

Socialist Organiser

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Join the LABOUR PARTY

Write to 150 Walworth Rd, London SE17 1JT

Tories threaten to suspend tax workers

by Stephen Corbushley

OVER 100,000 civil service workers struck on Friday 27th against the threatened suspension of 29 Customs and Excise workers in Inland Container depots.

The national union leaders defused the threat by ordering 21 back to work. The other eight came out on official strike.

But the Tory government is certain to continue trying to smash the strike and union funds through suspensions. On Tuesday 31st, 70 Inland Revenue controllers-in-charge were suspended. The union reacted by calling them out on indefinite strike.

So far the unions estimate that, with the cooperation of the bank workers' union BIFU, they have cut down the Government's cash flow to 40% of normal.

Threats of suspension are now issued every day. But at each stage the national union leaders pull back from full confrontation, and the Tories keep the initiative.

Their next step will be to threaten mass suspensions of Inland Revenue collecting staff if they refuse to bank cheques paid in.

This can only be countered by immediately pulling out all airports and docks staff, to cripple international trade and passenger movement.

But the union leaders see the strike as not being about the 16% claim, but restoring the pay comparability system. And they are becoming worried by their control over the local strike coordinating centres.

An all-out strike, or an escalation, would pose a serious threat to their control and open up the possibilities of developing a more militant leadership at local level.

TUC General Secretary Len Murray gave a strong message of support to the civil service workers at the Women's TUC. But real support in action can only come through a fight to link the civil service dispute with other workers in struggle.

Here and now this means linking up with the dockers (especially the Southampton dockers), to shut down the ports in a joint effort to stop Tory wage-gouging and union-bashing.

Hands off workers' Poland

by John O'Mahony

THE threatened General Strike in Poland was called off at the last moment. It seems that Solidarnosc's demands for punishment of those responsible for savage beatings inflicted on Solidarnosc members at Bydgoszcz have been achieved.

The token general strike on Friday 27th had brought out 13 million workers for a 4-hour stoppage — a tremendous show of strength and latent power in the face of manoeuvring by Warsaw Pact troops in and around Poland.

The central fact of Polish life is that millions of workers want a radical change, but can't use their strength and numbers to get it because of the threat of Russian invasion.

Solidarnosc is the power in the land. It is a political power in all but name. It

acts as a political party, taking up not only the interests of the workers, but also of other oppressed people such as the peasant farmers. It was Solidarnosc involvement in helping to organise a small farmers' union that led to the police assault at Bydgoszcz.

The bureaucratic police state, headed now by the policeman Kania and by the general Jaruzelski, remains unchallenged only because of the Russians. But it remains in being: the bureaucracy has the levers of control.

The entire logic of the situation points to the sweeping away of the bureaucratic machine and the assumption of power by the workers. Last August at Gdansk the workers' parliament — the first democratic assembly Poland has had in 36 years, and the most democratic assembly it has ever had — created a work-

ers' democracy.

That must now, for the Polish workers, be the model of their own free political activities. But that Parliament at Gdansk dissolved itself as an assembly because the only alternative was to attempt to take power against the Polish bureaucracy and its state, and against the Russian masters of Poland.

The Polish workers chose then not to make that bid, fraught with terrible dangers and the risk of losing everything. Instead they created the amalgam of trade union and political party that is Solidarnosc, and they are trying to carve out a livable existence by reforms and by coexisting with the bureaucracy.

Yet time and time again in the last seven months the question has been posed on who is master in Poland — the government or Solidarnosc. Even a comparative-

ly small affair of police brutality leads Poland to the brink of all-out confrontation.

Solidarnosc has reached the limits of reform because any autonomous working class activity threatens the way the bureaucrats rule: their rule is inseparable from how they rule, that is as a more or less closed state political corporation, with a police-guarded monopoly of power and social initiative.

Every Solidarnosc initiative or response to the bureaucrats' struggle to hold on is a blow to them: the existence of Solidarnosc is a lance impaled in the heart of the bureaucratic system.

Every workers' mobilisation threatens to become an all-out challenge to bureaucratic rule and to Russia's control.

Within Solidarnosc, an increasingly vocal and im-

portant radical wing is highly critical of Walesa. He is committed to continued coexistence and to reform rather than anti-bureaucratic revolution.

The situation cannot last indefinitely, and probably not for much longer. If the Polish workers do not make a revolution, the bureaucrats and the Russians will make a bloody counter-revolution.

