fight by the left to democratise the Labour Party and the trade unions.*

*This campaign creates the best conditions for debating socialist policies and winning the whole movement to them.*

*In the battle against the right wing, against the agents of capitalism in the movement, we'll stand shoulder to shoulder with supporters of Tony Benn. But if we are to go beyond defeating the right wing, towards socialism, we'll need a very different strategy to that of Tony Benn. Taken by itself, his is not a strategy which will defeat the Tories or put socialism on the agenda.*

*We'll need the programme of mass action and socialist revolution. That's why Socialist Challenge will strike together against the right wing with Tony Benn, but march separately under our own banner and programme.*



## Selling your way to the 300th issue

**MANY of Socialist Challenge's readers are strongly committed to the politics that the paper stands for.**

**On the occasion of our 200th edition, we want to encourage all of these supporters to sell the paper, even if it is just a few copies.**

At the moment, we sell around 6,000 papers a week, including sales through shops and subscriptions.

While sales of the paper remain at this level, we have to subsidise it through fundraising and donations. As production costs continue to soar, we can expect this subsidy to mount unless sales expand.

Supporters' money that could go towards improving the paper has to be spent on simply keeping the paper going at the present time.

Is it possible to keep sales expanding to the point where we can do away with the need for a subsidy altogether? We think the answer is Yes!

On numerous occasions, sellers have demonstrated that there exists a much wider audience for Socialist Challenge than we are presently able to reach regularly.

On the national CND demonstration last October; on the unemployment marches in Liverpool and Glasgow, as well as on the People's March, hundreds of extra copies have been sold.

It was the same story during the national sales day and the sales week organised earlier this year.

Special features in Socialist Challenge have always produced new buyers.

The 4-page Post Office workers' supplement sold over 200 copies at the POEU's lobby of parliament. Recent coverage of the hunger strikers' campaign has brought support to the paper from the Irish community in this country — Brent sellers have sold as many as 70 copies in one evening in local Irish pubs.

We have to try and find ways of reaching this number of new readers every week. One immediate way to reach more readers is to have more people selling Socialist Challenge — in workplaces, the unions, Labour Party wards, campaigns, and to friends.

If you want to make sure that Socialist Challenge reaches its 300th edition, start selling the paper now!

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amount to a total of about 250,000 people. The working class numbers million upon million. No coup could be successful if these millions were mobilised to use industrial action, huge street demonstrations, and if necessary force to stop it.

But none of these forms of resistance could or would occur if the working class is told by its leadership that such things are unlikely or impossible.

They can and will occur if growing public support for a left-wing government is translated into self-organisation and mass mobilisation. Without it, the most massive public support is sunk. The answer is to use mass working class support to mobilise for power and to employ workers' power to throw back the resistance of capital.

## Import controls

It is a useful step forward that Benn rejects trade protection as a strategy for solving the crisis. But there is an ambiguity in what he says.

He argues that trade planning should be used to protect nationalised industry. We agree, provided it's clear that this means a state monopoly of foreign trade under a socialist government in which the decisive sectors of industry are nationalised under workers' control.

If he rejects import controls under capitalism, fine. But he should make this plain to the trade union leaders, who quite definitely rely on an alliance with the CBI and the bosses to win import controls. Otherwise the sliding over from one conception of import controls to another is opportunist.

We believe that the alternative to import controls is work-sharing and a 35-hour week now.

# Capitalist plot uncovered in Italy

By Sophia Silj

THE ruling Italian coalition government was forced to resign last week, amid revelations of a secret conspiracy involving nearly a thousand leading personalities in the country's political, economic and military elites.

Three cabinet members as well as 30 other members of parliament. All are said to belong to an exclusive Masonic lodge, Propaganda Due, or P-2, the aim of which, according to the magistrates who exposed the clique was to 'destroy the constitutional order of the country'.

Some British media accounts of the scandal have tried to suggest that P-2 was little more than a mutual self-help society, through which members of the sect would assist the careers of fellow-members, something which Masonic lodges throughout the world specialise in.

## Villa

But it is obvious that much more was involved. One indication is the type of people who were members of P-2. According to papers seized from the country villa of the lodge's 'grand master', Licio Gelli, these included Justice Minister, Adolfo Sarti, Trade Minister,

Enrico Mancha, and Labour Minister, Franco Froshi.

A host of high ranking generals were also members of P-2, including General Raffaele Giudice, former commander of Guardia di Finanza, the paramilitary force specialising in border control and anti-smuggling operations.

## Fled

Giudice was already in prison for tax evasion when the latest scandal broke. His former Chief of Staff, who had the membership number 482 in P-2, has fled the country.

Among others named as lodge members are the head of the Defence Ministry's military security organisation, the chief of the Interior Ministry's secret intelligence and security service, and General Carol Dalla Chiesa, one of the top generals in the Carabinieri, Italy's prestigious police force.

Altogether, about 20 officers of the Carabinieri



Masonic lodge, P2, was linked to fascist terrorists

are said to have been involved in P-2.

The outgoing government is the 40th Italy has known since the war. The reason for the rise and fall of countless coalitions is the refusal of the bourgeois parties to include the Communists in government.

