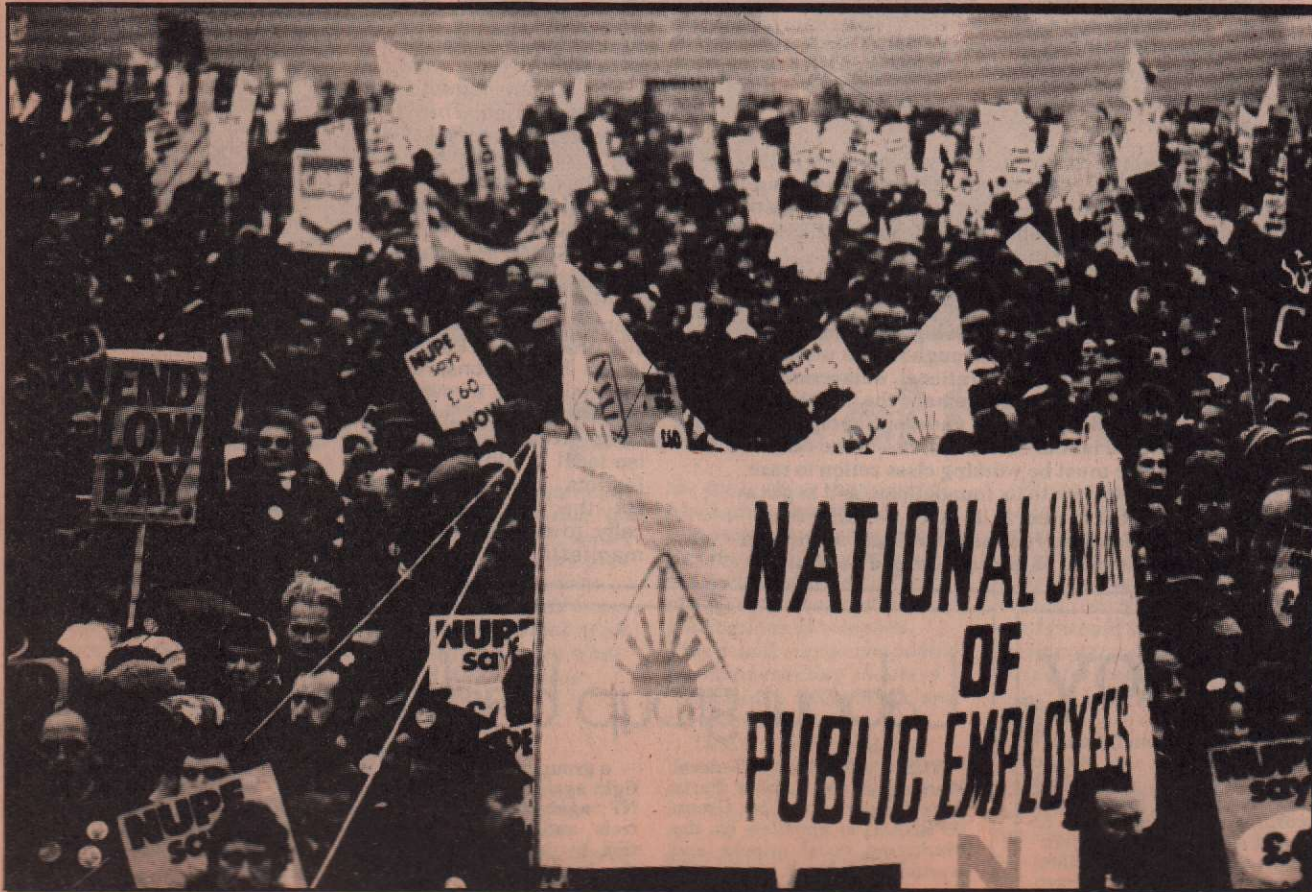


Socialist Organiser

FEBRUARY 1979. 15p

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory



This is the way to win

MILLIONS OF workers are telling Labour what they want. They don't want poverty-level wages. They don't want a 5% limit. They don't want to see the rich prosper while the working class bears the brunt of capitalist cutbacks.

This is official TUC and Labour Party policy in action, but the fight is being fought with the kind of de-

termination only the rank-and-file is capable of.

They are giving the lie to the nonsense that higher-paid workers make it hard for the low-paid. The Ford workers were first to break the 5%, then came the BOC workers, then the tanker drivers, and now it's the lorry drivers and the low-paid public service workers.

If the Government

really wanted to carry out its pledges to the working class, it would not see this great pay rebellion as a threat, but as an opportunity to implement those pledges with mass working class support.

But this is a Government committed to helping the bosses, not the workers. That's why it has capitulated to the Tories in Parliament on every single issue — picketing being only the latest.

This is no way to win an election — which must come soon. It is only a way of playing into the hands of the Tories, and spreading disillusion among workers. Callaghan is digging a grave for Labour's election chances by his present course. The TUC, instead of encouraging an even more militant mobilisation of our class, is trimming its sails to suit the Government.

The SCLV says:
■ No wage freeze!
■ Bring forward the claims!

■ £60 for 35 hours
■ Defend the right to picket.

SCLV supporters should take the initiative in creating support committees to mobilise the labour movement in support of those on strike. We must demand too that Labour councils pledge themselves to paying the full public service workers' claim, and instruct their employees not to cross picket lines. We must do everything to turn the Constituency Labour Parties and trade union branches outwards in the fight against low pay.

Andrew Hornung

INSIDE

How to beat the Tories p.6-7

The low pay battle p.4-5

plus: Labour democracy, industrial reports, devolution debate, Ireland, China, letters...

Iran: Army against the people

by GEOFF BENDER

AS WE GO to press, the people of Iran await the return of the Ayatollah Khomeiny. The powerless Government of Shapour Bakhtiar clings to office, desperately trying to buy time to do a deal with the Ayatollah. Meanwhile the Army, once again, turns its fire on the people in the streets of Tehran.

Bakhtiar, claiming that the intransigence of the Ayatollah and his supporters will provoke a military coup, has himself given the Army licence to slaughter the people of the capital. To prevent the Ayatollah's arrival, Bakhtiar placed the airports under military control. Control turned to a complete shut-down as troops invaded the university and set up road blocks to prevent the people surrounding the airports. In the scenes of carnage which followed, individual soldiers came over to the side of the people, but it was clear that the officers were prepared to go to any lengths to assert their control of the streets.

Desperately, Bakhtiar planned a trip to Paris to see Khomeiny, only to be told he was welcome... if he first resigned. His Government, as the Shah's legacy, was never acceptable to the Iranian people. Now, stained with the blood of the Ayatollah's supporters and of the risen

people of Iran, and having brought back the martial law it was pledged to end, it is doomed.

The return of Khomeiny can only be a matter of time. But it cannot bring the longed-for salvation which some of his followers expect. The halo of reverence which surrounds him in Paris may well look different in the light of the battles to come.

The first moves which he and his followers make towards establishing the Islamic Republic of their dreams will be met with the whole might of the Iranian Army. And the same goes for any other political current coming out of the movement which overthrew the Shah.

The Iranian Army, armed and trained by Britain, the US and the USSR, the Shah's greatest pride, now stands directly blocking the path to progress. The Iranian people need all the solidarity they can get.

All arms supplies to the Iranian army must be blacked. All links with the regime must be broken.

DEMONSTRATE Feb 3rd
□ Down with the Shah's regime!

□ Stop British support for the Shah!

□ Imperialist hands off Iran!

□ Support the Workers' Struggles in Iran!

1.30pm, Trafalgar Square



Tehran demonstrators seize Army truck. But can they stop the Army?



What we are fighting for

★ No more wage curbs! No more strike-breaking by Labour!

Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. The same should go for state benefits, grants and pensions. Demand immediate wage increases backdated to make up for the drop in our living standards over the last three years.

★ Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector.

★ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs — share the work with no loss of pay. Start now with a 35-hour week and an end to overtime.

★ All firms threatening closure should be nationalised under workers' control.

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

★ Freeze rents and rates.

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

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

◆ ◆

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

★ Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.

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

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

◆ ◆

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

◆ ◆

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

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

WE SET UP the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory so that the left would not be foot soldiers for Callaghan in the general election campaign.

An election victory for the Tories would be a defeat for the working class. But votes for Labour on the basis of approving Callaghan's record would also represent a defeat.

Too often Labour left wings have put forward their militant (or not-so-militant) policies but shelved them when the call came: all pull together against the Tories. They have contented themselves with vague hopes that the policies they plead for will percolate through somewhere, somehow, some time.

The SCLV aims to fight for its policies, in debate within the labour movement and in action, now. We press for CLPs (four of which have sponsored our Campaign) to throw themselves actively into the class struggle. We organise local groups, meetings, leaflets, posters. We fight for the Party democratically to decide its election manifesto, and for CLPs de-

mocratically to decide their election addresses and leaflets.

This activity provides the only forthright working-class answer to the capitalist principles so aggressively preached by the Tories. And it ensures that the voice of socialism is not drowned out by Callaghanite pro-capitalist 'moderation'.

We ask for support and cooperation from those who agree with our platform — and also from those who, without accepting the full platform, are willing to campaign with us round specific issues.

Support us by selling Socialist Organiser, by joining your local SCLV group or starting a new one, by inviting SCLV speakers to your CLP, LPYS or trade union branch and getting them to sponsor the Campaign.

Socialist Organiser is published by the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, Box 127, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1, and printed by Anvil Press [TU]. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the point of view of the SCLV.

EVENTS

South London: 'LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE & YOUR RATES'. Speaker: Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth Council. Wednesday 7th February, 8pm, at Tate Central Library, Brixton Oval, London SW2.

Haringey: 'FIGHT LOW PAY'. Speakers: Jeremy Corbyn (NUPE), Andrew Hornung (Tottenham NATFHE), both in personal capacity. Thursday 8th February, 7.30pm at Hornsey Labour Rooms, Middle Lane, N8.

West London: 'WHAT IS THE SCLV'. Speaker: Keith Veness (SCLV steering committee). Thursday 8th February, 7.45pm at the Old Town Hall, Isleworth.

SCLV fund-raising SOCIAL: Saturday 10th March, at Caxton House, 129 St Johns Way, N19 (Archway tube). 8pm to midnight, with 'Embryo' plus disco. Tickets £1.

All North London SCLV supporters: Every Sunday morning, CANVASS HORNSEY for Ted Knight. A vital marginal seat. Phone Jeremy Corbyn, 340 7362, for details.

8 pages, 10p.

Workers' Action

Revolutionary socialist weekly. From Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1. Subscriptions Britain & Ireland, £4 for 25 issues, £7.50 for 50. Other rates on demand.

Out in March: new magazine from

SOCIALIST CHARTER WITH ARTICLES ON The Bolshevik tradition, Socialist Feminism, the Labour Left, immigration, local government. 32 pages for 30p plus 10p p&p from 60 Loughborough Rd, London SW9.

Y.S. Democracy

A MASS OF rules imposed on the Labour Party Young Socialists in the 1960s still prevent it being run by its members in a really democratic way.

Each year at LPYS conference the platform proudly boasts that it is 'the most democratic conference in the labour movement'. True, the YS conference is more democratic than Labour Party or union conferences. But that's only because the standard of comparison is so bad!

The YS National Conference has no power to elect either the National Committee or the editor of the LPYS paper Left. There is no way for the conference to call the leaders to account.

Two LPYS branches, Edinburgh Central and Southampton, have decided to launch a 'Campaign for YS Democracy'.

One of the first targets they have pinpointed is the system of small regional conferences of the LPYS electing NC members. The CYSD wants NC

elections at National Conference, according to single transferable vote — so that minorities can be represented according to their strength. At present even a sizeable minority gets no NC members unless it is concentrated in one particular region.

The CYSD also demands that the conference rules under which the National committee dominates debates, with long summing-ups and recommendations on how to vote, are removed.

Though the branches launching the campaign support the two large minorities in the LPYS (Workers' Action and Clause 4), the policy they are putting forward is one that should appeal to any YS member serious about building a fighting mass youth movement.

★ The CYSD platform can be obtained from Edinburgh Central YS, c/o Gordon Brewer, 15 Barclay Place, Edinburgh

Stockport carve-up

THE STOCKPORT South saga took a new twist last week when the Labour Party National Executive Committee, at their meeting on 24th January, decided to postpone the constituency's Annual General Meeting for two months.

Enquiries are to be made into allegations against a right wing faction in the party who are attempting to exclude members critical of the Parliamentary candidate, Tom McNally.

McNally, who is Callaghan's personal adviser, was selected last year after blatant gerrymandering. Since then, things have gone from bad to worse. As well as threatening to expel some of their opponents, the right wing have refused to allow the party EC to meet and have denied the chairman the right to conduct meetings.

In the face of such outright fiddles, the NEC was forced to act. The right wing at first suppressed the correspondence from the NEC and are now refusing to implement the instructions.

The North-West regional office have given the green light to the right wing manoeuvres... if indeed they haven't actually orchestrated them.

The NEC decision is welcomed by party activists in Stockport South who were becoming alarmed at the prospect of the AGM turning into a real political carve-up... or even a physical punch-up.

What the party activists are now demanding is a full inquiry by elected NEC members, not merely a cover-up job by party bureaucrats. Only a full and open inquiry can restore Labour democracy in Stockport South.

Islington's lobby

MORE THAN 20 Labour Party members from Islington North CLP and the SCLV braved the icy weather on January 24 to lobby the NEC in support of their reinstatement of Keith Veness into the CLP from which he was expelled over two years ago.

In last month's Socialist Organiser Keith Veness explained the saga of political

manoeuvre and disruption which has led to the right-wing GMC suspending itself rather than accept his reinstatement. The lobby demanded that the CLP be re-constituted on the basis of the members accepting the NEC decision. Nearly 200 members of the CLP have signed a letter endorsing this demand.

Labour group backs self-defence

"THIS ANNUAL General Meeting of the Labour Party Race Relations Action Group [LPRRAG] is appalled by the continuing racial attacks and murders of black people in East London, and, conscious of their lack of confidence in the will of the police to protect them and their families, acknowledges their right to take adequate measures to defend themselves".

This is part of a resolution passed last week by LPRRAG

— a group which has taken the fight against 'Sus', against the NF, against immigration controls, and against discrimination by local authorities into the Labour Party. Supporters of the resolution emphasised that it was for those under attack to judge what measures were 'adequate' — fists and feet, or clubs and knives — and urged support for the Virk brothers, jailed for defending themselves with knives.

LPRRAG members have changed their views as the

grisly saga of racist murders has continued. Only seven months ago, a previous LPRRAG meeting was not prepared to support black self-defence.