The fact of the matter is

continued on page 9

Hands off the Polish workers! For a workers' Poland!

Assemble Speakers' Corner, 1.30pm, Sunday 12 April.

All socialist and labour movement organisations welcome. No cold war slogans.



DAVID EVANS (IFL)

ON FRIDAY 27 March the Socialist Workers Party bookshop and offices in Birmingham were totally destroyed by fire.

Sheila McGregor, Birmingham organiser of the SWP, told us:

'At around 4pm seven of us were in the shop. We saw a car drive up onto the pavement and stop outside the shop.

'The driver got out of the car and threw a petrol can into the doorway. Within seconds the front of the shop was in flames.

'One of the people in the shop kicked the can out again and tried to put out the fire with an extinguisher. But it was no use.

'We managed to escape through an upstairs window and out onto the next door roof.

'Later a woman's body was found in the boot of the car. The man was picked up by the police and charged with murder of the woman in the boot, attempted murder of an Asian who had been shot through the neck with a cross bow, and criminal damage with intent to endanger life at our bookshop.

'He's known to have extreme right wing views and

to mix with National Front members. He collected military regalia and in fact was wearing semi-military gear when he attacked the shop.

'Anyone who says this bloke is just an individual nutter is missing the point. He almost certainly is some kind of psychopath but clearly he unleashes it on socialists and immigrants because

he is encouraged by the fascists.

'Whether or not he is a card-carrying member of the NF is irrelevant. This is simply the latest and perhaps the most horrific example of fascist-inspired violence against immigrants and socialists in this area.

The SWP are appealing for help: Birmingham SWP bookshop appeal, 224 High St, Digbeth, Birmingham 12.

AFTER Michael Foot's description of Militant as a 'pestilential nuisance', the running in the witch-hunting stakes is now being made by NUR General Secretary Sid Weighell.

Weighell — apparently with private backing from Duffy of the AUEW, Chapple of the EETPU, and Sirs of the ISTC — intends to put down a resolution for the next Labour Party conference calling for 'the expulsion of any groups which do not abide by the party rules'.

His target, in case you hadn't guessed, is the Militant tendency, but Weighell also wants a more general reintroduction of bans and proscriptions to deal with the Left.

While Foot still rejects expulsions — perhaps because of nostalgic feelings about when he was on the receiving end in the '40s, '50s, and '60s, partly because he knows the difficulties in implementing them — the right in the party realises that even if they reverse the Wembley decision the CLPS will remain dominated by the Left.

Their solution: a purge starting with the target already set up by the Press.



PTA renewed again

35 Labour MPs — plus the Liberals and Gerry Fitt, MP for West Belfast — voted against the renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act on March 19th.

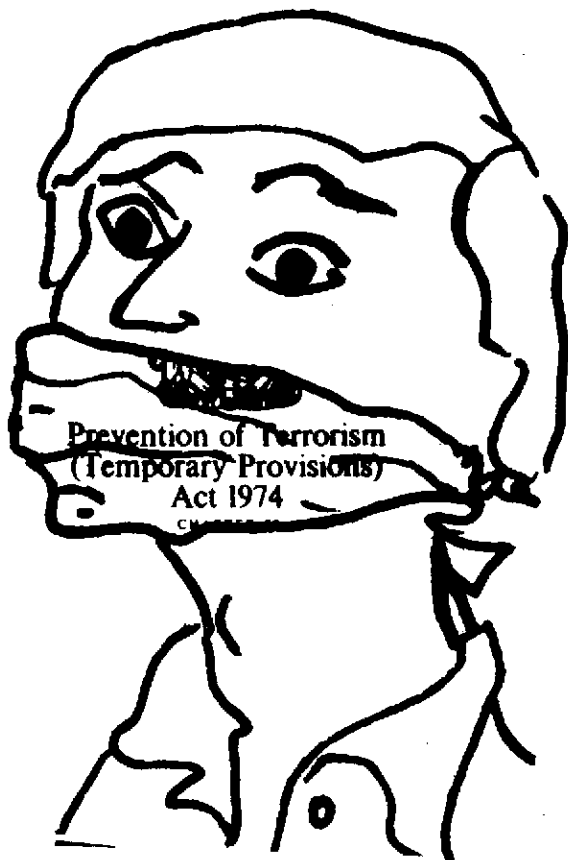
The Labour Front Bench put an amendment for an 'inquiry' into the working of the Act, but voted for renewal when the amendment was lost.