The Christian Democrats by themselves have 38 per cent of the seats in parliament, and so are forced, to maintain themselves in power, to

look for allies among the smaller and often even more right wing parties.

The Socialists, led by Bettino Craxi, are particularly right wing social democrats, with the result that they only have around 10 per cent of the seats in parliament. The Communists have 30 per cent.

It is the strength of the Communist Party and the prospect that eventually they may be at least partners in government, which helps to explain the formation of groups such as P-2.

Although the Italian CP has repeatedly watered down its politics, the military, economic and political leaders of Italy obviously feel in need of a 'guarantee' in the event of their interests being threatened by the 'democratic process'.

The links that P-2 appear to have with Latin American right wing circles suggests that essentially the organisation is in the business of implementing a 'Chile solution' in Italy, if or when the bankers and generals feel such a step is necessary.



Licio Gelli

What has been exposed in Italy is not some harmless Masonic lodge whose members indulge in the peculiar rites associated with such societies: what has been revealed is a classical capitalist conspiracy.

Several leading capitalists have already been arrested for their membership of this secret society.

Bank president Robert Calvi is among them, as is Carlo Bonomi, the head of one of the largest investment companies in Italy.

Gelli, P-2's boss, has in the past given some indication of what his gang of bandits and parasites were up to. Two years ago he said: 'Italy's political parties and institutions just do not do their jobs, we need good people to work together to straighten things out.'

## Control

The Milan magistrates who exposed P-2 declared: 'Gelli's strategy has been to bring under his control a large number of powerful and highly placed persons and thus to break down ... the separation between political, administrative, and military and economic spheres ... Gelli constructed a very real state within a state.'

Gelli himself is wanted on charges of spying for the right wing junta of Argentina, while his seized documents suggest that P-2 also has links with the Saudi Arabian regime and various right wing organisations in Italy and throughout the world.

In this context Gelli, in a secret message to the Italian Prime Minister, Arnaldo Forlani, warned that if the P-2 list of members was made public there would be 'serious international consequences'. In the event, Forlani only agreed to the publication of the list when the magistrates who discovered it threatened to publish it with or without the Prime Minister's permission.

Forlani also resisted offering the resignation of his government, although three of his ministers were among the plotters, until forced to do so when the Italian Socialist Party, who are partners in Forlani's Christian Democrat-led coalition, withdrew their support.



Above, and opposite, the scene at Bologna railway station after fascist bombing

# The great Spanish cover-up

By Davy Jones

IT'S not just in Italy and the USA that the ruling class plots to hang on to power and eliminate socialist opposition. The past weeks have starkly revealed how far the Spanish state apparatus is riddled with right wing sympathisers of the old Francoist regime.

Following the unsuccessful attempted military coup in February, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Tejero, the far right have multiplied their provocative actions. The recent Barcelona bank siege has now been confirmed by the Spanish Prime Minister as masterminded by extreme right organisations.

Each member of the bank gang was promised 5m pesos and a one-way ticket to that haven of democracy, Argentina. The gang's job was to demand the release of Tejero, and the publication of a communiqué in two major newspapers.

More worrying was the attempted government cover-up of the whole affair. While hostages released from the bank have claimed that the assailants were well armed and spoke in military jargon, reinforcing the idea that they were members of the infamous Civil Guard, the Minister of the Interior originally

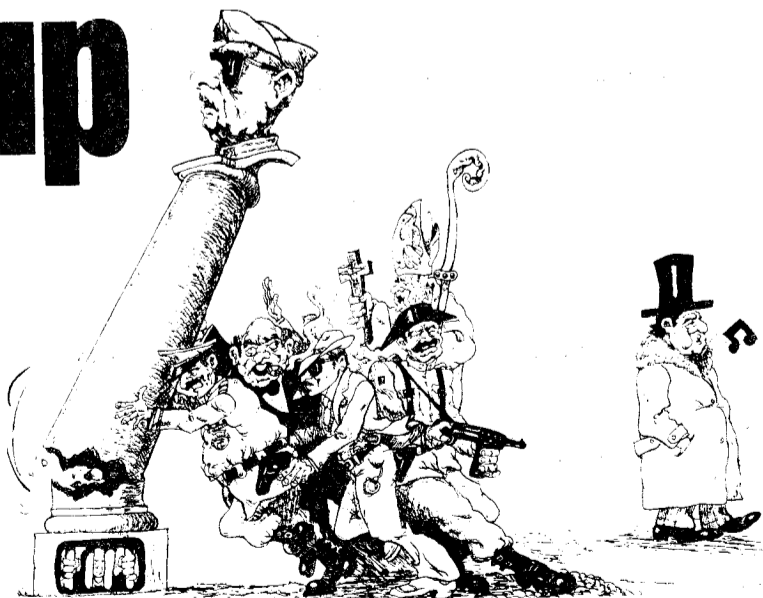
asserted that they were 'delinquent elements with obscure motives'.

The government has also denied that there were as many attackers as originally claimed, supporting the thesis that the police may have 'failed to capture' certain members of the siege gang: the Civil Guard members, perhaps?

Just as the government was trying to put the lid on this right wing scandal came a new revelation. A large tunnel was found under the road where a military procession was to have taken

place last weekend, presided over by none other than King Carlos himself. It is clear that the tunnel wasn't there to make sure that someone got a good view of the march past.