John Tilley, MP for Lambeth Central, was elected chairperson, in place of Alex Lyon MP, who stood down. For more details about LPRRAG, contact the secretary, Marion Gerrard, at 2 Campbell Rd, London E17.

BERNARD MISRAHI



Fascists attack 'Bloody Sunday' marchers

THE 2,000 marchers who turned up in London to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the deaths of 14 civil rights marchers in Derry were given a warm reception on Sunday January 28th by several hundred fascist hecklers. Throughout the entire length of the march, the fascists, from the NF and British Movement, maintained a barrage of chants against the 'Troops Out' and 'Prisoners out of jail' slogans of the demonstration.

While Special Branch men mingled with the marchers along Oxford Street, their uniformed colleagues responded to the provocations of the fascists, mainly skinhead youth, by giving them a taste of the kind of treatment usually reserved for the left. Fists and boots flew, and several fascists were dragged away.

The fascists clearly grasp the importance of the issue of Ireland in a way that many of the left have failed to do. Though the march contained a cross section of various left

groups, the UTOM and the Women and Ireland group, as well as Irish militants from the Provisional Sinn Féin and IRSP, some organisations were conspicuous by their absence.

No constituency Labour Party banners were in evidence. There were few trade union banners, and the Militant tendency and the LPYS which they control were nowhere to be seen.

Today, for many on the left in this country the annual Commemoration march has become routine. For republican fighters in the North of Ireland, such complacency is a luxury they cannot afford. While 400 men and women in Long Kesh and Armagh prisons continue their life-or-death fight for political status and Roy Mason, still sponsored by the NUM, continues his war of attrition against them, the lessons of Bloody Sunday are not just history.

The fascists' intervention in London on Sunday 28th January 1979 should be a warning to British socialists against

complacency on the issue of Ireland... and a reminder to anti-fascist groups and organisations that if they don't take the issue of Ireland seriously, there are others who will.

GEOFF BENDER

ON SATURDAY 27th January, over 1,000 people marched two and a half miles through Glasgow for the 7th anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

This was over double the number who marched on the last Irish demonstration in Glasgow. As the march passed through the largely Catholic areas on its route, it nearly doubled in size, and local residents waved their support from the windows, some with the Irish tricolour.

This support, and the excellent turn-out by Republican sympathisers, were however not matched by the organised labour movement. Solidarity movement supporters will have to take the Irish issue into the labour movement much more seriously than at present.

CALLUM McCRAE

Lorry drivers near victory

by SIMON TEMPLE

HAULAGE FIRMS all over the country are giving in to the lorry drivers' demand for an increase in basic pay from £53 to £65 for a 40-hour week. In East Anglia, firms employing over 1,000 drivers have broken ranks with the Road Haulage Association and ports in the region are now re-opening. Many firms in the South-West and Scotland have also given way.

Militant picketing, mostly organised by unofficial strike committees, has produced these results.

In the West Midlands, there are two strike committees, official and unofficial — and their records have been very different.

Regional officials at first promised the bosses there would be no strike in the West Midlands, if the bosses promised to pay the increase won in other regions. Thousands of West Midlands drivers rejected this sell-out and set up an unofficial strike committee. Eventually the officials had to make the strike official and set up an official strike committee.

The official committee has been using the 'cool it down' code imposed by the T&GWU leaders to issue 'exemption orders' like confetti. Virtually any scab, using any old excuse, can get hold of this piece of paper, which is meant to let him through the picket lines.

In the eyes of the officials, Cadburys chocolate became 'essential food', and drivers poaching work normally done by strikers were given official blessing. One driver from the West Midlands who turned up at the BL Bath-

gate plant in Scotland freely admitted to pickets that he was doing work normally done by striking drivers of the West Midlands firm Howard Tenens & Co. He was turned round at the gates after a quick phone call to the unofficial strike committee.

The unofficial committee in Birmingham has held the strike together in the face of official sabotage. At Liverpool and Southampton docks, West Midlands lorries are let through only on the unofficial committee's say-so.

Unexpected side-effects of the unofficial committee's success have also been registered. Two of the bosses who negotiated the original sell-out deal, including their chairman, Reg Cooper, have suffered heart attacks in the last few weeks, and so has the union chairman at those talks, Barry Foley, who was put in by the bureaucrats as chairman of the official strike committee.

However, rumours that Foley's illness may be simply 'diplomatic' are flying around. He has thoroughly discredited the officials by driving through a picket line at the Patent Steel Shaft works in West Bromwich, and by sneaking through picket lines in Hull on the pretence of being an owner-driver.

Not all the bosses or sell-out merchants are going to leave the scene so quickly. Rank and file strike committees must keep control of the strike and steer it through to victory. And after the strike we must make sure that rank and file militants stay organised, campaigning to clear out the right wing bureaucrats from union positions.

How the camera lied

PADDY MOORE, vicious union thug, was caught in the act in a front-page picture in the Northern edition of the Daily Mirror on Thursday January 18th. It was plain to anyone that he was violently threatening women workers at the Cadburys factory in Birmingham who were protesting at the lorry drivers' picket line.

But pictures can lie — especially in the hands of the bosses' press.

In fact, Paddy was being prodded in the chest by local Cadburys boss Jocelyn Cadbury. Just at the moment when Paddy had had enough, a bright Daily Mirror photographer stepped in and snapped his response to this arrogant, vicious little boss. Such is the way that 'picket line violence' is born.

There were more twists to the press coverage of the Cadburys picket line. The papers were full of glee when, on Wednesday 17th, the drivers' pickets faced a lot of hostility from two or three hundred women, egged on by Cadburys bosses who had told them that the pickets were threatening their jobs. But after that a lot of workers came out and apologised to the drivers for what had happened, saying that they, at any rate, supported the strike.

The SOGAT union members in the factory then presented a statement to the pickets saying that they supported the strike, and called on drivers of print lorries who are SOGAT members not to cross the picket lines.

On Monday 22nd the drivers' case was put across to the women workers. A leaflet by Women's Voice,

explaining that the strike was not trying to hit other workers but the bosses, made a big impact. By Wednesday 24th, when drivers picketed the factory again, there was no trouble, a lot of support... and no Daily Mirror photographer.

S. Wales bosses crumbling

AROUND CARDIFF, three or four firms have given in on the £65 over the past few weeks, though they won't give the 35 hour week.

The strike is still very strong. In both Swansea and Cardiff, 'back to work' demonstrations have been mounted by convoys of scab lorries, but they have been met by strikers' counter-demonstrations.

The strikers say that the 'back to work' lorries are being driven by owner-drivers, managers, and drivers not involved in the dispute. One union official said: "The employers are not prepared to give £5 extra to our members, but they are prepared to money into demonstrations like these!"

The TGWU branch chairman at Snakpak, Cardiff, has said that he has details of the lorries involved in the 'back to work' convoys and will try to get them blacked in future.

PAUL BYERS (TGWU)

The secondary pickets of the mind

Thought-pickets have been stationed at the gateways to reason. They are led by a bunch of shock-stewards from the Sun, Mirror, Mail and Express.

These people are the ultimate in 'greedy workers'. Their pay averages out at about £8,500 a year. But — just to show how the philosophy of I'm-all-right-Jack prevails in these circles — these layabouts oppose demands by others for wage rises and decent working conditions.

Our reporters went down to a thought-picket line on Fleet Street to find out what these people are after. Unfortunately, instead of argument all we got was a shower of abuse. Words like 'thug', 'threat', 'crippling' and 'ransom' made up for any coherent case.

Demented and hysterical, one picket screamed that 'the shock troops of NUPE, under Alan Fisher, are preparing for a massive dirty jobs strike'. He should know — his is the dirtiest job of all. But it is difficult to see what this could mean. Who is Alan Fisher?

Another thought-picket shrieked about a 'food famine' and a 'famine threat' in which '1,000 old people might die a day'. Obviously this is 'the face of hate' — a hate so sunk into the bone marrow and brain mallow of these pickets that they cannot distinguish fantasy from reality any more.

While we were there a small group of workers from

the place these thugs were blockading came out to remonstrate with the pickets. But they were immediately set upon and driven off by the pickets who used lies and fabrications as weapons. This attack was accompanied by blood-curdling shouts of 'Commies', 'Extremists' and 'Terrorists'.

These self-appointed 'leaders' pose as representatives but this is in fact a lie. None of them has been elected and their undemocratic appointment is plotted behind the closed doors of secret City offices.

The question that everybody is asking is 'Have these bully-boys got too much power?' Should they be allowed to press-gang people to support their cause? Can they bring the nation's brains to a standstill?

We can only concur with the interpretation by a High Court judge of the words of the government's recent trade union law: 'Totally unlimited construction of these words would have meant Parliament was writing a recipe for anarchy...'

Quite so! How could a government that claims to be running a democratic set-up possibly give unlimited licence to create chaos to a bunch of liars, intimidators and mercenary hacks who together have more power than Parliament?

We are waiting eagerly for the Prime Minister to issue a statement urging people to cross these picket lines and let the truth-trucks through.

IRELAND: 'LABOUR HAS JUST ACCEPTED TORY POLICY'

IT IS NOW seven years since the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry. What do you think have been the most significant changes in Labour's policy on Ireland since then?

IT'S JUST got worse. There has been a gradual and total acceptance of Tory policy by the Labour cabinet, with the continued use of troops against the Catholic minority in the North of Ireland. The attempt by Callaghan to cling onto power by promising extra seats to the Ulster Unionists has finally patched over any differences that used to exist between Labour and Tories. Callaghan made that deal of out of simple self-interest to prevent a general election.

STATUS

What do you think about the campaign for political status for Republican prisoners?

THE FACT that there has to be a campaign at all emphasises that the Labour government has tried to ignore the political basis of the Provisional IRA and make them out to be criminal gangsters. As long as that attitude is kept up, there will be no solution

SO asked KEN LIVINGSTONE, an SCLV sponsor and prospective parliamentary candidate for Hampstead, about Labour's policies in Ireland.



to the situation in Ireland.

Do you think that the recent Daily Mirror editorials calling for Troops Out show any mood amongst Labour leaders for this policy?

AS WITH THE Vietnam war for the USA, once the military and financial costs of a war become too high some sections of the Establishment will go over to wanting to pull troops out. Basically they want to avoid the danger to the hold of the ruling class that would occur if they suffered a significant defeat in Ireland

What do you think is the British ruling class's strat-

egy for Ireland?

BRITAIN HASN'T got an overall strategy in the North. The war is costly and dangerous. Though they probably want to pull out, they still want to defend ruling class interests in the North. They would probably prefer some sort of deal with the government in the South, without the fear of any sort of socialist state being formed as a result of the struggle in the North.

SOUTH

If there was a victory against the British, it could unleash a radicalisation in both the North and South of Ireland that would probably spill over into Britain.

When you argue your views in the Labour Party, what sort of response do you find?

VERY MIXED. Amongst the more active members of the party, there is a strong body of resistance to 'Troops Out' views, though they feel they should be against the government line.

Canvassing on the doorstep, however, there is no real problem getting my views across. Activists in the movement are much less radical on Ireland than



ordinary working class opinion. Labour Party members seem to have all sorts of agonies about having blood on their hands if they even pass a resolution calling for Troops Out.

The cause of this is the way the Government has been able to squash real debate on Ireland in the Labour Party, as well as keeping up the continued censorship of the media.

How can we break out of this situation?

AT THE moment there are lots of small journals and small campaigns putting out Troops Out views... but they are small. It is the same problem as putting forward socialist views on the economy or race — how do we actually reach out to ordinary working class people? At the end of the day, we can only fall back on our own abilities as socialists to educate, agitate, and organise through campaigns like the SCLV.

All out to win

THE LOW-PAID workers are being blamed by the press for their indifference and irresponsibility. The truth is exactly the opposite.

There are many groups of workers with a more militant tradition than the hospital porters, school caretakers, road maintenance workers and ambulance crews. But few have achieved the degree of rank and file control that can be seen in the present strike.

In Coventry, writes nurse JENNIE LONG, shop stewards representing all hospital ancillary departments (including transport and engineers) elected a strike committee made up of NUPE, TGWU, and CoHSE stewards.

Hospital porters there are out on strike, though they are covering emergency services. They have plenty of support from other hospital workers. The telephonists, who are EETPU members, are refusing to 'bleep' non-medical staff... except on union business. TASS members have agreed to black non-essential supplies, while ASTMS members are refusing to carry out NUPE members' work.

ERIKA NIGHTINGALE, secretary of the Northampton NUPE local government branch, told us how they organised for the Day of Action: "A special branch meeting was called two weeks before. 200 members turned out and decided that picketing was their first priority, to try to close down as many places as possible."

"We got a lot of support. Especially welcome were the many NUT members who refused to cross picket lines."

"The branch stewards are now establishing a strike committee to organise further action, especially all-out strike action to hit the authority where it would really hurt them."

In Liverpool, writes teacher BARBARA WOJCIECHOWSKA, two rank and file groups have been set up to campaign against low pay — the "£60 for 35 hours" Low Pay Campaign and the Campaign for Action in NUPE. The Low Pay Campaign is producing a regular bulletin and the two campaigns are cooperating closely.



In Leicester it is the Hospital Worker group that is producing bulletins. CHARLIE SORELL, a NUPE shop steward from Leicester Royal Infirmary, tells us that the group is working to build contacts with other branches in the dispute and it has called a public meeting for all those involved in the low pay campaign.

It will be a meeting to tell NUPE leader Alan Fisher that the rank and file does not accept what he said on the Day of Action (Monday, 22nd): "We won't get £60 in one go."

In Nottingham the NUPE strike committee's bulletins have been censored by union officials for carrying criticism of them. The bulletins will continue... with a 'suggestions' column. According to TIM THORPE, NUPE Social Services branch secretary, officials are insisting that any extension of action must be officially approved, and they are keeping links with other unions to themselves.

In a number of areas, local officials — even those of NUPE, by far the most militant union in this dispute — are holding back action.

In Edinburgh, writes JOHN MACDONALD of Edinburgh South Hospitals NUPE, full-time union officer Andy Wilson (a member of the ill-named 'Communist' Party) has actively interfered with the organisation of a militant work



to rule. In the Royal Infirmary he arranged for eight scab porters to come in, and in the Sick Children's Hospital he prevented the senior steward from arranging the blacking of kitchen equipment, arguing against the steward in front of management.

At Longmoor Hospital the cleaners have walked out until management agree to accept their arrangements. At the 'Deaconess', ancillary workers are blacking a doctor who refused to cooperate.

Workers at the City Hospital blacked the records department for breaking their picket line until a verbal apology was given to every picket.

Even in this very fragmented, rather confused action, the rank and file is taking control out of the hands of the officials.