An inquiry is useless: the facts are already there. 89% of the 5,061 people detained under the PTA since 1974 have neither been charged, nor even excluded from Bri-

tain [i.e. sent to Ireland: no criminal charges are required for this].

The Act is nothing to do with stopping violence. It is just a way of harassing the Irish community and political activists, and gathering information about them.

More Labour MPs than ever before vote against the PTA, but at this rate we won't get rid of it until the 1990s. The Labour leadership should take a clear position against the PTA and make sure all MPs turn up to vote against it next time it comes up for renewal.



KEVIN McNamara — MP for Hull and a member of the Labour MPs' Northern Ireland committee — has branded the Labour Party consultative document on Northern Ireland as 'a Unionist paper, possibly an Orange paper'.

The document puts a number of questions for Labour Parties to consider, put in such a way as to be 'almost a hook, line and sinker acceptance of the Unionist position on integration and constitutional reform'. McNamara also said, 'It bases itself on the continuing assumption of the Six Counties being part and remaining a definite part of the UK'.

According to McNamara, a majority of the Northern Ireland group of Labour MPs support an eventual unification of Ireland.

It looks as if the Working Party will come with a similar set of Unionist proposals for Labour Party conference this year. CLPs need to keep up the pressure for a real break with bipartisanship and for troops out.

DUNDEE Council, the last council in Scotland to stand out against council house sales, has backed down.

It had been threatened with prosecution by the Government. Dundee NALGO still has a policy of refusing to process the sales — but they now face isolation, just as the council faced isolation because of the lack of fight by other councils.

A DELEGATION from Dundee Council has just set off to visit the West Bank city of Nablus.

Dundee Council recognises the Palestine Liberation Organisation and 'twinning' with Nablus following a visit to Dundee last autumn by the mayor of Nablus, who has recently lost his legs in an attack by a right wing Zionist group.

Already Labour's powerful Zionist lobby is mobilising its MPs. At a recent meeting of delegates from Jewish organisations, Dick Douglas, Labour MP for Dunfermline, and Grenville Janner, also a Labour MP and chairman of the British Board of Jewish Deputies, called for the council to rescind the twinning arrangement and stop flying the PLO flag. As usual, they have tried to equate anti-Zionism with anti-semitism.

Labour Parties, Trades Councils, and council Labour groups should send messages rejecting this equation and supporting the Council's stand.

AFTER repeated declarations by the AUEW engineering section leaders that they saw no objection to taking state money for union ballots under the Employment Act, the union has officially decided to take this money.

This flies in the face of official TUC policy of non-cooperation with this anti-picket, anti-union Act.

But what will the TUC do? Why doesn't it organise a campaign among the AUEW rank and file to get the money rejected, or, failing that, to boycott the Tory-funded ballots in favour of democratic voting at the workplace after proper discussion.

SCOTLAND'S CLOSED SHOP JOBS MARCH

AT THE same time as the Liverpool to London jobs march, a march is being organised from Glasgow to Perth, to finish on the weekend of the Scottish Tory Party conference.

But just as the Liverpool march is being weakened by activities like getting employers to sponsor it, so too the Scottish march is being organised in the most un-militant way.

The Scottish TUC is restricting it to individuals nominated by their union branches.

Given that details of the march have not yet been finalised, let alone circulated to union branches, many union branches will not be able to discuss it until too late.

But worse: how many unemployed people are members of a union?

People who have been working before becoming unemployed have little incentive to stay in their union, even if the rules permit it (and in many cases they don't). Doubly so if, like redundant steelworkers for example, they have no chance of getting another job in the same industry.

For people going onto the dole straight from school or apprenticeship, the only union which accepts them is the TGWU (but only if they don't have a trade). But unemployed members in the T&G have to pay the full rate, 34p a week, and there are no branch meetings for them.

The STUC must be forced to back down. Union branches should sponsor marchers not yet members of a

union, resolutions should be sent in to the STUC demanding that the march is opened up to all the unemployed, and, most important of all, unions should get round to opening up their membership to the unemployed, at rock-bottom levels of contribution but with full speaking and voting rights in the union.

STAN CROOKE, Glasgow.



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

Bye Bye Comrade Chairman

IT HAS been pointed out to me that I started a bad precedent at the SO/CDLM cuts conference by addressing comrade Mary Corbishley as 'comrade chairman' at the start of my speech, and that this continued throughout the conference.