Needless to say, the conclusion from these outrages drawn by Prime Minister Calvo Sotelo is the need for stronger anti-terrorist laws. These will be aimed against 'extremists', and implemented by... the army, the police and the Civil Guard, the very forces who lie behind the latest intrigues and plots.



By Tom Martin in New York City

**IF YOU'RE a criminal then you have certain rights. But if you're a 'subversive' — forget it. That was the blunt testimony of former FBI agent Arthur Greene in court here on 15 May.**

Greene had been called as a trial witness by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, who are suing the United States government and its agencies for \$40m damages in compensation for illegal acts against them. The Trotskyists are also seeking an injunction to bar further illegal government activity against them.

Greene's job was to break into the YSA national and local offices in New York. In court he openly admitted to carrying out between 75 and 90 such 'entries' in the period 1960-66.

But then he ran into a problem, because Judge Thomas P Griesa insisted on a little background information. Which methods were considered proper, and which improper? Didn't you need search warrants before breaking into private premises?

## Powers

Green replied that, yes when investigating criminal matters they were told that a search warrant was required. But he 'didn't recall any such instructions' in relation to domestic security. He understood that the FBI's authority here came from the executive powers of the President, starting with Roosevelt in the late 1930s.

This was pretty serious stuff. So the judge asked what evidence of illegal activity had been uncovered. Did the FBI find that the SWP was plann-

ing to throw bombs, organise kidnappings, embark on sabotage or similar activities?

Well, said Greene, 'one of our highest objectives was to establish whether the SWP was in violation of the Voorhis Act'. This Act, passed in 1940, makes disclosure of membership lists compulsory for any organisation with international affiliations; as a result, the SWP does not pay dues to or cast decisive votes in the Fourth International, although it otherwise collaborates to the fullest degree possible.

## Eye

Greene's story about the Voorhis Act keeps cropping up whenever government agents take the stand. And the judge feels he's being taken for a ride. When FBI attorney Charles Mandigo took this line the previous day, Judge Griesa could hardly conceal his impatience:

'Nobody could ever contend that you would have to have a 40-year-long surveillance of the SWP and YSA to establish whether they violated the Voorhis Act or the Foreign Agents Registration Act. It is quite clear that the FBI didn't have the slightest interest in this subject — they never prosecuted anyone.'

But if events in court sometimes resemble high farce, what lies behind them is deadly serious. Former FBI agent Greene spelled out what the government means by 'subversive activities'

# US government — at war with its people

when he explained that the FBI 'wanted to know who's on the side of this government and who's not'.

The implications of this are staggering. It is no secret that only a quarter of the American electorate voted for Reagan. Polls show less than 20 per cent support for Washington's intervention in El Salvador. And the latest budget proposals, which include cuts in retirement benefit, are cutting into Reagan's limited support further.

What is more, the opposition to the administration is increasingly coming out onto the streets. Every demonstration, whether its focus is El Salvador, nuclear power, the racist killings in Atlanta, the Equal Rights Amendment, the rail cutbacks, or the miners' strike, becomes a general outburst against the way society is ordered today.

## Action

Even the union bureaucrats are being forced to respond: the AFL-CIO federation has just announced a national march against the budget cuts, its first such action since 1975.

All these people are 'subversives' according to Greene's definition. And other developments confirm this was no slip of the

tongue. Just days before the SWP suit opened, FBI agents W Mark Felt and Edward S Miller were pardoned by Reagan after being convicted of illegal break-ins in the early 1970s.

The official statement pointed to 'their good faith that their actions were necessary to preserve the security interests of our country. The record demonstrates that they acted not with criminal intent, but in the belief that they had grants of authority reaching to the highest levels of government.' Which is exactly what the SWP/YSA suit is all about.

Reagan's statement explains that 'America was at war in 1972'. That is not formally true: no such bill had ever passed Congress, nor had the American people voted to go to war. But it is true in one important sense: the American government was and is waging war on the democratic rights of its people.

As opposition develops to its policies the White House is stepping up that war. Today a new executive order — the same kind of mandate the FBI used for 40 years to spy on the SWP — is being drafted for the CIA. The *New York Times* of 14 May revealed that one source 'believed the new draft would permit the extension of covert actions to be undertaken by the agency within the United States in some circumstances'.

One possibility, according to the paper 'would be the infiltration or disruption of a political group consisting mainly of Americans but that is led by foreign nationals, or a group suspected of being an "agent" of a foreign power. This could include groups promoting "solidarity" with or sympathy for such foreign movements as left-wing guerrillas in El Salvador.'

## Spying

The purpose could hardly be clearer. But a major obstacle to achieving it is the SWP/YSA suit. Others who had filed legal challenges to the government's spying operations have been bought off with out-of-court settlements. But not the Trotskyists. They are fighting for an injunction which would declare all such harassment illegal.

The US government, as this trial has shown, tries to trick and cheat the people of the United States on every possible occasion. It is the 'executive branch' of the wealthy few who run this society, and it is loyal only to them.

Every day the trial goes on is an education in how the capitalist class rules — and how working people can fight back. In that sense, getting out the facts about this case is a historic opportunity to advance the socialist cause today.