With none of the unions calling for an all-out strike, the picture varies a lot from area to area. In Brent (North West London) housing estate caretakers and hospital porters have been on an indefinite strike since January 22nd. The 120 housing caretakers have undertaken to provide heating for old people during the strike.

In Haringey (North London), school and college caretakers have been on strike since January 22nd, and dustcart drivers are now to be called out. Labour councillor BERNIE GRANT tells us that "At its January meeting the council voted to support the manual workers' full claim for £60 minimum and a 35 hour week. The motion called on the government to agree the claim immediately."

"We have issued a statement instructing head teachers to close schools and colleges, and calling on staff not to cross picket lines. The council has met with other London boroughs to make a concerted effort to force the Government and the Environment Secretary, Peter Shore, to pay up."

"A demonstration by a few parents — with Tory backing — outside one school was swamped by a much bigger counter-demonstration of parents, children, and local trade unionists."

"Some of the parents who had gathered to protest against the school's closure were persuaded by the pickets to join a lobby later in the week

calling for payment of the full claim."

The NUPE Inner London Education Authority district committee has voted to stage selective strikes up to mid-February, then go on all-out strike from the school half-term.

In Cambridge, all dustmen, road staff, sewer men and other City Council workers are now on strike. The GMWU has made the strike official until Friday 2nd February, and the Cambridge GMWU are now pressing to have the strike made official for an indefinite period. Workers employed in city schools have said they will join the strike if official instructions come through.



The GMWU branch strike bulletin says: "Council workers throughout the country have got to keep the pressure on our union leaders to call an all-out indefinite strike of council manual workers. This branch has already sent a resolution to our executive council demanding an all-out national strike. We must force our leaders to get off their backsides and act immediately!"

NUPE workers in Cambridge are working to rule. But although GMWU workers combined the start of their strike with NUPE's Day of Action, the local NUPE branch has been stand-offish about closer links.

Support for the strike has come from Cambridge Labour Party, which has given the GMWU strike committee the use of its offices.

Grave-diggers throughout the North West are on strike, and local shut-down factories are being used to store the unburied bodies. In Lincolnshire water workers are out and in Nottingham — where union officials told them to go back — water workers may come out again. Nottingham's central hospital laundry has closed down.

In Coventry, hospital porters are operating a work to rule which includes: not using faulty equipment, insisting that two porters accompany each theatre trolley, and refusing work without protective clothing.

The full £60, no less

BY STEPHEN CORBISHLEY [CPSA, BRITISH LIBRARY]

PUBLIC SECTOR workers have been hardest hit by the Labour Government's right-wing policies, suffering from the cuts and from the strictest application of the pay controls.

Union leaders like Fisher and Basnett are well aware of this. And they are well aware of the strength of feeling among their members. That is why they are concerned to reach a deal with the Government.

Callaghan's answer has been threefold: admit the 5% limit does not fully hold, and allow the lower-paid a little leeway; make some noise about controlling prices; and for the long run offer an inquiry into public sector pay, to lead to a 'comparability' pay system.

Many of the union bureaucrats would like to settle for crumbs. But they can do so only after the strikes have run their course a bit, and after a deal has been made on the long-term strategy for public sector pay.

David Basnett of the G&M welcomes the 'comparability'

plan, and indeed has been campaigning for it over the last three years. NUPE's Alan Fisher, speaking at the Central Hall rally on the 22nd, posed the options as either pay comparability or indexation, without indicating his preference.

The rank and file of other unions should learn from the experience of the civil service white-collar workers' union, CPSA. Pay has been based on the principle of fair comparison since 1955. The result? Full-time male manual workers in Civil Service clerical grades had average gross weekly earnings of £62.90 in April 1978 — even lower than local authority manual workers, on £66.70!

Every so often the civil service union bureaucrats try to improve the system, but since 1974 it has been suspended every time the Government imposes an incomes policy.

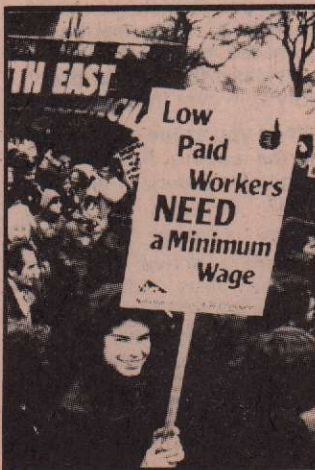
The Pay Research Unit system is at best parasitic on the efforts of white-collar workers in the private

sector. It undermines all efforts in the civil service unions to organise independent action, and turns most pay 'battles' into haggling over differentials and percentages, leaving virtually absolute control in the hands of the full time officials.

And how could a pay comparability system work for mental health nurses, grave-diggers, or ambulance workers? It could not. A 'comparability' system would just turn into another weapon of direct government wage control, with the full time officials acting in harness.

For the Labour Government, its aim is a new Social Contract — perhaps only with the public sector unions, but under strict control since the state is the employer.

We should oppose any pay comparability scheme, and take up the option Fisher does not want: 'indexation'. We must fight to win the full claim — and to have our gains protected from inflation through automatic cost of living rises.



THE HACKNEY NUPE general branch is submitting this emergency motion to Hackney South CLP for the London Labour Party Regional Annual meeting. Socialist Organiser suggests that other CLPs and union branches take it as a model:

"This GMC notes the escalating militancy of local authority manual workers in pursuit of their just pay claim. It pledges itself actively to support all industrial action being taken."

"It resolves to write to the NUPE Greater London Divisional Council in full support of its call for an all-out strike. It would encourage NALGO social workers on strike now, teachers affected by the

schoolkeepers' being on strike and themselves putting in a 30% claim, civil servants, local authority officers, nurses, all those with claims coming up, to bring them forward and to fight now with the public sector manual workers."

"It resolves to join in demanding:

- ☐ £60 for 35 hours NOW
- ☐ no phased agreements
- ☐ no 'comparability'
- ☐ no cuts
- ☐ abolition of 'cash limits'
- ☐ rejection of 'no strike' clauses.

"It resolves also to send this resolution to the Hackney Council Labour Group and the Labour Party Greater London Regional Council, urging their full support immediately."

The
press
bullies,
cancer kills,
pickets
don't

FLEET STREET'S sharpest knives have been reserved for the pickets at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The story that cancer patients had been sent home because of the picketing even reached the floor of the House of Commons, in a question to Health Minister David Ennals.

Behind all the screaming headlines, the real story is rather different.

Internal drivers, central stores staff, and most porters have been on strike since the 22nd. The press reported, almost with glee, that over 100 patients had been sent home. NUPE pickets insist they need not have been — and this has been confirmed in a statement by the chief administrative officer at the hospital.

The head of the Radiology Department, a Mr

Hunt, had issued a statement to the press saying that patients would die because essential supplies were being turned away at the gates. But at no stage were food or medical supplies turned away. Several delivery drivers refused to cross the picket line, but they were mostly carrying coal, of which there is six months' supply inside the hospital.

The press hysteria has had its effect. Scabs are doing the internal drivers' jobs, and student nurses are being pressurised into doing porters' duties. Pickets have been abused by drivers of Rover 3500s and the like, on their way to the wealthy suburb of Edgbaston.

As the pickets say: "Cancer patients die of cancer, not picketing".

DOUG MACKAY

It's a political fight

RICHARD SHIELD, a NUPE shop steward on the Inner London Education Authority, told Socialist Organiser:

Fisher is looking towards 'comparability' and 'phased settlements' for his let-out. If we do not stop them, our negotiators will settle for a small increase phased in over two or more years and resulting in our wages being determined according to comparisons with equally poor private sector workers.

The Government maintains it cannot meet our claim because it would exceed their strictly imposed cash limits on public spending. It argues that higher wages will cause more cuts, more hospital closures for

example. We must completely reject this. We earn a living wage. The Government must pay it to us. We run the public services. We demand that they be retained and extended. We must fight all cuts and smash all cash limits.

□ □

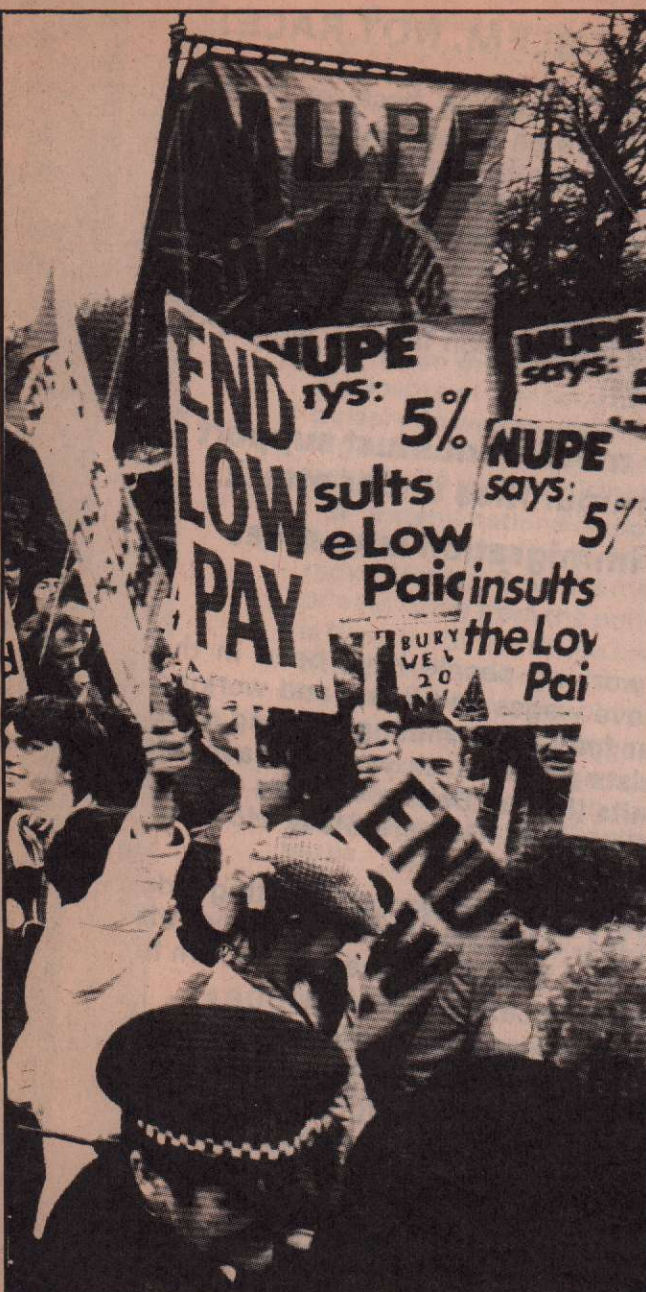
Even victory on the £60 and 35 hour week would be insufficient unless protected against inflation. But it could begin to halt unemployment by 'natural wastage' if the cash limits are successfully challenged.

We must reject all attempts to withdraw our basic trade union rights by imposing 'no-strike' claus-

es on us. All those with claims coming up should bring them forward and fight with us now.

Our campaign is of necessity a political, and not just a trade union, one. Our employer is the Government of the day. We are in direct opposition to the state.

In an election year like this, Callaghan and his TUC apologists will want to quell our anger as soon as they can. They are seeking to divide us, to weaken us, and to sell us out. Our struggle for a living wage is also a struggle to force our political 'leaders' of the Labour Government to represent our needs, the needs of the working class.



Photos of the 22nd [here and p.1] by Colin Chalmers

WOMEN AND LOW PAY

Women are particularly hard hit by low pay. Many women can only get part time work, and the insulting wages are justified as 'pin money'.

★ Women manual workers' gross earnings have actually fallen in relation to men's over the last four years: from 62% in 1974 to 61% in 1978.

★ NUPE says that nearly 90% of female local authority and NHS manual workers gross less than £60. Nearly two thirds gross less than £50.

LABOUR'S PROMISES...

"The Social Contract is not simply, or narrowly, an understanding about wages. It is about justice, equality, about concern for and protection of the lower paid, the needy, the pensioner and the handicapped in our society".

Labour Party Manifesto October 1974.

A £60 minimum wage — two thirds of average male earnings — became Labour Party policy in 1978.

LABOUR GOVERNMENT PRACTICE

★ Earnings of male council manual workers and NHS ancillaries have fallen to 72.3% of the average for all male workers, from 74.7% in 1975.

★ In 1976, 14,900,000 families — one quarter of the population — were on, or below the poverty line, defined as supplementary benefit level plus 40%. And the proportion is increasing.

★ And still £300 million is lost each year in unclaimed supplementary benefits.

★ Most NUPE members are on a basic minimum wage of £42.40. The subsistence level for a family with two children, as laid down by the Government for Family Income Supplement purposes, is £50.

This is going too far, the judge said

by NIK BARSTOW

THE HEEL of the High Court has once again come stomping down on trade union rights. Last week, United Biscuits — contributor of £20,000 to the Tory Party in 1978 — was granted an injunction forbidding shop steward Reg Fall from picketing a firm in Purfleet which supplies United Biscuits with edible oil.

United Biscuits' lawyers came to the chambers of Mr Justice Ackner claiming intimidation, interference with contracts, and other heinous crimes. There were stories of sledgehammers, threats, and normally fearless workers now quivering in their wellingtons.

The firm — which has one of Thatcher's advisors as chairman of the board, and shadow employment secretary James Prior as a board member — said it was losing £127,000 a day... but its real worry was about its workers who might suffer.

The judgment was greeted by the press as the voice of sanity in the midst of chaos, an answer to the new threat to the nation, 'secondary picketing'. In fact the inevitable judgment against Reg Fall — a judgment rightly understood as attacking all militant trade union action — was only the latest in a series of legal blows against trade unions.

In 1974, after the Heath Government had been brought down, the new Labour Government set out to reverse the Tories' 1971 Industrial Relations Act.

Since the unions did not register under the Industrial Relations Act, they had been liable to prosecution for breaches of contract even where the unions' actions were in furtherance of a trade dispute. In theory this put unions back to the situation of 1906. In 1974 the Labour Government ended that.



What was not changed until 1976 — when the Labour Government was a majority government — was the law relating to commercial contracts. Through the '60s, judges had been increasing the scope for prosecuting unions by claiming that interference with commercial (as distinct from employment) contracts was illegal.

Also, in 1975 the Labour Government tried to plug up another loophole the judges were using against trade unionists. It had been the custom that when firms asked for an injunction to stop picketing, the judges would grant an interlocutory (or interim) injunction.

The idea is that the judge orders a return to the status quo existing before the strike, and this status quo lasts until the case can be heard fully in court.

But usually firms aren't interested in a full court hearing. They just want to stop the strike there and then. The judges obliged them every time.