Although, of course, no deliberate offence was intended on my part (a reverting to type under pressure, perhaps), I agree that this is an example of gratuitous sex-

ism, which we should make every effort to stamp out in labour movement meetings.

I am in favour of fairly formal openings to speeches, for example, 'Comrade chairperson, comrades', and then an introduction of oneself.

I suggest that this should be fairly rigidly applied and certainly that the word 'chairman' be withdrawn from our vocabulary.

DAVE SPENCER
Coventry.

Hands off El Salvador

March and Rally Saturday April 25th

Assemble 12.30pm

Speakers Corner

march past U.S. Embassy
to rally in Trafalgar Square.

Tom Litterick Appeal

TOM LITTERICK, Labour MP for Selly Oak, Birmingham, from October 1974 to May 1979, died suddenly on 4 January from a heart attack.

Selly Oak Constituency Labour Party has set up a fund in his memory. In the first instance this will be used to sponsor the activities of CND in the Birmingham area.

In the constituency, a memorial meeting will be held after Easter and in cooperation with CND.

Please contribute to this fund by sending donations to Anne Crawford, Treasurer, Selly Oak CLP, 265 Dawlish Rd, Selly Oak, Birmingham 29. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Tom Litterick Memorial Fund'.

Gary Thornton

ON THURSDAY March 25th, at 6.00am, comrade Gary Thornton, Chairman of the Leicester District Branch of the Workers' Socialist League (WSL), died. He was nineteen. His death, two days before the third annual conference of the Socialist Youth League, was a massive blow to all those who knew him, and in particular to those who had worked with him for a socialist future.

Gary came into politics whilst still at school. From involvement in the fight to keep the fascists off the streets of Leicester, he moved on to an understanding of the need to overthrow the whole capitalist system through a workers' revolution.

Such a step demanded the difficult choice for any youth of abandoning the round of parties and pubs for the hard world of political life. Gary made that choice without hesitation, and committed himself to the struggle for a Trotskyist party.

He became a founder member of the SYL in Leices-

ter, building it, together with his friends and comrades, into a significant force amongst youth. At school he organised the students into NUSS, organised a strike against the cuts, and was elected to the NUSS National Committee.

In October 1979 Gary joined the WSL, becoming an Area Committee member eight months later. Quiet and unassuming, he was loved and respected by all those comrades who worked with him for his courage, honesty and determination. Gary never flinched from facing problems. He was always in the front line in the fight to smash fascism regardless of the dangers. He was always there when the time came to stand up and be counted.

Above all he believed that what was needed was a mass revolutionary movement with real roots in the working class. To that end he argued unceasingly the need to turn out to new layers of youth, women workers and all those brought into struggle against the bosses.

At the time of his death he was proposing to stand as a shop steward in the National Union of Railwaymen, and was enthusiastic about the new opportunities his work in the unions gave him.

His death is a blow that we in the movement will come to terms with only slowly. Certainly he will never be forgotten. In tribute to his memory the Socialist Youth League has launched a special fund to produce a commemorative pamphlet on 'The Fight against Racism and Fascism', a struggle that was particularly dear to Gary's heart.

To his parents, Alan and Peggy, we in WSL extend our deepest sympathy in their loss. To his companion, Bethan, and her daughter Melissa, we offer not only our sincere sympathy but our support as a comrade and a class fighter.

Gary died a Trotskyist. We salute his memory.

PETER FLACK
[WSL National Committee]

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Supporters are being asked to undertake to sell a minimum of 6 papers an issue and to contribute at least £1 a month (20p for unwaged). So becoming a supporter helps build our circulation and gives the paper a firmer financial base.

If you like Socialist Organiser, think it's doing a good job, but realist that it can't possibly do enough unless you help, become a card-carrying supporter.

Fill in the form below and return to: Socialist Organiser, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

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Name

Address

CLP

Trade union

Socialist Organiser EDITORIAL

Militants or managers

FOR ABOUT 18 months after the return of the Tory government SO has had an increasingly acrimonious debate with some people on the left about rate rise policies.

Ted Knight and others held up rate rises as the alternative to social service cuts. We said they were not an alternative, but could only be a prelude to cuts and would hinder the work of mobilising workers to stand up to the Tories.