## Big Brother's Dirty Tricks

*ONE of the most riveting pieces of testimony yet heard in the trial was the deposition of John O'Brien, formerly an agent with the 113th Military Intelligence Group in Evanston, Illinois, read out in court on 14/15 May.*

*It shows the extraordinary length to which the state agencies will go to harass socialists, including direct association with far-right organisations like the US Legion of Justice. Below is an edited version of his court-room statements.*

We had an agreement with a Chicago police officer who had penetrated the YSA on behalf of the Chicago Police Department, and we would debrief this individual, without the knowledge of his superiors in the Chicago Police Department... It's standard procedure, the more you know about the individuals that you're working against, the better you can counteract their activities...

Based on information he obtained, we were able to create a marital situation or create a situation among a married couple who were members of the YSA that we eventually broke the marriage up and it caused internal strife within the organisation...

We precluded a YSA member who was a high school student from gaining entrance to the University of Illinois. We contacted the Chief of Security of the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus, and we advised him that an applicant to the university, was a member of the Communist Party of the United States, a member of the Young Socialist Alliance, a member of just about every organisation.

Anyway, that the individual was coming to the University of Illinois solely for the purpose of becoming involved in student activist activities...

We employed the use of a motorcycle gang, to break up a Hiroshima Day march at Grant Park that terminated the speeches, through a contact that one of the military intelligence agents had with 113th in that gang. He introduced him to me and I attended one of the gang's meetings in Arlington Heights.

They were extremely right-wing in their political proclivities, and they offered to do anything they could to assist the United States Army. And on one occasion, we utilised them to disrupt, and another occasion, we used them as body guards. They rode their motorcycles in Grant Park, with guns; dressed in the regular paraphernalia, Hell's Angels type thing...

Occasionally I would go on the

street when a peaceful demonstration was taking place and I'd make contact with the individuals with whom I was acquainted as a result of our investigations and through their files, and I would try to create a situation of paranoia on the part of these individuals; normally they were leaders within the organisations.

One of the methods I would use is I would point out a member of another organisation, and through conversation, convince the leader of one of these sponsoring organisations that the individual is an FBI agent.

The idea was to parry one radical against another, that's all, by making one think the other one's a government agent. There were always petitions passed around. Occasionally I'd rip off some petitions.

These were already signed and eventually got to me. And I'd fold them up and stick them in my pocket and walk away. I'd take it back, copy the copy, and write a report on it.

I disseminated it to other agencies to see whether or not any of the names were familiar to them, and if they were, we'd gather information from these individuals and open up a file, and then we'd run credit checks, employment checks, education checks; add that person to the list of people we would watch...

One incident I recall, involved a member of the SWP. The Army had determined that this individual had a very, very strong military background in the '50s, including membership in a military intelligence unit, and we attempted to recruit that individual by saying we would blow him as a government spy if he didn't come around and start working for us.

The result was that he was in fact an FBI penetrant, so we lost our base...

I had seen them (the Legion of Justice — eds) on the street many times observing demonstration activities in which the YSA was involved. I became aware of a burglary that they were involved in concerning the YSA...

Late in the evening, the duty agent advised us that there were some people to see Filkins (O'Brien's direct superior). And we went out and several individuals started bringing in cardboard boxes filled with paper...

They contained records from the offices of the YSA. The men were members of the Legion of Justice...

During the period from July 1969 to approximately March 1970, I'd say almost half of the work done by Special Operations in Chicago concerned the YSA or SWP



You have got no rights

# Black workers will be in the forefront

By Raghib Ahsan

WHEN blacks exploded in Bristol and Brixton, there was joy and sympathy in the black communities. The state, press and media could not find a single puppet to disapprove of these actions.

These events illustrated the anger and frustrations of blacks, especially youth, in the face of economic difficulties and the growing racist harassment by the police and right wing groups.

After the Second World War, large numbers of immigrants came to Britain from the third world to take the jobs that white workers refused to take, as bus drivers, ancillary workers in hospitals, in the textile and clothing in-

dustry. In some parts of British industry, like Ford's Dagenham and Dagenham Dock, as much as a third of the workforce is black. Black workers dominate the textile industry, the health service, transport, and engineering in-

## Racism

The racist views which permeate British society have kept blacks in the manual jobs, or left them with no job at all, which is increasingly the situation for young blacks born in this country.

According to the 1976 Political and Economic Planning Report, 62 per cent of black workers are unskilled compared to 48 per cent of white workers. Blacks traditionally look to the organisations of the

labour movement, the trade unions and the Labour Party, as being 'on their side' although there is little to show for it.

In 1955, the TUC elaborated its policy on race which was used for the next decade. It called upon blacks to integrate with whites.

Twenty years later, following the National Front's electoral successes, the 1977 TUC congress passed another resolution, this time against fascism.