In 1975 the Government instructed judges that they must refuse an injunction if they think the union is likely to win when the case eventually comes to court.

But judges are a hard-bitten, reactionary, upper-class bunch — and mulishly stubborn too. So they looked

for other ways of hitting out at trade unionists while still staying within the letter of the law.

The United Biscuits case is the latest example of the High Court trying to sabotage the legal gains won by the trade union movement in Parliament. In 1977 the BBC got an injunction stopping the Association of Broadcasting Staffs from blacking the transmission of the 1977 Cup Final to South Africa. This, said the Court, was not a 'trade dispute', and so did not qualify for protection under trade disputes law.

When seamen stopped the Camilla M from sailing from Glasgow because the Greek and Indian crew weren't being paid enough, the High Court stopped them too. That wasn't a 'trade dispute' either.

In two more recent cases the judges made up yet more new rules to suit the bosses. Solidarity strikes were declared illegal because they are not 'in furtherance' of a trade dispute, merely 'in consequence' of it. The court also said that even if the workers and the union thought they were furthering a trade dispute, the Court could rule that they weren't.

On top of that, it said that



Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill [shown above at Grunwicks] condemned the "biased, blatantly anti-working class legislation". "My advice is — carry on picketing".

Tory plans

WITH ALL the horror of a Tory who sees that the 'lower orders' are getting ideas above their station, Margaret Thatcher complained in Parliament that: "Now we find that the place is practically being run by strikers' committees".

The Tories have plans to stop these upsets:

□ They want to make trade unionists liable to legal penalties if industrial action causes a breach of commercial contracts.

□ They want to take legal action against the closed shop.

□ They want to remove the right to strike from workers in essential services.

They say they want to protect "the country" against "union power". In fact they protect only profits.

moral support of a trade dispute didn't count as being 'in furtherance' of it. Solidarity action was only moral support, not practical support!

If Reg Fall had wasted his time and gone to the hearing, he would have heard all these tricks being used at once. Mr Justice Ackner didn't bother with the stuff about sledgehammers and intimidation. That was all besides the point. It has always been illegal — if it really exists!

The point, the judge said, was that the picketing at Purfleet wasn't closely enough connected to the main issue in the lorry drivers' strike to be in furtherance of a trade dispute.

Even the most hate-filled anti trade unionist can see that is nonsense. Another criterion therefore had to be dragged in. It was impossible, the judge claimed, that Parliament could have had this sort of thing in mind when they legislated protection against the law of contract for those engaged in trade disputes. "There must be a presumption that Parliament does not intend to legislate to bring about its own destruction".

In layman's language: I know it's a trade dispute, but this is going too far. And I'm not having it!



Towards the end of his summing up — after all the arguments about the action being 'in consequence' and not 'in furtherance' of a trade dispute, and being 'moral' rather than 'practical' support, the judge made his class bias even clearer. He bore in mind, he said, the public interest. And strikes were not in the public interest.

The papers are filled with absurd hysteria about 'union power'. The hypocrisy is blatant. Here are a handful of wealthy non-elected bigots wielding tremendous power. When it doesn't suit them they evade, obstruct, or reinterpret laws passed by Parliament. And they really are 'above the law'.

This judgment was aimed against 'secondary picketing'. But the real target for it, and for all the press fury, is militant trade union action of any sort.

The return of a Labour Government at the next election will mean another rather feeble attempt to keep the judges from going all out against the unions. So far, so good. Better in any case than a battery of Tory anti-union laws.

But the lesson to be drawn is this: Parliament is weak compared with the forces of the state, of which the judges are an important part. Secondly, the laws only work when the working class movement is weak enough to submit to them without a fight. Between 1971 and 1974 trade unionists had no legal protection from prosecution, but strikes and picketing were more militant than ever.

Lack of legal protection didn't stop trade unionists then, and it shouldn't now. The law cannot be expected to function in the interests of the working class while the capitalists hold economic and state power.

STOP THE TORY UNION-BASHERS

The richest ten per cent in this country own 60% of all personal wealth. An even smaller minority — 0.8% — owns 75% of all company shares. At the other end of the scale, half the population owns only 5½% of personal wealth.

Top bosses personally rake in £2,000 or £4,000 a week. Bosses' 'perks' are worth about £100 a week on average. Nationalised industry bosses recently got a rise of £120 a week. Meanwhile three and a half million workers get wages below the official poverty line.

And inequality in increasing. The wealth created by our labour goes into the well-filled pockets of the minority who live off profits, dividends, rent and interest.

The Tories are the party of the top 10%. Big business finances them. Nearly all the Tory leaders are big businessmen in their own right.

These millionaire exploiters are the people who accuse trade unionists of being too greedy and powerful! The top profiteers have the nerve to say that workers who strike for an extra £10 or £20 are money-grabbers!

Wage Rises and Inflation

Why does anyone listen to this Tory hypocrisy about the unions being 'too strong'? It is because we are constantly told that there is something called the 'common good of society' which is the same for workers and for bosses. Wage rises cause inflation, they say, and that is equally evil for millionaires in their pent-houses and workers in their council flats.

We never hear about higher profits causing inflation! From mid-1973 to mid-1978 wages consistently ran behind prices, and still there was inflation. In the USA real wages have been at a standstill for ten years, and prices are rising faster than in Britain.

Wage increases are not the cause of inflation. But they do cause a squeeze on profits. That's why the bosses are bleating — and hiding their greed for profits behind a pretended concern with the 'common good'.

There is a class struggle between workers and bosses. Without unions, workers would still suffer Dickensian exploitation. Some non-unionised workers still do. To say that 'the unions are too strong' is to say that the workers should lose or stop short of winning.

Unions Too Strong?

In fact the unions are too weak in representing workers' interests. The press usually talks about the TUC and the bosses' CBI as equal powers. But the TUC represents eleven million workers while the CBI represents a few thousand bosses. And the CBI gets its way when it puts its foot down, whereas even from a Labour Government unions have been unable to win quite modest reforms.

We say the unions should be stronger. They should organise more members. They should fight harder against the bosses. They should be more united. They should have a more active membership, exerting more direct control over their leaders. They should fight to stop Labour Governments going along with Tory hypocrisy about the 'common good'.

The Tories' union-bashing means nothing more nor less than safeguarding the interests of Profit. When other workers are on strike, they appeal to you, as part of the 'Great British Public', to line up with them against the 'troublemakers'. But any time you and your workmates strike for a better deal, you will be the 'militants' and 'bully boys' the Tories hate.

KEEP THE TORIES OUT! VOTE LABOUR! Join your union and your Labour Party, and help to make the labour movement stronger, so that soon we can be strong enough to end the profits system once and for all.

VOTE LABOUR AND FIGHT RACISM

BAD housing, rising prices, lengthening dole queues, cuts in social services — these are the grim realities of the bosses' crisis for ordinary working class people. Who is responsible for this situation? How can we best fight back?

RACISTS try to blame all these problems on black people living in this country. Like Hitler, the fascists of the National Front talk of defending the Nation and the Race; like the Nazis, their aim is to smash the labour movement and come to power on the broken back of a divided and weakened working class. The racism which already exists — and which the Tories are playing on in this election more than ever before — is the most powerful weapon these fascists have.

THE TORIES are not far behind the National Front when it comes to using racism to pick up a few votes from the gutter. The old party of Empire has always treated black people as it has treated working class people — like dirt. The Tories want to:

- End settlement rights for those coming to work in Britain.
- Set up a system of 'internal controls', like the Pass Laws in South Africa.
- Encourage black people to leave this country — an open invitation to the thugs and murderers who are trying to terrorise black families into leaving.

LOCAL TORY councils have given the fascists an airing, ending Labour's bans on their use of Council halls and rooms.

LIKE THE FASCISTS, the Tories want to use racism to split the working class and weaken the fight back against the system which exploits both black and white.

BUT FAR FROM creating problems, as racists claim, black

people suffer the worst housing, the lowest paid jobs, the highest jobless rates — and they suffer from racism.

■ ■ RACISM IS THE PROBLEM, NOT RACE!

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN murdered in London because of the colour of their skin. Racist attacks are an everyday occurrence. Blacks, especially youngsters, constantly get picked on and pushed around by the police, and locked up on frame-up charges like the ancient crime of being suspected by a policeman — 'Sus'.

FAMILIES are broken up and hundreds of black people imprisoned without trial under the immigration laws — while the racists scream for more such laws.

- WE SAY the labour movement must support the defence of black communities under attack.
- WE SAY the racist immigration laws must be scrapped.

DESPITE ALL THIS, black working people have been in the forefront of the fight to improve wages and living and working conditions for all workers. Far from undermining working class living standards as the racists claim, black workers have led the struggles to end wage limits (Fords, Bakery workers etc), to defend trade union rights (Grunwick, Garners Steak Houses), and against cuts in the National Health Service.

THE TORIES hate to see black and white workers fighting side by side. They would much rather we fought each other and left them in peace to make big profits. This is why they use racism to turn white against black, so they can exploit all of us.

THE FIGHT to unite the working class against racism has to be taken into the Labour Party too. The Labour Party Conference called for the repeal of the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts, but the Party leaders are still implementing those Acts. Your local Labour Party is among those fighting to make Labour leaders carry out the Party's anti-racist policies.

VOTE LABOUR AND JOIN US IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM

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PROFITS OR JOBS?

THE TORIES tell us that this Labour Government is not working. They say the unemployed are being left to rot on the dole, that prices are roaring upwards because of 'excessive' wage demands, and that we're not working hard enough. But the Tories' concern for the unemployed, the sick and elderly, for young people and workers struggling to feed and clothe families is just hypocrisy.

WE ALL REMEMBER the three-day week in 1974. Edward Heath's incomes policies didn't stop inflation of over 20 per cent. Lame-duck policies created thousands of redundancies as firms collapsed with no government action. Nothing has changed with this party of Big Business.

TODAY THE TORIES are more extreme. Under Margaret Thatcher, they blame black and Asian people, the unemployed or trade unionists for the problems of their Big Business system. They call for cuts in social security and welfare benefits. They want massive cuts in public spending — except armaments — which would completely wreck the National Health Service, education and the social services, and do away with thousands more jobs.

EVERYONE AGREES there is a crisis. But how can workers be causing it — the very people who work hardest, live on least, and have no say in the way that society is run? That just has to be nonsense! The capitalists are in a mess because of their system which is unbalanced, unplanned and irrational. Ever since it started, the bosses' system has gone up and down like a yoyo, and every time it goes down, workers are blamed and made to suffer.

THE BOSSES are concerned about their profits and about nothing else. They want to sack thousands more in the cause of speed-up and efficiency; they want an end to any controls on prices, an end to food subsidies and not even a pretence of controls on their profits.

Our Policies

- Work-sharing with no loss of pay and a 35 hour week. Where employers declare

redundancies, demand that work is divided up between all workers with shorter hours.

- Expand public spending — create jobs! We say no workers should be unemployed, no machine should be idle. Hospitals, homes, schools and an integrated public transport system are urgently needed. Meanwhile 200,000 building workers are on the dole. We are fighting for a massive expansion of public works to employ the jobless. Boost financial support for apprenticeships and for re-training schemes at average trade union rates of pay.

- Open the Books. Labour should make disclosure of company information compulsory so we can see the waste, profiteering, perks and squandering that goes on behind the veil of 'business secrets'.

- Extend nationalisation into profitable sectors. Nationalise all firms declaring redundancies. Stop the massive handouts to private firms from the public sector: the NHS is bled dry by the drugs industry, and the Coal Board went on paying high compensation for decades to the old pit bosses.

- A £60 minimum wage for all. A cost-of-living clause in all wage agreements is workers' best protection against inflation. Labour Party and TUC policy is against pay curbs.

Join Us In The Fight

LABOUR IS THE traditional party of working people in this country. Trade unionists and socialists built our party. And they are still fighting for working class policies, whatever Labour Governments do.

VOTE LABOUR, JOIN THE LABOUR PARTY, AND MAKE SURE YOUR LABOUR REPRESENTATIVES STICK TO THE POLICIES THAT THE PARTY RANK AND FILE HAS DEMOCRATICALLY AGREED

Stop the Housing Rip-Off

Did You Know....?

- Every year, millions of pounds are overcharged to the Government and local councils by 'cost over-runs' from cowboy building contractors.
- Thousands of building workers are seriously injured every year by private builders who ignore safety standards to maximise their profits.
- The Tories are committed to dismantling all council Direct Labour workforces and afterwards handing these lucrative contracts to their rich friends, the private building bosses.
- 200,000 building workers are unemployed — yet the Tories have said they will reduce council house building, the only way millions of working class people can hope for re-housing.

Five million pounds (yes, £5,000,000) has been spent by the big building contractors in advertising and organising for the Tories to win this election. These people are among the most irresponsible and anti-social in Britain. Look at the record of them and their Tory friends.

LIVERPOOL The urgently needed Royal Liverpool Hospital was ordered in 1962. The original contractor went bust, the cost over-ran by £5 million, and the hospital was finished five years late.

BIRMINGHAM The city had one of the best and most efficient direct labour forces in the country. In 1976 the new Tory council axed Direct Labour and put the work out to tender for private contractors. Since then, building and maintenance standards have slumped dramatically.

GLASGOW The Royal Hospital for Sick Children was unusable when handed over by private builders. The water system was polluted (in a hospital!) and by 1980 it will have cost an extra £3 million.

ISLINGTON [London] Last year this Council, with the biggest re-development programme in London, was ripped-off for a cool £14 million by cost over-runs from private contractors.

CAMDEN [London] McAlpines Ltd. built 400 flats for the Council — who now face a bill of £½ million for defects. This Borough also has in it the notorious Centre Point, the ultimate in private speculators building for profit, not for need.

BRIGHTON The new Civic Conference Centre was finished years late and cost 80% more than the estimates.

It is possible to quote such examples endlessly. What they all show is that housing and house-building is far too important to be left in the unscrupulous hands of Margaret Thatcher and her building speculator friends.

Labour is the only major party committed to supporting Council Direct Works

We Say:

- ★ ★ Nationalise the big building firms and place them under the control of the local authorities, the public utilities and the people who work in them.
- ★ ★ The Government should tell local authorities to refuse to pay the cost over-runs charged by building sharks. It's our rates, rents and taxes that are being doled out to these millionaire speculators.
- ★ ★ Expand the Direct Works departments of all local councils.
- ★ ★ No cuts in the building construction programme
- ★ ★ Outlaw the 'lump' tax swindle — which leads to shoddy building and thousands of accidents every year.
- ★ ★ No sale of council housing! For a massive expansion of public building to make use of the skills of the thousands of unemployed building workers.
- ★ ★ Scrap debt interest payments to moneylenders. As much as one third of council spending is for interest.
- ★ ★ RETURN A LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND FORCE IT TO CARRY OUT THE ABOVE POLICIES

Of course the bankers, the gutter press and the Tories will scream that the country can't afford all this. But what are their priorities? Tax cuts for the rich, juicy contracts for speculators, expensive and dangerous armaments for their officer friends in the Armed Forces to play with — and at the same time, slums and homelessness while thousands who could be building decent housing are on the dole.