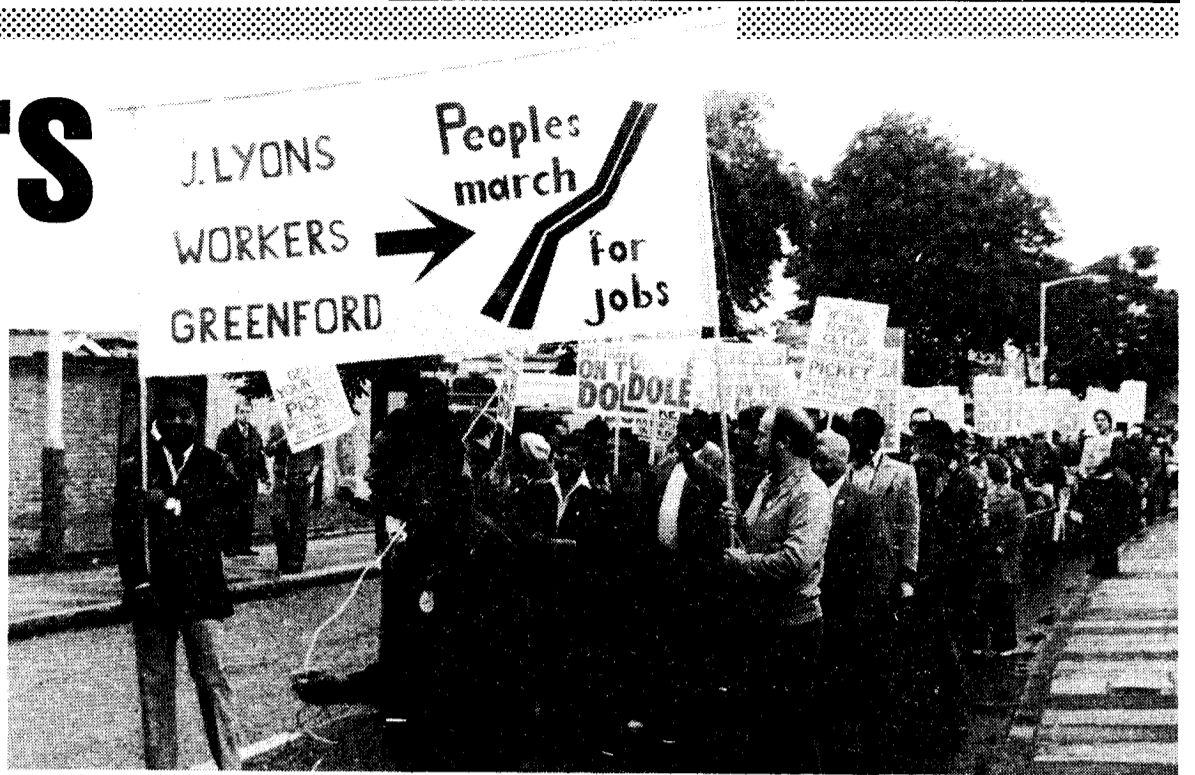
As a result of struggles like the Grunwick and Garner's Steakhouse strikes in which black workers were central, the TUC set up an equal opportunities committee which devised a model resolution on race to be included in all agreements with employers.

## Unions

But according to one black trade union leader, 'This equal opportunity clause is not worth the piece of paper on which it is written.'

The Transport and General Workers Union, the largest union in the country, has only five or six full-time black officers. There are no blacks on its elected general executive council, and there will only be a handful of black delegates out of 1,200 at its biennial conference in June.

The engineering union doesn't have any full-time black officers and none on its national committee —



Some industries, like Lyons Tetley have a majority of Asian workers

And the crisis is forcing black women everywhere to take up 'home work' which, according to one estimate, pays on average less than 20p an hour.

In earlier centuries, the merchant and landowning classes, supported by the

Increasingly, blacks are taking action on a variety of issues which affect them as blacks and as workers.

The Black People's Day of Action which was supported by over 15,000 during a working day

for Racial Equality to co-opt and strangle the new militancy.

So far, this new militancy has not found a political leadership although components of it are to be found in various groups and campaigns.

As one black writer said recently 'consider the effect of black workers closing down London Transport and key hospitals every time the racists attack black people.'

It is by linking the struggles of the community with the workplace as well as with the labour movement that such a movement will be built. It must be led by black workers.



Lyons Tetley workers greet People's March in West London

all the posts are elected. This pattern is generally the same throughout the trade unions.

The most significant move to overcome racism in the unions has come from the London division of the public employees' union, NUPE, which has set up race relations committees with black majorities as part of a campaign which involves publishing a pamphlet on race.

The crisis of British capitalism is hitting blacks hard, as marginal and technologically backward industries are eliminated and cuts in the social services take hold.

## Midlands

In the West Midlands, unemployment among blacks has tripled in the last year.

Birmetals, for example, a well known foundry works which employed a large number of blacks has closed all its plants except one which is operating with a reduced labour force, concentrating production at a single modern plant in Derby.

The story is the same in Lancashire where the textile industry has suffered due to lack of investment and its consequent inability to compete with foreign imports.

churches and the courts denied the humanity of black people in order to justify their enslavement.

## Deport

Today the same forces headed by Thatcher send armed police into factories to look for 'illegal' immigrants, try to deport black women like Nasira Begum, and turn a blind eye to constant racist attacks on blacks in the streets or in their homes.

They try to make the white worker blame the black worker for the loss of jobs.

In this they are aided by the labour leaders who see the British working class as white and male and don't fight against racist and divisive ideas.

Black workers, by the very nature of their double oppression as blacks and as workers will be in the forefront of coming struggles against this system.

Black workers, by the very nature of their double oppression as blacks and as workers will be in the forefront of coming struggles against this system.

## Strike

The writing is on the wall. The strikes in Mansfield, Huddersfield, Lorient, Trowbridge and more recently at Orpington show the strength of the black worker, male and female, in struggle.

showed the anger of black people over the racist murders of the 13 black youth in Deptford and about racist violence in general.

There have been other demonstrations around issues of immigration controls, police harassment, African liberation days and solidarity actions with struggles in their countries of origin.

Black workers have joined with white workers on the big demonstrations against unemployment in Liverpool and London.

The black movement is in transition. Blacks, particularly the youth, are breaking from the reformist misleaders of their community. They are rejecting the attempts of the state, through its Councils

The building of a black movement that can provide answers to the political issues that confront black people, lead them in action and develop the fight against racism and fascism will depend on the industrial muscle of black workers.

## Socialist Challenge

### REVOLUTION

### Industrial Workers Conference

London 27-8 June  
Entry by ticket only from PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

The Socialist Challenge/Revolution industrial workers conference will discuss the role of black workers, the fight against racism and how white workers can solidarise with their struggles.

### London Immigration Action Group

### Public meeting Deportation & repatriation

12 June 6.30

Friends House, Euston Rd, small hall

speakers

Cynthia Gordon, Nasira Begum, Nasireen Akhtar, Jaswinder Kaur, Philippino Domestics Campaign, and Tony Bunyan of State Research on Internal Surveillance.

Cynthia Gordon is West Indian and Nasira Begum is Pakistani — they are both faced with deportation. Support their campaigns to stay in this country.

### Demonstrate for Cynthia and Nasira 6 June Manchester

Assemble 12.30 at the corner of Princess Rd and Moss Lane East, Moss Side. For coaches from London phone Satnam 01-485 6672.

Time: 15 June, London. Nasira's appeal will be heard. Assemble 1pm at the High Court, Strand opposite the Immigration Appeals Tribunal.

Contact: their defence committees for petitions, leaflets and make donations to: Friends of Nasira Begum, 595 Stockport Rd, Longsight, Manchester 12 TCC, phone 061-225 5111.

Cynthia Gordon Action Group 14 Gradwell Walk, Moss Side, Manchester.



Stop Cruise Missiles available price 20p + 31p post from Blackley Book Group, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP.



July 10-17

This year's courses include:

Women's politics: A Century of War and Revolution: Debates within Marxism: The Labour Party: Modern Writers: Mapping the Missile Madness: Working for the State: Introduction to Marxism: Classical Marxism: The Mass Media: The Politics of Black Liberation: Sexual Politics: The Anatomy of the Revolutionary Left: Advanced Economics: Literature - Women and Writing: The Fight for Socialism in Eastern Europe: Imperialism and Revolution Today: Ireland

MARXISM 81 will be held at the Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, London, E1 from 10-17 July (Friday to Friday). It costs 21.00 in advance, 21.00 on the door. Write to SWSO, PO Box 82, London, E2 or ring 01 986 4365 for further details.

Abortion Rights

# Debating our future

By Judith Arkwright

TONY Benn is quite right when he says it's not enough to fight the Tories and bring in Labour. We should all demand to know: Labour back to power for what?

We women would like to know what Tony Benn thinks a future Labour government would do for us.

The Tory government's restrictions on abortion rights are being implemented through the back door. We have to fight this with a clear alternative: to establish a woman's right to choose both in law and in practice.

The Labour Abortion Rights Campaign is putting forward motions for this year's Labour Party conference, which will begin to commit the party to this alternative. A Facilities Bill which would oblige local health authorities to provide abortion facilities is due to go before parliament in this session.

The Campaign wants a future Labour government to take over all private abortion clinics and to provide all abortions free of charge on the health service.

At a time when the decrease in availability of NHS abortions is pushing the cost for a private abortion up to £200, this demand is vital. LARC is also arguing for abortion



LARC: fighting to commit a labour government to free abortions on the NHS

day care to be provided by law in all areas of the country.

If a doctor's 'conscience' means he or she would balk at women exercising control over their own body, they would be required by law to refer women to a sympathetic doctor.

Supporters of LARC also argue that abortion should no longer be an issue of conscience for MPs voting in Parliament.

What right do they have to determine women's lives? Like the rest of the left in the Labour Party, LARC wants a party which implements policy passed by conference.

The first major discussion on these issues within the party will be taken at the Labour Women's conference on 14-16 June, where LARC is holding a fringe meeting. An emergency motion is to be put to the conference demanding support for a

huge campaign around the Facilities Bill.

The crucial question is how do we fight to achieve its aims? If LARC's proposals are adopted by the Labour Party conference it would herald a massive campaign that has to be launched throughout the labour movement: in the trade unions, in the women's movement, and out on the street.

The experience of the campaign against the anti-abortion Corrie Bill showed us that this is where the battles are really fought and won.

MPs should be picketed locally at street meetings held, and resolutions of support for the Facilities Bill should be put to labour movement bodies. We need a campaign that will take us forward to fight for a woman's right to choose and to control our own lives.