The rich have one set of priorities — the millions of people needing decent housing and secure jobs have quite different priorities.

VOTE LABOUR — YOU CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO!

On March 1st Scotland and Wales vote on devolution.

Dai Francis, Brynley Heaven, and a contributor from Edinburgh South argue — from different angles — that socialists should vote yes

Martin Barclay argues that devolution is just a sop to narrow-minded nationalism, and socialists should vote no.

It means more democracy

by a member of Edinburgh South CLP

AS ANEURIN Bevan said, socialists take power to give it away; and whether it be workers' democracy in industry or consumers' democracy, the aim of socialists is to make a political democracy into a democratic society. This is the rationale behind devolution.

The choice is between improved democracy or uncontrollable bureaucracy. Simply

speaking, Scottish administration is now too big to be controlled directly by Westminster, and decisions on housing, health, education, social services, transport and environment are all being made behind closed doors without the political control that is essential.

Scotland has always had its distinctive administration and its distinctive problems. It is as ridiculous to claim that Scotland was fully integrated with

Britain after 1707 as it is to claim that people were robbed of their nationality. From the 1880s onwards a regional administration in the Scottish Office was set up. Then it had a staff of 34, now its bureaucracy exceeds 10,000. Then it spent only a few thousand pounds, now it spends more than £3,000 million.

While bureaucracy has grown, democratic control has become more difficult.

Conflicts over who benefits

from public expenditure on social services and how resources are allocated ought to be in the open, and fought out democratically. The Scottish Assembly's powers over health, housing, education, social services, transport, and environment give it a major role in mobilising people around a new set of social priorities.

That is why a Yes on March 1st is a step forward for the socialist cause.

It's Wales against the Tories

by DAI FRANCIS, ex-general secretary of the South Wales NUM.
Abridged from the Welsh socialist paper 'Y Faner Goch', available from 21 Howard Gdns, Cardiff.

AS ST. DAVID'S Day dawns, the light of day shows where the organised labour movement in Wales stands on the issue of a Welsh Assembly: the Labour Party, the Wales TUC, the NUM, Plaid Cymru, and the Communist Party will have been campaigning for a Yes vote; on the other side are ranged our traditional class enemies — the Conservative Party, the CBI, and even the Country Landowners' Association.

Thus the battle lines are straight enough for us to see during the referendum campaign: It's Wales against the Tories!

Why, then, are reactionaries unanimous in their opposition to a democratically elected Welsh Assembly?

The key words in any explanation are, 'democratically elected'. The Tories have not won a majority of Welsh votes in any general election since 1841 — when the mass of the people were banned from the ballot box. Therefore, to put it bluntly, Mrs Thatcher and her poodles in Wales are against democratic devolution because they know they can never control the Welsh Assembly.

So what constitutional settlement does the Conservative Party offer the people of Wales? Their official policy is to expand the powers of the Secretary of State for Wales and of the Welsh Office, and to tinker with the non-elected Welsh Council.

Now, the Secretary of State wields enormous powers of patronage and influence in Wales; he presides over 2,000 Cathays Park civil servants, oversees public expenditure of £1500 million every year, and he appoints 488 people to over 50 nominated bodies in our public life. This is the kind of work which would, of course, be taken over by the Assembly in Cardiff.

Welsh wants and problems can at last receive the attention they so desperately require, from the people who know best. The Welsh Assembly will be a powerful democratic force in Wales and a progressive voice in Britain. With the Assembly, democracy, debate and decision-making will flourish as never before.

For socialists — the majority of the Welsh people — it will be an immense challenge and opportunity. We have everything to gain from seizing this chance. It might be the last one we have.

CYNICAL, DILATORY, BUT AN ADVANCE

Most socialists will rightly be arguing for a Yes vote in Scotland on March 1st to clear the undemocratic 40% hurdle to a directly elected Scottish assembly. We are all only too painfully aware that an Edinburgh-based glorified talking-shop will not, in itself, resolve a single one of the problems facing the Scottish workers' movement. We are aware that the motives of most of the prime movers have had more to do with salvaging electoral support than any genuine concern for structural reforms in the way British capitalism is governed — witness the reluctance to hand over real powers to the assemblies and the mischievous contrivance of their financial arrangements.

The point is that however cynical the motives and partial and dilatory the granting, an assembly does at least represent a response to a consistent popular grievance, not confined to Scotland, that the unitary state has been unable to react sensitively, or sometimes at all, to particular concerns arising in regions, in peripheral areas, or in Scotland and Wales. Indeed, metropolitan power has at times been used to obstruct their concerns or to submerge their existence.

If the assembly 'solves nothing' in itself, it provides the potential for a massive area of leverage, at the least every bit as democratic as the geriatric Westminster model, to resolve popular aspirations for government closer to home. The Scottish people themselves have

by Brynley Heaven —

the opportunity of building on the gain of an assembly by charging its members with the extension of its power and democratic accountability outside the limits which Westminster has set for it.

What possible interest can socialists have in obstructing this process? The ability of the labour movement to use spatial and circumstantial peculiarities to its advantage,



age, as happened in the developing momentum of the lorry drivers' strike, could only be enhanced.

Wales presents a slightly more difficult question. Whereas Scotland's coherent class-divided political culture transcends the unevenness between clapped-out Clydeside, booming Aberdeen and (Orkney and Shetlands excepted) the Highlands and Islands, Wales lacks the same. The difference is between the Welsh Welsh of the rural north, where the ethno-centric and rather left-wing

Welsh national movement is still largely based, and industrial South Wales, run by an entrenched Labour mafia comparable with its West of Scotland and North-East England namesakes.

It is dislike of the mafia combined with a fear of the 'ethno's' (who would have all the kids learning Welsh so they couldn't get on in the world, as parents see in the eastern Valleys) which creates the paradox of a noisy Labour movement 'No' lobby in Wales. It is led by the ego-centric Neil Kinnock on the left, and the incomprehensible Leo Abse on the right, less isolated counterparts to good old Tam Dalyell in the Scottish Lothians. There is only one thing to say about these people. They are wrong.

The democratic case for a Welsh Assembly appeared in Labour Weekly from a Welsh correspondent: "I believe in a Welsh Assembly because it would take over the vast power already devolved from Westminster to the Secretary of State for Wales and the Welsh Office."

"All the bodies... whose members are mainly nominees of the Secretary of State would come under the democratic control of the assembly. An added bonus... is an opportunity to re-examine the structure of local government in Wales."

Minimalistic? Perhaps. But are better initiatives really likely to come from outside Wales, Mr Kinnock? You have been sitting in Westminster long enough to know the answer.

Vote No!

by Martin Barclay

DEVOLUTION appears to be a clear-cut class issue. Both in Wales and in Scotland, most of the labour movement is in favour; the Tories and the CBI are against.

The pro-devolutionists argue that Scottish and Welsh Assemblies will help cure everything from bureaucratic government and rising unemployment to depopulation and the decline of the Welsh language.

But the variety of the promises shows that the issue is not clear-cut at all. Nationalists, administrative reformers, electoral opportunists frightened of losing votes to the nationalists — and even some left wingers who seem to think that a Parliamentary Road to Socialism can succeed if only the Parliament is in Edinburgh or Cardiff rather than London — can all agree on devolution. They all have their 'good reasons'. The real reasons are different.

Socialists have to side unconditionally with oppressed nations fighting the yoke of imperialism. But Scotland and Wales are not oppressed nations. They have shared the booty of the British Empire. Now they are suffering from the unevenness of capitalist development in much the same way as many parts of England.

Most workers in Scotland and Wales are healthily sceptical of the whole devolution hullabaloo. Scottish and Welsh nationalism is a matter of middle class politicians making a quick buck with quack answers to a crisis where the labour movement has failed to fight for socialist solutions.

The Scottish and Welsh peoples have the right to devolution or even to separation, if they want it... and without any undemocratic '40%' clauses. At the same time, class-conscious workers in Scotland and Wales must argue for looking outwards, to broader international workers' unity, not inwards towards artificially revived parochialism.

In the abstract devolution could be a democratic reform of government, albeit a feeble one. In practice devolution is nothing more than giving the nationalists a parliamentary stage to prance on.

Labour's leaders hope that devolution will be a sop to keep the nationalists quiet. In reality it will make them noisier. That is why socialists should vote no.

IN "A New Immigration Policy", Ann Dummett describes the immigration policy of Britain and a few other countries, and presents a detailed alternative. She also analyses why Britain developed particularly racist controls, and why the policy of other capitalist countries sometimes differed.

She argues that Britain cannot scrap all controls unilaterally, because it would lead to a tremendous influx of settlers who would come here because no other country would let them in. This, she believes, would provoke a backlash which would quickly reverse such a progressive policy.

REPEAL

Agreeing that an open door policy should be the ultimate goal, she proposes an alternative that would repeal the most obnoxious provisions of British control. Her main proposals are:

□ All British citizens should be able to enter freely. All restrictions on Indians in Malaysia and Chinese in Hong Kong who hold UK passports would disappear.

The best non-racism is the open door

Bernard Misrahi reviews the pamphlet 'A New Immigration Policy' [Runnymede Trust, £2], in which Ann Dummett attempts to spell out precisely what so many people refer to vaguely: 'non-racist immigration controls'.

The SCLV opposes all immigration controls. Being able to move freely across national frontiers is an elementary democratic freedom. And by the very nature of the imperialist states which implement them, immigration controls in countries like Britain are always racist.

But Dummett's book poses a few questions for us.

Dummett's proposals are not racially discriminatory in any overt way. They do discriminate against the poorest and unskilled of the Third World, and against those outside the Commonwealth, who would be less likely to speak English. These people would anyway find it most difficult to raise the money to emigrate.

POINTS

It is not exactly clear how Dummett's points system would operate. It could be relatively open and let in hundreds of thousands of non-citizens. It could, on the other hand, set the qualifications so high as to exclude almost everyone who would actually want to come here. Given the racist nature of the state, it could be racist in practice even if not on paper.

If there were a powerful movement which campaigned on these recommendations, the situation would be rather

different. If a Bill along these lines were going through Parliament, it would be rather sectarian not to support it against the 1971 Act. We often support legislation which is, to say the least, imperfect. The 1967 Abortion Act, for instance, did not grant abortion on demand.

The trouble is, apart from Dummett herself and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, very few have campaigned for such a halfway position. The Labour Party, which in 1976 passed a resolution demanding the repeal of the 1971 Act, has never seriously carried this opposition beyond the Winter Gardens at Blackpool. The Communist Party do little.

Dummett bases her recommendations and her general perspective on the Canadian experience. There, she says, legislation even more racist than Britain's, such as the Chinese Immigration Act, was replaced by controls designed to help refugees, to

unite families, and to supply Canada's labour needs.

She does not describe how the political battle was won, nor how what happened in Canada can happen here. We still do not know why her perspective is more politically viable than the 'no controls' position she agrees with anyway.

The supporters of controls will be just as hostile to her proposals as to an open-door policy. "A New Immigration Policy" will demolish most post-war and some pre-war controls. Why not go the whole way?

AIMS

Obviously we must unite on aims we all agree with, and try to impress upon the anti-fascists and those who sympathise with us in the labour movement that immigration controls are central to British racism. Let's take up the proposal of Labour's Home Policy Committee that the Manifesto include the demand that the 1971 Act is replaced by 'non-racist' controls — and explain that the best way to have non-racist controls is to have no controls at all!

Southwark Town Hall rebels purged

CAROL TURNER explains how she and ten other Southwark Labour councillors were expelled from the Labour Group for opposing a new £28 million Town Hall.

ON MONDAY 15th January, 11 councillors were expelled from the Labour Group on Southwark Borough Council for a minimum period of not less than six months. It is likely that four more will join them shortly. The crime? Supporting local party policy by voting against a decision of the 56-strong Labour Group.

The expulsions revolve around a controversial local

decision to build a new municipal headquarters. But the issues raised by this split cover wider ground than the bricks-and-mortar decision. The leadership of the Labour Group have bulldozed through their decision without proper debate and without taking into account the wishes of the local parties.

Talk of a new town hall has been around for over 10 years, and documentation on the present scheme has been available since last July. Yet despite frequent demands for consultation documents on the new town hall were not made available to Labour councillors until only ten days before the day of decision. And then on a strictly confidential basis!

Two GMCs demanded the decision be deferred until there had been proper consultation. One Dulwich councillor dismissed this argument with the claim that constituency motions should be ignored because discussions on GMCs were always ill-informed. What hypocrisy! In fact, the same councillor had previously argued against deferment on the grounds that information had been around for ages.

At the Labour Group's meeting, just half a minute was spent actually approving the £28 millions expenditure — and then the whip was on!

At the end of the disciplinary meeting, the 17 who had voted for the motion

were given 48 hours to sign an undertaking to abide by group decisions or be expelled for a period of at least six months. This, of course, meant signing before the final vote in full Council. Eleven refused.

But it took another 13 days to complete the expulsion. The EC of the Local Government Committee had to be consulted. They recommended no action, or only token discipline. In the meantime two constituency parties and the full Local Government Committee had come over to the 'Rebels' position.

After meeting on the 15th to 'consider' the EC recommendation, the Group gave the 11 the chance once

again to sign the declaration immediately — still, of course, before the final vote in council — or be expelled there and then. All eleven walked out of the meeting without signing. The vote against the Town Hall two days later at the full Council meeting saw four more of their comrades join their ranks.

An appeal to the National Executive Committee is now underway.

If this heralds the end of the era of internal tyranny by a privileged few in the Labour Group, it can only be welcomed as a small beginning to open government and party democracy in Southwark.

1 house in 3 for blacks, say Lambeth

Councillor MATTHEW WARBURTON explains Lambeth Council's policy to give black people a fairer share of housing.

LAMBETH COUNCIL has set up a monitoring system to ensure that black families are getting 30% of the better Council houses. The letting of each new estate and group of newly rehabilitated houses is to be checked regularly to see who gets what.

If black tenants are not getting their fair share of the better properties, the officers will have to find out why, and the Chairman of the Housing Committee is empowered to take 'appropriate action' to prevent the situation recurring.