## National Abortion Campaign National Conference

Saturday/Sunday  
13/14 June  
UMIST Students  
Union, Manchester

Discussion on positive legislation contraception and international situation

Details from: Manchester NAC, 9 Birch Hall Lane, Longsight, Manchester M13 0XJ

# Sorry, we don't employ ladies

Ms A GUEST is taking a complaint of sex discrimination to the Industrial Tribunal, scheduled to be heard on 3 June.

She had applied for a van-driving job only to be told the firm, Alpine soft drinks, does not employ 'ladies' as the job involves lifting heavy weights, dirty work and working long hours even at Christmas.

They said it would be physically difficult for women, as the jumping in and out of the van is not suited to the female build and the lifting would cause back strain.

This firm does not seem to have heard of the Sex Discrimination Act which states that

women must not be treated differently from men when applying for a job.

### Claim

'Obviously some men and some women are more capable of doing this type of work, but to categorise it into male or female is unlawful,' said Ann Sedley, women's rights officer for the National Council for Civil Liberties which is supporting Ms Guest in her claim.

Ms Guest herself points out that no one — male or female — should be asked to do a job which causes damage to health. 'Ten years after the Sex Discrimination Act was passed, it's a scandal that this case sort of

sponsor us with

& Tenners Against the Tories!



20th June  
Edinburgh



Festival for Women's Rights against Tory attacks

discrimination is continuing.' The case is being financed by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

## Scottish anti-nuclear youth plan activities

By Doug Maclean

CAMPAIGN for Nuclear Disarmament organisers are expecting 25,000 people on the Faslane to Glasgow march this weekend but some think it could be as many as 40,000, such is the support that CND has in Scotland.

The endorsement of unilateral disarmament by both the Scottish TUC and Labour Party has contributed to the build up.

CND branches are already planning their campaign to get thousands to the 24 October demonstration in London — beginning with Hiroshima week in early August.

Several Young CND branch are flourishing in Scotland. The strongest is in Edinburgh with 50 youth coming to its weekly meetings. The weekend of ac-

National Demonstration 6-7 June

Faslane → Clydebank → Glasgow  
See overleaf for itinerary

- For a nuclear-free Europe
- Jobs not bombs
- Stop Trident
- No Cruise missiles

Published by  
CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT  
11 GOODWIN STREET LONDON N4 TELEPHONE 01 263 4954

tion against the missiles planned for 27-28 June includes a march, a Rock against the Missiles concert and a Scottish YCND conference.

## The Silent Killers

IT NOW looks likely that chemical weapons will stand alongside Cruise missiles and Pershing missiles as battlefield weapons. These weapons are like nuclear weapons, instruments of mass murder.

They aim to kill the maximum number of people in the quickest possible time without destroying buildings or hindering the approach of armies. They are human insecticides.

It is not difficult to imagine how the increase in the number of battlefield weapons — Cruise missiles, 'mini-nukes', the Neutron bomb, and now chemical weapons — at the generals' disposal, increases the likelihood of war.

The ability to wage 'limited' nuclear/chemical war now appears to be NATO's goal — but there is no such thing as limited nuclear war. All would be destroyed.

## THE SILENT KILLERS

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN GAS AND GERM WEAPONS BY DAVID BAYS



From a new CND pamphlet: *The Silent Killers — New Developments in Gas and Germ Weapons.* By David Bays. Available from CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.

# Socialist Challenge

## Our Fund Drive - 8 months on

In October we launched our most ambitious fund drive ever. We asked for £100,000 to buy a centre for Socialist Challenge with a modern printshop and a well-stocked bookshop.

We merged our regular printing fund into the £100,000 drive. This helps finance our campaigns and our paper, which relies on voluntary contributions. We asked local supporters to raise £20,000 of this total, and sought £80,000 for national activities and donations direct to our centre.

The drive has been a success due to your dedication and the growth of socialism in this country. We've raised £30,000 — £7500 through local activity and £22,500 nationally. Projections of £85,000 next year will allow us to reach our goal of £100,000.

### Secured

How have we been secured? First of all we've secured the lease on our building, and completed over half our renovation programme, including security protection for our computer with new equipment, that's worth about £11,000.

We think we can purchase a new building for £20,000 — of which we can support a mortgage of £10,000. So we need £5000 more, and £10,000 to complete renovation and buy an office computer.

We've also put £7500 into the printshop: it needs another £2000 to stabilise it. We've brought out a new and very popular edition of our theoretical journal *International* at an initial cost of £800. It will be coming out bimonthly from now on.

### Stock

Our major weakness is the bookshop. We've put £2500; but it needs at least another £2000 for an adequate range of stock to

Tories: we were the driving force in both the Labour Movement Conference against the Missiles and the Women's Festival against the Tories.

### Placards

We've tried to ensure that your paper and its policies have a fighting presence in mass unemployment demonstrations in Glasgow, Liverpool and London — our 35-hour week placards alone cost us over £500.

In spite of having to cut back on staffing at our national centre, we've had a full time organiser in South Wales for a year, and we've opened three local offices and a new bookshop in Birmingham.

But most important of all we've tried to turn our paper into a weapon for socialism, able to reach out to new left-wing forces in the factories, the Labour Party and the anti-Cruise movement.

All this has cost money. We aimed to spend £9000 in campaigning expenses between October 1980 and July 1981. The final bill will be nearer £12,000, but thanks to you we think we'll cover it.

### Cash

Our £100,000 fund will stay open until March next year. We need a minimum of £12,000 — and it's up to you, our local supporters, to make sure we get it. Without it we'll start to lose all our hard-won gains.

But we also need cash for our campaigns and our paper. In July we'll be re-opening the fighting fund. In addition to our regular subsidy, we want to expand! We need at least one more national and one more local organiser. We're looking for a total of £6000 extra every quarter.

That's why we're asking you to think very carefully about increasing our income. You've put us on the road to expansion with your donations, whether 50p or £5000. Why not keep us on the road with a regular donation?

### Extra

Our most consistent supporters, in the IMG, each give us between £5 and as much as £30 each month. From them we're looking for an extra £1000 every month. But we're also asking our many thousands of independent readers, to think about their contribution to socialism. A fiver a month from two hundred readers — that's all we need!

Why not see your local *Socialist Challenge* seller and make an arrangement to hand over a regular sum? Or better still, fill in the standing order form below and send it to us.

Keep our Challenge going with a fiver a month!



# H BLOCK PRISONERS STAND IN IRISH ELECTION



National H Block Committee member Vincent Doherty — challenging Haughey in his constituency

By Penny Duggan

**THE issue of the H Block prisoners will dominate this month's elections in the south of Ireland. The National H Block Committee is standing the four hunger strikers and five other H Block and Armagh prisoners as candidates.**

The prisoners will mainly be contesting seats in the border areas although one is standing against government Foreign Minister Brian Lenihan in Dublin West. Other candidates will also take up the prisoners' cause. Neil Blaney's Independent Fianna Fail Republican Party are fielding candidates in the border counties not covered by the prisoners.

But it has been left to the revolutionary organisation People's Democracy to challenge Prime Minister Haughey in his North Central Dublin constituency.



Charles Haughey

British ambassador and breaking off the Thatcher/Haughey talks until the prisoners' issue is resolved. They will also be challenging the economic and social exploitation of the working class.

PD are hoping for support from the local H Block Action Groups on the basis of their central involvement in the prisoners' campaign to date. Bernadette McAliskey, who is acting as press officer for the prisoners' campaign, has already announced her support for Doherty's candidature.

### Talks

Vincent Doherty, a prominent member of the National H Block Committee and of PD in Dublin will be standing there. In Limerick another PD member and prominent labour movement activist Joe Harrington is intending to stand.

The platform of the PD candidates challenges the bankruptcy of the bourgeois nationalists over the prisoners, calling for the expulsion of the

Leaders of the major political parties had hoped this would be a normal 'bread and butter' issues election. And Haughey, long considered the most nationalist of all na-

tionalist politicians, is particularly vulnerable on the prisoners' issue. The H Block candidates intend to ensure that he gets a rough ride throughout the election.

## HELP US CHALLENGE HAUGHEY

By John McAnulty and Fergus O'Hare

*The people of Belfast elected us as People's Democracy candidates because we stood for the 5 demands of the prisoners and focussed popular opposition to the British government.*

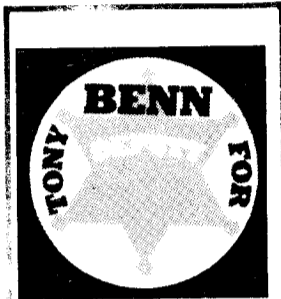
*We stood four square against the quislings who attacked the prisoners. We linked the hunger strike to the whole issue of imperialist economic and political domination of Ireland. We outlined a strategy of mass action which alone can take the struggle forward.*

*Now our comrades, Vincent and Joe, are standing in the Southern election and we will be active in the campaign for prisoner candidates. Again we plan to show the mass support that exists for the prisoners and the mass resentment against British rule.*

*To do this places a severe strain on our small resources. We appeal to you to contribute to our election fund to ensure that a clear challenge is made to Haughey at the polls.*

*Cheques to: People's Democracy Election Fund Pay to: Bank of Ireland, Upper Ormonde Quay, Dublin 1. Sorting code: 90 06 15 Account no: 49147310.*

*Send to: 38 Clanawley Road, Killester Dublin 5.*



**Tony Benn for Deputy — 'The fastest selling badge on the People's March, (Morning Star, 1 June). You too can have a copy of this hot property for just 20p (plus 11½p postage).**

**Give-away bulk rates also available. Write to: Islington Research Group, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Hurry, before stocks run out!**



run a proper socialist education service for our local activists.

Our fighting fund has eaten up more of our reserves than we expected. Printing the paper alone now costs us £350 more each week than in October — only partly offset by the price increase. We've taken bold initiatives to boost the fight against the

### SOCIALIST CHALLENGE BANKER'S ORDER FORM

Your Bank .....

Name of Account to be debited .....

Account Number .....

Our Bank..... Socialist Challenge .....

..... Lloyd's Bank, 19 Upper St, London N1 .....

Account No ..... 0179678 .....

Sorting Code..... 30-94-57 .....

Amount to be paid..... Monthly .....

First Payment due..... And on the same date in the month thereafter.

Signed .....