This move is the result of evidence collected by the Housing and Race Relations Advisor, Dan Thea, and presented to the Race Relations and Housing Advisory Group. Like many national studies, it showed that blacks were concentrated in the

worst housing: the pre-war walk-up blocks and high-density estates in Brixton.

Worse, this was being perpetuated by the rehousing policies of the Council. New estates were still being opened in the more desirable southern part of Lambeth, with an almost negligible number of black households on them.

This was probably mainly because the Council gives top rehousing priority to people from clearance areas, who in the past have been 80 to 90% white. They tend to get the best properties, at the expense of homeless families and the waiting list, where there is a higher percentage of blacks.

In September 1978, the council decided to limit the number of properties on any estate going to clearance cases to 70%, to give a better deal to homeless families and the waiting list.

And now the Council has decided to monitor the oper-



ation of its policy. At present about 30% of the people it rehouses are black, so they should be getting about 30% of the better properties.

Of course this depends on where people choose to go.

The right wing of the Labour group on Lambeth Council has argued in the past that blacks are not moving to Streatham and Norwood because they like to stay in Brixton. But there are plenty

of black families looking to move from an overcrowded flat in Brixton into a house with a garden in Norwood.

Nobody is saying that this new policy will give blacks the same housing opportunities as whites. It is estimated that 40% of those in acute housing need in Lambeth are black. But most of these are in the private rented sector, and with a waiting list of 13,000 the Council will not be able to rehouse them overnight. At most, what will be achieved is a fair rationing of the inadequate amount of housing available.

Labour's manifesto for the Council elections made it quite clear that there is no solution to Lambeth's housing problem within the confines of the borough. With no more sites to build on, housing must be provided outside the borough. So far, the Government's response to this has been equivocal.

BAN THE BAN

ONE OF THE first things the newly-elected Tory/Liberal coalition ruling group on Hammersmith Borough Council did in May 1978 was to ban the use of town hall facilities to the SWP, the New Communist Party, the Anti-Nazi League and the British-Soviet Friendship Society. The ban already existed for the National Front, which had been refused the use of the Town Hall and other council facilities by the Labour majority on the council in 1977. The official reason for extending the ban was that none of the parties or groups had ever had a Member of Parliament!

Rather belatedly, the Hammersmith & Kensington Trades Council held a meeting on January 17th at the Hammersmith Town Hall, to discuss action to lift the ban on labour movement bodies.

The meeting was held on the normal monthly meeting night of the Trades Council at its usual venue, so it was extremely mysterious that suddenly no rooms were said to be 'available'. After some 'political arm-twisting' (Bro. Martin's words), the Borough Council finally relented. Over 150 people crowded into the small committee room, helping to give the meeting the edge and atmosphere it needed for success.

Platform speakers were Ernie Roberts of the ANL; Steve Jefferys of the SWP; Peter Zinkin of the BSFS; Martin Spelman of the NCP; and finally Danny Harris of the North Hammersmith Labour Party — not yet itself a victim of the ban but, with the neo-fascist tendencies of the Hammersmith Tories and their sleazy small-business associates in the Liberal Party, a likely future candidate.

The two main positive things to come out of the meeting were a Trades Council deputation to see the Central Services Policy Committee of the Council on February 26th, and the setting up of a coordinating committee consisting of Trades Council representatives, representatives of the banned groups, and also those of other interested parties.

It's a pity that it takes a particularly stupid and obtuse Tory administration, bent on destroying democratic rights, to unite several strange bedfellows into a fighting force. But maybe this unity can be developed on other issues as well now.

JONATHAN HAMMOND

STEVE SUFF [GLC Nalco] and Hackney tenants' leader **BOB DARKE** continue the debate begun in the last Socialist Organiser about the Tory Greater London Council's plan to transfer all GLC housing estates to the borough councils. Most Labour councils, except Islington and Barking, reject the transfer. Steve Suff endorses this rejection, while Bob Darke argues that the problems of the transfer can be solved if tenants are properly consulted.

The tenants' voice

by **BOB DARKE**

WE UNDERSTAND the takeover of GLC estates by local councils does present many problems.

But what we object to is the statements put out in the local and national press to the effect that all GLC estates are run-down rubbish and of a bad social order. This we say is an insult to GLC tenants and the sort of publicity which can only undermine the unity of all tenants which is so desirable. It might be argued that such a statement could be linked to racism because many coloured families are herded together on GLC estates in a ghetto style.

The conditions of many council estates are also run down, no less than those of the GLC. We say to Cllr Cable, Hackney's Housing Chairman, that both authorities are responsible for the existing deterioration. Neither Hackney Council nor the GLC when it was Labour fought the Government's massive cuts in housing expenditure.

One thing is for sure. We will not permit GLC tenants to become scapegoats or the subject of insults by Hackney's Housing Chairman. The attitude of Hackney Council to this situation is not what's

best for tenants, but what's best for the rate-payers, including the big stores like Tesco's, Marks and Spencer and the like.

Our tenants are not to be considered as just rent and rate payers lucky to have a roof over their head. We are a united, fighting force and will demand an end to the policies which classify our tenants as first and second class citizens. We fight for equal rights and a decent home for all tenants. The problem of the local Council takeover of GLC estates can be solved on the basis of tenants' participation and consultation with the Council.

It is sad to relate that, despite our representation, the Hackney Council still do not see it right and proper to seek our assistance for such discussions.

It is the paramount duty of the tenants' movement to defend the interests of our tenants, whether they be under the GLC, local Borough Councils or even private landlords. Secondly we stand on the unity of all tenants irrespective of colour, creed or religion. These two cardinal principles are the spearhead of our National Tenants Charter just recently launched.

We must remind Hackney Council that we will fight and defend the interests of our tenants whoever the landlord is to be. We hope in the final analysis that the Council will take over the GLC estates, not some private speculating company.

GLC workers fight estate transfers

by **STEVE SUFF**

SINCE MAY 1976 the Tories at County Hall have set about destroying council housing provision in London.

The plan has involved a three-part attack: the sale of council housing; the winding-down of the Construction Branch, and most importantly the transfer of the GLC housing stock to local authorities.

There are fundamental differences between the present transfer arrangement and the one devised by the previous Labour Council — which the NALGO branch at the GLC basically supported.

That transfer involved the setting up of one council waiting list, run by the GLC, while the boroughs had responsibility for all property within their boundaries. The GLC together with the boroughs would also agree on the yearly provision each council should make for construction of new properties, and if any borough did not reach their target the GLC would then build the required number in that borough and charge the cost to the Borough council.

The Tory transfer will result in inner London council tenants being 'trapped'. There is no common waiting list, no compulsion for the boroughs to build more housing.

The GLC have agreed to set up an inter borough nomination scheme. On paper it

appears to be a satisfactory substitute for a common waiting list. In practice it will not work.

Most tenants want to be transferred from an inner London borough such as Tower Hamlets to an outer one such as Bromley. It is difficult to envisage a situation where Bromley would have an effective 'swap' arrangement with Tower Hamlets.

The results of the transfer could be devastating in financial terms. Although the GLC will pay for their transferred housing stock for five years, there is no guarantee that it will last longer than that. The burden of maintaining high-density GLC property will then fall on the poorer inner London boroughs. These boroughs will also have to build expensive high-density blocks to house people on their waiting lists, whilst in outer London there will be no obligation on the mainly Tory boroughs to build more houses.

Another major problem we face as trade unionists is the staffing implications of the transfer. GLC Housing Department staff are supposed to be transferred to the boroughs. But we believe it will be extremely difficult for our members to be found jobs.

Many boroughs do not carry out their own direct labour maintenance, as it is contracted out to private firms: so what about GLC housing maintenance workers?

As yet the GLC have only

identified Housing staff as being liable for transfer, but we do not see how the removal of 3,000 white collar and 5,000 manual staff (the largest GLC department) can fail to affect other departments such as Treasurers' and Supplies.

Even if all these problems are solved, there is an additional one. We are on different (and higher) rates of pay, and have different service conditions to borough staff. If GLC staff are transferred on protected salaries, this will mean that they are likely to receive no increases until borough staff obtain the same salary through the yearly pay rises.

There would also be implications for borough staff, as it is probable that a number of ex-GLC staff would be promoted above them.

I can foresee a great deal of resentment from the borough staff, with fewer promotion opportunities and doing the same jobs as ex-GLC staff for less money, and from the GLC staff, feeling they are being cheated of their yearly pay increases.

All in all, the transfer looks like being a disaster for GLC and borough staff. NALGO nationally has therefore instructed all their branches to black all work on the transfer of estates until a statutory staff commission has been established to resolve the staffing problems.

We have not been allowed to oppose the council's policy by industrial action. But we would ask all Labour councillors and activists to resist this transfer tooth and nail.

Using 86 words where 29 would do

Comrades, 'Labour Activist', the broadsheet of the Labour Coordinating Committee, has proposed a model resolution for Labour Party members to put forward in their wards and constituencies, calling for local Labour Parties and affiliated organisations to receive copies of major documents from the Party's policy sub-committee before these documents go to the NEC or Conference for final decisions.

All very well, you might say, but having stated its intention in 29 words, the Labour Activist goes on to formulate its resolution in no fewer than 86 words. If you are putting the resolution in your ward, you might like to hear what happened to me first.

I was able to send a typed copy of the resolution to the ward secretary, who dutifully read it out to the meeting. She was met with dazed silence.

My initial attempts to explain the issue were only slightly more successful.

There was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing. At one point one member wondered whether I wasn't trying to slip something in behind the cover of all these words! I agreed to reduce the motion to a new, shorter version.

The shorter version read simply: 'This GMC asks the NEC to require policy sub-committees to circulate major long term proposals to CLPs for comment, before sending them to the NEC and conference'. In an atmosphere of 'why didn't you say so in the first place?', the motion was passed overwhelmingly.

The end of the story? Not quite. I had forgotten to include the last bit which should have read: 'CLPs wishing to take part in such a scheme should contribute to the postage and duplicating costs'. So the motion could be thrown out on the grounds that Transport House couldn't afford it.

Don't fall into the same trap. IAN HOLLINGWORTH Newham South

Out of place, snide, sectarian

Dear Editors,

It is a shame that the otherwise very good issue of Socialist Organiser in January included a completely out-of-place article on Rudolf Bahro by Bruce Robinson. The sectarian tone of this piece cut across the stated aim of the SCLV which surely is to unite the left currents within the Labour Party and the trade unions in a principled campaign for the forthcoming election.

Bruce Robinson seems to think that it is impossible to discuss the ideas of Bahro without making a whole number of extremely condemnatory remarks about the views of Ken Coates of the Institute for Workers' Control.

No doubt comrade Coates has views that people in the SCLV might take serious issue with. This is their right in a united front campaign. But these criticisms must be made constructively and in the context of a properly planned discussion of Coates' ideas — not dragged willy-nilly into a discussion about a completely separate issue.

The point is that both Coates, and his many supporters and co-thinkers in the labour movement, are presently involved in a campaign to win recognition for the case of Bahro, both in terms of his imprisonment and the need to get a wider discussion in the working class movement around his published works.

Surely we should be working alongside these comrades in this aim rather than stating from the outset that 'he (Bahro) belongs not with Coates and Johnstone [the CPGB theorist also criticised in the article], but with the revolutionary Marxists'. This is just pious breast-beating and it should have no place in a newspaper of a campaign which should be seeking to develop ways whereby all left currents in the labour movement can work together constructively for socialism.

In conclusion, a proper discussion about the ideas of Ken Coates, the IWC, etc, yes! But not the rather underhanded snide sectarianism that came into this article, please.

Comradely,
DON FLYNN

BRUCE ROBINSON writes:

Don Flynn confuses the issues I was trying to raise.

Firstly, the article was not supposed to be a detailed

analysis of Bahro's ideas; it would be a disservice to Bahro to try to do that in a couple of columns. It was an attempt to look at some of the reactions to his book in Britain, so that the criticism of Ken Coates was not 'dragged in willy-nilly into a discussion about a completely separate issue'.

Secondly, the letter completely confuses criticism of Coates' political ideas with a refusal to work alongside him in a united front campaign. I would have no objection to working with Ken Coates or Monty Johnstone in a united front to build support for Bahro in this country.

The fact that Coates is involved in such a campaign does not mean that his ideas are above criticism or discussion on the left. Indeed, one of the reasons for discussing

Bahro's 'The Alternative' should be precisely to clarify ideas on the left through debate around the significance of Bahro's book. For Comrade Flynn, it appears that this discussion is simply 'snide sectarianism'.

All the best

Dear Comrades,

I was very interested to hear about your campaign. As a LPYS secretary I would like to know more about the background and policies of this Campaign.

Wishing you all the best.

JOHN CUMMINGS
Whitehaven LPYS

MARCH FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS, MARCH 31st

WOMEN IN Britain will be marching on March 31st in solidarity with all women around the world who are struggling to get the right to choose when and whether to have children.

In the USA, where only 18% of public hospitals perform abortions, medical insurance for abortion has been withdrawn, although 90% of the cost of sterilisation is paid for.

In many countries there is no right to abortion and severe penalties for women who have one. In other countries, rights have been given and then withdrawn.

Israel is about to restrict abortion to women whose lives are endangered, and in New Zealand a new law allows abortion on the narrowest of grounds, not including rape. Women prisoners raped by their guards in Chile are refused abortion.

In Eastern Europe, it is now argued that a woman's right to choose should be secondary to the economic needs of the state. Rumania and Hungary have made contraception and abortion difficult to obtain.

Population control programmes are used in parts of Latin America, Africa and India, and amongst oppressed minority and poor women in the USA to force unwanted sterilisation and contraception on women.

In Puerto Rico, for example, 35% of women of child-bearing age have been sterilised. Women are told the lie that poverty is due to 'overpopulation'.

In Britain, where health care is free, abortions are in practice an exception, with over 50% done in private clinics.

Some members of the medical profession intimidate women into being sterilised as the 'price' of an abortion. Some are also responsible for such practices as in Rochdale, where Asian women have been injected without their knowledge with Depo-provera, a long-term contraceptive drug which can have extreme side effects.

When is the Labour Government going to implement the policy of the Labour Party and decriminalise abortion, provide all the necessary services and facilities, and nationalise the drug industries which make such huge profits at the expense of women and women's health?

The International Campaign for Abortion Rights demands:

- ★ women's right to control their own bodies;
- ★ the right to contraception
- ★ the right to free abortion
- ★ the right to refuse forced sterilisation.

Contact: ICAR, c/o NAC, 374 Grays Inn Rd, WC1.

Timeless, compressed, wrong

Comrades,

Due to rather heavy sub-editing, the article on Iran which appeared under my name on the front page of the last issue of Socialist Organiser did not accurately reflect either the views or the tone of the original draft.

There are three points on which the compression of the article led to political oversimplifications with which I would not wish to be associated.

Firstly, the reference to 'the big merchants of the bazaar': in fact, the merchants of the bazaars vary from the most wealthy to the self-employed petty bourgeois stallholder. It is among those at the lower end of the scale that the ayatollahs and mullahs have found greatest support in their opposition to the Shah. This is not only because of the traditions of Islam as a religion of traders but because these people were squeezed between the scarcity and high prices brought about by the Shah's agrarian reforms and the restricted consumption of the industrial workers.

Therefore it is incorrect to imply that there is no common ground between these small traders and the working class.

Secondly, the call for a revolutionary party is posed in an abstract and ultimatum way. It is one of the strengths of the SCLV that it recognises that the fight for revolutionary leadership cannot be separated from the broader struggle occurring in non-revolutionary organisations. While in no way disputing the need for a new party to lead the Iranian masses to power, the call for it without any analysis of the forces out of which it can be created in no way helps in our understanding of the situation nor assists in the creation of such a party.

Similarly, the statement 'Workers' councils are the only way to reorganise the economy, to ensure supplies, to ensure workers' self-defence, and lay the basis for a new revolutionary government', ultimately substitutes what is the most desirable alternative for the range of possibilities which exist.

Even if a direct transition to

the rule of workers' councils was on the agenda, which it is not, the whole question of alliances with other oppressed classes in political power and in economic organisation would be posed given the numerical weakness of the working class.

The aim of this letter is to clarify my own views to the readers of Socialist Organiser and to open up the debate in these columns on the Iranian revolution. Whilst all revolutions have certain features in common nevertheless they are all, also, unique. There is a constant danger of slipping from a concrete analysis of concrete events into timeless formulae of radical journalism. The abbreviated edition of my article which appeared showed, unfortunately, that tendency.

Comradely,
Geoff Bender

COLIN FOSTER writes: As the sub-editor responsible, I apologise to Geoff for foisting opinions on him which he does not share. Nevertheless, I think the sub-edited version was right on the points Geoff mentions.

Of course there are small merchants in the Tehran bazaar too. But the big merchants are very important in the National Front and in the Muslim opposition — financially and in other ways. They have very little common ground with the working class. For that reason many strikers in Iran have refused to accept donations to their strike funds from the bazaar.

Surely it scarcely needs any deep analysis to see where a revolutionary party can and must be built in Iran: among the Marxist students who have raised the red flag against the green flag of Islam, among the oilworkers who have raised more radical demands than Khomeiny wanted, and among the organisers of the strike waves of recent months.

Of course this approach is a bit different from the SCLV's in Britain. But as Geoff says, we need a 'concrete analysis of concrete events'.

In fact the working class — broadly defined — is not especially weak in Iran. Nevertheless, the Iranian workers certainly need to make an alliance with the peasants, artisans, and small traders. Workers' councils could provide the vital leadership for that alliance. And they are not just 'desirable'. What other force could lead a fight for socialism? The army? The mullahs?

TWO YEARS after the death of Mao Tse-tung, China has taken a dramatic turn. Vice-premier Deng Xiaoping [Teng Hsiao-ping], survivor of two purges during Mao's lifetime, is visiting the United States after being named 'Man of the Year' by Time magazine. The United States has decided to drop Taiwan and establish full diplomatic relations with the Peking regime. And Chinese capitalists who were paid a 5% dividend from 1949 until the Cultural Revolution are having bank deposits and income confiscated in 1967 refunded to them.

Deals

After an extensive debate within the Chinese Communist Party leadership, Deng's policy of modernisation is now being implemented at a rapid rate. In the past few months, several very large trade deals have been signed with Western states or multinational firms.

China has bought steel and petrochemical plant technology from Japan, and two nuclear power stations from France. Joint projects have been set up with Coca Cola, Intercontinental Hotels and several Hong Kong consortia. British Rail has sent

WHY CHINA IS THE TORIES' NEW FAVOURITE

a delegation to help modernise China's rail system.

And now the US will be getting a bigger slice of the action.

China has abandoned its previous conservative 'cash on the nail' policy on purchasing, and has gone into large scale borrowing. French banks have fixed up huge credit deals. China hopes to pay for Western goods by exploiting its considerable crude oil potential.

Meanwhile, starting last November, there has been a spectacular wall-poster campaign in Peking. The demands for rehabilitation of purge victims and for democratic rights seem more outspoken than ever before. Many posters even attack Mao directly.

The message coming from the capitalist press seems to be that the bad old days of the Cultural Revolution and political instability are over. Former 'capitalist-owners' like Deng are now firmly in

charge. The CCP has suddenly discovered the superiority of Western technology; armaments, and even 'democracy'. The Tories now have nothing bad to say about China. They have stopped calling it 'Red China', and Heath, Thatcher, and European Tory lead-

the CCP has always subordinated international struggles to its own needs, and preferred diplomatic manoeuvres to anti-capitalist internationalism.

After breaking from the Soviet bloc in 1960, China was isolated and sought support from Third World

BY CHEUNG SIU MING

ers like Franz-Josef Strauss have visited Peking over the last few years.

The Labour Government has also been keen to strengthen trade. Apart from rail technology, co-ordinating technology and the Harrier jump jet will soon be sold.

What happened to the 'Red Star over China'? And is the current shift as unprecedented as it seems?

The Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949 with a nationalist, bureaucratic conception of 'building socialism in one country'. In parallel with the rising bureaucracy in the USSR,

countries. It came out with radical rhetoric. It attacked the Soviet leadership for turning their backs on Stalin and claimed that capitalism had been restored in the USSR. Although the CCP gave strong support to the Russian suppression of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, they accused the USSR of imperialist aggression in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

This rhetoric against US imperialism and the USSR gradually changed into a concentrated attack on the USSR alone. When the war-weary USA wanted to force

tion, it gained China's assent. Mao greeted Nixon in Peking while the B52s hammered Hanoi in 1972, forcing the Vietnamese to the Paris Peace Talks.

Quietly, China established diplomatic and trade relations with other states. Today, Chinese policy is so dominated by the 'Soviet threat' that support for regimes like Iran, Chile and Argentina, and for a stronger NATO, has become the norm.

China has scaled down its support for guerrilla struggles in South East Asia. In the joint communique announcing the Sino-US normalisation, Peking dropped its long-standing claim to 'liberate Taiwan by military force'.

The Government of Hong Kong, Britain's colony off the South China coast, has started massive construction and investment programmes in the secure knowledge that China has no intention of reclaiming Hong Kong in the foreseeable future. Pek-

ing prefers to continue to keep Hong Kong as an entrepot, rather than end capitalist exploitation of four million Chinese there.

The Western powers are playing down the old Cold War language because they hope to penetrate China's economy and exploit a market with a quarter of the world's population. The Sino-Soviet conflict is a bonus for the NATO hawks.

Rights

Socialists should support the movements for workers' rights in China, and campaign for the release of all political prisoners. The recent Amnesty International report reminds us that repression in China at least equals that in Russia. We should give no support to any faction within China's ruling bureaucracy.

Of course, any workers' state must aim to modernise its economy, and there is nothing wrong in principle in trade with capitalist countries. However, only if the Chinese working class overturns the bureaucracy, and forges links of solidarity with the workers' movement throughout the world, will real socialism begin to be built in China.

HOW WE'VE FOUGHT BACK AGAINST THE CUTS

RECENT weeks have once again revealed the anger and frustration of thousands and thousands of public service and health workers at their deteriorating pay and conditions of work.

The public sector unions, particularly NUPE, have been a focus for this much needed offensive. And the numbers and high spirits of those demonstrating on January 22nd showed a strong determination to win.

However, determination or 'true grit' are one thing; having the perspective and the organisation to defeat the programme of cuts and 'cash limits' (the major cause of low pay, staff shortages and the run-down of the NHS) is something else.

'Fightback', an independent, nationally coordinated campaign against the cuts, sees itself as contributing to the building of that perspective and organisation.

Why is this necessary? Because the full implementation of the cuts will mean not only the continuing deterioration of the health service with more waiting, suffering

and worrying for patients and worse pay and conditions for the staff, but the establishment of a two-tier health system: one, comfortable and efficient, for those who can pay; and a 'skeleton' service for those who can't.

Fightback itself developed from much needed coordination between several of the London based hospital campaigns and work-ins (Hounslow, the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital, Plaistow Maternity, St. Nicholas and Bethnal Green), and built from among those trade union branches, Trades Councils and community organisations that had offered support to these campaigns.

However, Fightback's work goes beyond coordination. From the beginning, we realised that health workers alone could not defeat the cuts. The whole working class is affected, and the NHS itself is recognised as one of the greatest achievements of the working class movement.

In addition, we believe that fighting cuts is not simply about fighting closures. It



Hounslow's fightback: blowing it alone doesn't help

is about fighting for better health care, for preventive medicine, for health and safety at work, against pollution and for women's health care.

It is also about democratic control of the service by those who work in it and use it.

We are therefore committed to building a broad-based class struggle movement against cuts and for better health.

At the moment, the working class's understanding of

the cuts is too fragmented, experience is too narrow and we are too divided to have a serious impact on the Government's programme. But by raising questions among workers and militants at the most basic level, about why the cuts are made, whose interests they serve, what kind of health care the working class really needs, who controls it — and constantly assisting, learning from and developing strategy with local campaigns and struggles — we aim to build

up an alternative socialist perspective.

Affiliation to Fightback costs £5 per annum. We produce a quarterly bulletin, Fightback, which attempts to constantly assess the successes and failures of local campaigns, monitors the effects of cuts (i.e. staff shortages, deterioration of care, the effect of closures, the experience of the work-ins); includes articles on community care, the social production of ill-health, community hospitals and the

damaging effects of the growth of private medicine. (Fightback bulletin is 15p plus 20p postage for every 5 copies).

More recently, we have begun to produce 'action-sheets'. The first one, 'Health — not Cuts', has been written specially for those outside the health service and shows what the real effects of the cuts are and tries to link the fight for health and safety at work and for better environmental health with fights against cuts. (Bulk copies for trade union branches, Trades Councils, health and safety committees etc, £1 for 25).

We hope too to hold a Conference on Health and Cuts in May, and would like all those interested in this or any other aspect of Fightback to contact us. In particular, if you have information on the cuts in your area, or on any fight against them, we would like to hear from you.

★★ Fightback, 30 Camden Road, London NW1. Tel: 01-560-3431 ext. 679 [for messages only].

Shipbuilding: How not to save jobs

ON FRIDAY 27th October last year, the management at Cammell Lairds shipyard in Merseyside announced that they wanted 790 workers to be made redundant.

The 90 days notice runs out on Friday 26th January, and to date (24th), about 350 boilermakers and 80 GMWU labourers have volunteered for redundancy. We don't have the figures for the other unions involved.

No doubt many workers have volunteered only because of the refusal of the unions in the yard and nationally to give them any alternative for their future. The Boilermakers Society is the main union affected, with about 620 proposed redundancies. They should be in the lead of a fight against redundancy. In fact they have done very little (and what they have done was on their own).

Last year a 'Fighting Fund' was set up to fight enforced redundancy and attempt to get more orders for the yard. A small delegation was sent to London to meet four local MPs, Loyden, Heffer, Ogden and Crawshaw. The result was an offer by the MPs to address a mass meeting 'if arranged at a convenient time', a proposal of a meeting with a Minister from the Department of Trade and Industry (neither meeting has happened yet), and a promise to investigate more ways of getting work for the yard.

On Tuesday 16th January about 50 boilermakers travelled to Newcastle to protest against 'enforced' redundancies at a Boilermakers conference. When the delegation arrived at the hotel where the conference was being held, we occupied the lobby in front of the meeting hall and demanded to see the Executive Committee and hear what they had to say about the proposed redundancies and other issues which affect the yard. The EC's reaction was to say that they wouldn't speak to us unless we went outside the building. Needless to say, we didn't move.

by LOL DUFFY [Boilermakers' Society, Cammell Lairds].

The next show of union solidarity came from EC member Bro. Hepplewhite, who said that if we didn't leave the police would have to be called. We told him what to do with his threats.

Then we were graced with the presence of our General Secretary, Bro. Chalmers CBE, who said that he would not be forced or pressured into doing anything by this unrepresentative delegation. Still we didn't move, still we demanded a meeting with the EC.

The EC members then got into a huddle and Bro. Chalmers came back and told us that the EC had decided to meet us in another room at 1.30pm. At 1.40pm we were finally allowed into the room. We were told that we had 20 minutes to make our point!



Heffer the unhelpful

A number of questions were asked of Bro. Chalmers and Bro. McFall, the region EC member. Most of them were avoided or answered inadequately. One of the main questions was whether the EC would support us if we fought redundancy, or whether they would give some sort of lead nationally.

Bro. Chalmers replied that he could not answer the question or give any guarantees... the issue would be discussed at the conference.

At a few minutes after

2pm, Bro. Chalmers and the rest of the EC just walked out of the meeting, leaving the delegation fairly mad!

What Bro. Chalmers didn't tell us was that the conference was just a discussion session, and would not take votes. The EC would just 'take into account' the 'feelings' of the delegates when drawing up a 'plan of action (?)'.

The delegation came away totally disgusted with the attitude of the EC, particularly Bro. Chalmers CBE.

We then went on to British Shipbuilders' head office and occupied a lobby on the ground floor. The Industrial Relations Officer for British Shipbuilders, a Mr Farningham, agreed to meet the six shop stewards on the delegation. They were told that no enforced redundancies could be carried out in Lairds until there was a meeting between the bosses and the union Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee. The stewards were satisfied with this, and called off the occupation.

The publicity for these two events was very small.

Back in the yard, a mass meeting of the Boilermakers was called on Friday 19th. The meeting decided to suspend the 'Fighting Fund' because the stewards were finding it hard to collect.

The stewards put up no argument in favour of keeping the fund going. This shows the shortsightedness of the unions in the yard, because there is no doubt that the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee, which consists of people like Bro. Chalmers, will agree to more redundancies.

Lairds management have reduced the number of redundancies among the boilermakers by 110; but how long will it be before British Shipbuilders demand more?

If Lairds workers are to save the remaining jobs, they must learn from experience. Appeals to MPs and trade union leaders do not save jobs. Only by direct action to save jobs at the expense of profits can we hope to win.



Picking up the wreckage of their claim & others' lives

'Don't treat geese like swans'

ON FRIDAY 26th January, delegates from the local government workers' union NALGO voted by a two-to-one majority to accept a national agreement on regrading of social workers' pay.

The agreement, cobbled together by the NALGO local government negotiators led by Mike Blick, is a slap in the face to the thousands of social workers who have been striking for as long as six months. They are seeking local bargaining rights and pay regradings.

Social workers are expected to pick up the pieces of wrecked lives, dealing with battered children, mentally depressed and poorly provided for old people, and all the problems produced by poverty-level wages and benefits, unemployment, and overcrowded and decrepit living conditions.

Since 1971 cuts in public spending and changes in the law have doubled the workload. Most social workers receive less than the average industrial wage for a week that may include three evenings of unpaid overtime, plus physical danger, decisions whether to admit people to mental hospitals and whether to re-

move children from parents and place them in local authority care, many complex dealings with laws and regulations, and dozens of harrowing problems.

In Southwark, where social workers have been striking for six months, 13 in one department are responsible for the problems of an inner-city community of 22,000.

The new emphasis on 'community care' following Government cutbacks in institutional care puts an added burden on field social workers.

Yet callous Tories want it both ways. 'Do we really need social workers?', they ask, and in the same breath they fulminate against the damage inflicted by the social workers' action on children and the aged!

Socialist Organiser spoke to DOUG TILBURY, departmental rep. for Hackney Social Services. Hackney social workers have been taking limited industrial action by working to contract and refusing to provide court reports.

'The agreement is utterly divisive. It creates five levels for grading where they were only two before. Basically, the

principle of a fair rate for the job goes out of the window. We have qualified and unqualified social workers doing the same job, but on different grades of pay... and now different levels.

'Appeals for regrading will now have to be lodged individually within three months. It's a 'creeper's charter' for those whose face fits.

'The only relative victory gained from the conference against the NALGO leaders was the success of the Liverpool, Knowsley motion. This supported the continuation of existing strikes until satisfactory local settlements are achieved. It called for a union levy to back the strikers and forced the Executive to maintain strike pay.

'The feeling in most of the striking regions is that the action will continue until local agreements are reached within the national agreement.

JON TAYLOR, a social worker in Haringey (where the Labour council agreed to regrading and a local agreement before the strike) told SO that the newly-created five levels were 'completely arbitrary'.

'They don't correspond to the real work allocations of social work cases. Worse still, instead of categorising our jobs and responsibilities, the agreement now categorises clients according to their relative degrees of 'problems', which of course can change from week to week. Theoretically this could mean our gradings change from week to week.

'The national agreement completely evades the main issue of categorising and rewarding social work for responsibility and training. An example of the general discrimination between social workers and others can be seen with regard to mental health.

'Both a qualified social worker and a psychiatrist have to sign a section order to commit a client to mental hospital. But the psychiatrist is paid twice the social worker, and a fee on top'.

The employers are clearly anxious to avoid snowballing. The social workers' employers' secretary, Mr Rasbridge, admitted in an official letter that he feared 'the advantages gained for social workers through local bargaining would then be used, step by step, in all other occupational groups'.

The national agreements means continued divisions and disparities of pay in the local government sector. 'An authority which regarded all its geese as swans would distort the scheme for everybody', says Rasbridge's letter, in a clear call to local authorities to close ranks on holding down pay.

VICTIMISATION BY STEAM-AGE MANAGEMENT

by IVAN WELS

OUT OF 250 provincial newspapers, only one — the Nottingham Evening Post — has seen fit to victimise its journalists after the recent NUJ strike. "Computer-age technology, steam-age management", ran a placard at a mass picket outside the Post offices on January 27th, as NUJ members and other trade unionists tried to stop vans from entering or leaving.

Over 100 people took part in picketing from 11am to 3pm. It got increasingly violent as both police and some drivers laid into pickets.

Vans tried to drive through the line at 15 or 20 mph, one picket was carried along on the bonnet of a van, and two people were quite badly hurt. One driver, a known member of the National Front, was seen with a long knife on the dashboard of his van.

The police showed their true colours. Only after pressure did they get round to arresting a 'loyal employee' of the Post who came out and hit NUJ president Denis McShane. Three pickets were arrested, and a copper slapped a traffic offence charge on a van driver who refused to cross the picket line.

The Evening Post is an unashamedly anti-union paper.

It solved its computer-type-setting problems in 1973 by sacking all its NGA staff, as a long strike ended in defeat. It is now reputedly the most technically advanced paper in the British Isles.

After that defeat, demoralisation set in amongst the unions on the Post. This stopped the NUJ from taking part in the one-day strike in support of the Kettering journalists in 1977. But 28 journalists did join the recent national NUJ pay strike, while 20 others carried on working. The 28 were immediately sacked for 'breaking their contract'.

In a TV interview, Post managing director Pole-Carew said: "How can I employ people who deliberately set out to wreck the paper?"

The scab editorial staff are struggling to put out enough copy for each issue. A member of the NUJ chapel [office branch] committee told SO that "WE have the support of many trade unionists in refusing to advertise in or buy the Post. Advertisements for the jobs of the NUJ journalists will be blacked throughout the country, and the Post will have difficulty in finding people to fill the vacancies".

Now a mass picket will be held every Saturday, from 10.30, outside the Post offices in Forman St, Nottingham.

GARNERS: ONE YEAR ON THE PICKET LINE

by Stephen Corbishley

27th JANUARY marked the first anniversary of the strike at Garners Steak Houses.

84 workers were sacked a year ago for joining a union, the TGWU: pay was £28.49 for a 55-hour week, and 20 hours' overtime was common. The staff were allowed only meagre meals at work and had to buy and launder their own uniforms. A large proportion of the workforce was immigrant, and any insubordination led to instant dismissal.

The strikers are under tremendous pressure: the T&G provides just £6 a week strike pay and the barest minimum of support. There is continual harassment by the police and over 55 arrests for obstruction, as a result of which at least one striker faces deportation if convicted a third time.

Regular lunchtime and evening picketing, 7 days a week, has substantially reduced Garners' custom. During the summer tourist season many

of the restaurants served less than 20 customers when they would normally serve 200. The picket has been maintained in the face of abuse, threats, and roughness from customers, provocation by management, and occasional violence.

One striker lost partial sight in one eye after being struck by the wife of Garners' boss Cyril Margolis. She was fined £25 for assault...

The strike committee has organised two marches, the second ending in a mass picket of over 200 people at Whitcomb Street and then at the Haymarket branch: both pickets were broken up by the police. They have also organised two 'Stake Out' mass pickets. The first, in December, was supported by about 250 trade unionists, aiming through mass picketing to close every branch of Garners for one day. Police, however, kept picket numbers to 6, limiting effectiveness.

At the second 'Stake Out' last Saturday, police continued

to restrict picket numbers to six, so that the 150 trade unionists who turned up to support the mass picket were compelled to remain on the opposite side of the road, chanting slogans such as 'Break the 6-picket limit — mass picket now', 'End police harassment' and 'End scab violence'. The restaurant was almost empty and a number of passers-by joined the picket.

Management has difficulty finding sufficient scab labour and continues to sack its staff and to put considerable pressure on them to counteract picketing. This has lost them some of their strongest allies in the non-union managers.

The negotiations with the strike committee opened by Margolis have broken down over his continued refusal to recognise the union: he claims that only a minority of the staff wants unionisation and supports this by unrepresentative ballots which exclude the strikers' votes and which are in any case, according to a num-

ber of those still employed, are rigged.

It is certain that Margolis has the support of wealthy backers, very probably catering firms intent on breaking unionisation in the industry, and the NAFF, though it denies giving financial help, asserts that it would willingly do so.

Undoubtedly the major factor in the length of the strike has been the attitude of the TGWU officialdom, in contrast to the financial and practical support coming from the rank and file of this and other unions. Their stand is exemplified by the agreement between the Regional Executive and the police to limit picket numbers to six at each restaurant, a limit unhesitatingly enforced by the police at the last two 'Stake Outs'.

There has been no regional levy of membership of the T&G to provide adequate means for the strikers, and the strike committee is impeded by union accusations of financial mismanagement. Strikers have even picketed union HQ, but to no avail.

Conditions at Garners are representative of the whole catering industry: badly paid workers, largely immigrant, working long and unsocial hours and split shifts under management hostile to unionisation. Victory for the strikers at Garners would have implications for the whole industry, and for the TGWU which at present ignores its membership in catering and seems heedless of the potential recruits.

★★ Pickets are every day from 12 to 3pm and 5.30 to 11pm at: 399 and 243 Oxford Street, 40 Haymarket, 29 Cockspur Street, 3 Charing Cross Road, 28 Berkeley St., 56 Whitcomb Street, 16 Jermy Street, 11 Lower Regent Street, and 179 Brompton Rd. Donations to the strike fund and offers to picket, to Garners Steak Houses Strike Committee, Room 84, 12/13 Henrietta Street, WC2. 01-240-1056



TIMES CHALLENGED

IT'S TWO MONTHS since the Times and Sunday Times closed. Every week more people finish their notice. By mid-March 3,100 men and women will have been sacked. Only five union branches have signed agreements with the Times bosses, while 49 have refused.

A Print Branches Liaison Committee has been established, and is convening a conference on 10th February. It has produced a paper, the Times Challenger, while the Sunday Times NUJ chapel have produced the 'Sunday Times Reporter'.

Both papers reflect the general attitude of the unions involved in the lock-out. They condemn the Times management, put forward ideas about setting up a workers' co-op at Times Newspapers, and call on Len Murray to convene a conference of all print unions. But the Times Challenger contains no ideas on what rank and file printworkers should do now.

There has been no call yet to workers employed in the Thomson Organisation's other interests, and no call to bring out the Thomson regional newspapers. And such solidarity action is becoming more and more difficult to organise as another week goes by with no action at the Times.

Other Fleet Street bosses have taken this lack of trade union action as their cue. Already the Evening News has tried to sack over 500 workers. Throughout Fleet Street, things are beginning to look grim.

CLARE RUSSELL

UNITY AT BOOTH'S

BETWEEN mid-October and mid-December there was a strike at Booths Distilleries on the Great West Road in Brentford, West London. The strike was caused by the victimisation of a young worker, who was eventually re-instated. The strikers did not win their demand for a London weighting allowance, but they returned strong and united.

A significant feature of the strike was the involvement of Asian women, who constituted over a third of the workforce. They proved resolute and firm during the strike, maintaining a good presence

on the picket line. Asian shop stewards made an active contribution to the strike committee.

One of the Asian shop stewards spoke alongside Mrs. Jayaben Desai at the recent Grunwick commemorative evening.

The effects of all this were to eliminate racial antagonism among the workers and create a new unity born out of struggle.

There could be no more positive antidote to racialism than fighting together.

PETE ROWLANDS

Secretary, Hounslow Trades Council

Forum for women

THE NEXT national Socialist Feminist conference is being held on the weekend of 24th and 25th March at the City University, London EC1.

The organisers see the conference as a forum for women in various areas of politics to draw together their ideas and experiences: women within the Socialist Feminist current, feminists on the left, women in trade unions, women involved in anti-imperialist and anti-racist struggles, indeed all women with an interest in socialist and feminist politics.

The planning group agreed the Conference should focus on four main aspects of the current situation in Britain as it affects women.

■ Social policies (education, welfare, taxation, health, legal changes, etc.)

■ Economic conditions (unemployment, domestic labour, low pay, training, etc.)

■ Struggles in 'communications' (media, art, etc.)

■ Reproduction and sexuality, control over our bodies (lesbianism, fertility, pornography, rape, etc.)

Other areas to be looked at in workshops and general sessions include defining the aims and priorities of Socialist Feminism and relations with the wider women's movement; relations with the trade unions, major political parties, and other groups on the left and right; and the kind of alliances and organisation needed

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Name

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ANL MUST ADOPT: NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS

by FRANK HANSEN

NO-ONE CAN disagree with Ernie Roberts' claim in the last Socialist Organiser that 'unity is the key to success' in building the Anti Nazi League and defeating the fascist threat.

Unfortunately the ANL has been unable to achieve the sort of unity in action which could have dealt a real body blow to the organised hard-core of the National Front. While carnivals and propaganda have created a massive groundswell against the NF, which has been reflected in their falling vote in local elections, the fascists have — as Nik Barstow pointed out — been able to step up violence against the immigrant community and the labour movement. While mobilising hundreds of thousands of anti-fascists, the ANL continue to allow a handful of NF to terrorise Brick Lane!

If it is to be effective, any anti-fascist movement must base itself on one simple fact of history: fascism seeks ultimately to annihilate the organisations of the working class in the interests of monopoly capitalism. Because fascism is the mortal enemy of our class, we cannot allow it the 'right' to hold marches, pickets or to have a public face of any kind. In other words, fascism must be confronted and smashed not merely in words and at the polls, but by mass mobilisations on the streets, or wherever the fascists raise their ugly heads.

This is why an unequivocal position of 'No Platform for Fascists' must be adopted and put into practice by the ANL.

The problem with the ANL is that it has compromised on this crucial question. On the one hand, there are those who are prepared to organise against the NF on the streets, on the other there are people like Neil Kinnock who say that the ANL is an 'alternative to street fighting' — i.e. implying that the fascists must be fought by 'pure reason' alone, with a bit of music thrown in for luck.

In practice this equivocation about how we confront the NF has led not to unity but disunity. While the carnivals have grown, mobilisations to prevent the NF organising, whether it be Ilford, Brixton, or Brick Lane, have dwindled. The adoption of the 'No Platform' position as the basis for unity against the fascists will not divide the unity which exists, but will strengthen it. While we may lose a few of the liberal personalities, we will decisively win over the thousands of working-class youth who have flocked to the carnivals — a force which will really be able to challenge and stop the National Front.

If anyone doubts the wisdom of such a course, it must be remembered that the reason the ANL was able to mush-

room in the first place was that black youth and the labour movement confronted the NF at Wood Green and Lewisham in 1977, and showed themselves to be stronger and better

organised than the would-be 'master-race'.

On the other hand, Nik Barstow is wrong to say that the ANL now must adopt as part of its programme, 'opposition to all immigration controls'. It is true that the labour movement must come to terms with the issue of immigration if it is to really destroy fascism — indeed, one can go further and say that it must see the need to overthrow capitalism if it is really to find a solution to this problem. But firstly the working class must be won to the idea and practice of defending its organisations against fascism. This is the basis for unity now. Concrete success in this struggle will create the conditions under which workers can be won to the need to extend their unity internationally (opposition to all immigration controls) and to ultimately challenge the force which creates fascism — the capitalist system.

As socialists, we of course must constantly argue for opposition to all immigration controls and seek to win workers to our programme. But we do not advance our programme as the necessary condition for unity in action against the fascists.