A sizeable and influential body of comrades hived off from SO because of our intransigence on this question. They founded "London Labour Briefing". We respected the integrity of comrades such as Ken Livingstone but believed events would show them to be mistaken. [Ted Knight launched attacks on SO, equating us with the right wing].

It is now a matter of fact that the rate rise policy is bankrupt. Camden, facing a vicious, punitive government, has backed down. In Lambeth the policy has been 'supplemented' now by an all-round 10% cut. [To be sure there were few reasons to expect anything else from Knight: he tried to impose cuts within two months of Thatcher's victory in July 1979]. Events have given a clear verdict on the dispute between ourselves and 'Labour Briefing'.

But it is the rent and rate strikes now starting up in a number of areas — like Hackney, for example — that are the real indictment of the high rates policy. They show it to have been not merely a misjudgement but a fundamentally false view — it was the view of administrators (and their hangers-on) rather than that of militants.

It was an illusion that socialists could settle into a little corner of local power and juggle and balance the local accounts irrespective of the state power being hostile. It rested on the self-inflicted blindness to the sharp conflict in reality between left-wing councils passing on cuts in living standards to workers and mobilising workers to stand up to the Tories.

Now the old argument translates itself into one of whether we look to direct action like rent and rates strikes — whatever the political colour of the council. SO stands now as throughout its existence on the viewpoint of the rank and file, of the tenants, of direct action. We think it is essential that local Labour parties support and organise the tenants' movement, whoever forms the council majority.

The comrades around 'Briefing' made a gross mistake in supporting the rate rise position. They now oppose Lambeth's cuts; they argue for the 57% rate rise that would be necessary there to avoid them. Significantly, this 57% rate rise policy, had practically no support at all in the Lambeth labour movement itself. The comrades facing the hard reality of the working class reaction to huge rate rises either went along with Knight's cuts or opted for the policy SO advocates. These were the real alternatives.

Will 'Briefing' now shift their viewpoint from that of administrators and would-be administrators to that of the rank and file?

THE press is now assuring us that there was no real plot for a military coup in 1968.

It's sure that no coup plot got very far. Why should it? The Labour government of the time was entirely willing to do the bidding of the bosses. And it was capable of keeping the working class under control, not completely, but to a large extent.

But it was only those considerations that kept the coup talk confined to a few hotheads of the ruling class.

In 1968, it seems, there was a meeting between newspaper boss Cecil King, Lord Mountbatten and Lord Zuckerman (Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government). They discussed 'what to do' about the Government. Zuckerman stormed out, saying that talk of 'machine guns on street corners' was "rank treachery". [His anger did not go as far as telling the public about this "rank treachery"].

King says he told Mountbatten: "there might come a time when his position with the Royal Family and his position with the Armed Forces might make him a key figure at some time in any future disturbance". In other words: keep your powder dry.

In 1974 too — as we know from Field Marshal Carver — there was coup talk, squashed early on by the more level-headed members of the ruling class.

In short, even the beginnings of political instability will call forth support in the ruling class and the state apparatus for military measures. Most times, perhaps, the support will remain limited and inactive. But can there be any serious doubt that a Labour government which systematically refused to do what the bosses wanted, or which was unwilling or unable to clamp down on the working class, would face not merely coup talk but coup preparations?

Isn't it foolish to talk about a future Labour government carrying out any major anti-capitalist measures, without also planning to disarm and break up the uncontrolled power-bastions of the ruling class, like the army top brass, MI6 and MI5.

Will the ruling class that so readily starts talking about coups back down meekly when faced with a working class challenge for power — or will the working class have to arm itself against counter-revolutionary violence?

THE first test case for the Employment Act's anti-picket provisions seems to be falling flat.

Workers on strike at Wilkes Business Forms, near Wolverhampton, have been picketing nearby premises of a sister company, Wilkes (PCA) Data Supplies.

As 'secondary picketing', this is unlawful under the Employment Act. The bosses got an injunction against it.

But injunctions have to be served on specific individuals — and the eight individual pickets named by Wilkes Forms have 'disappeared'. The picket line continues.

The workers' union, the NGA, refused to comment or give information when contacted by Socialist Organiser.

But this case confirms the point made by NATSOPA's successful defiance of an injunction on March 14th last year. These anti-picket laws can only work by frightening the unions into submission. Against sufficiently well-organised opposition they are useless.

LEFT/ASIAN ALLIANCE HITS BRENT LABOUR PARTY

by Mick Woods

BRENT seems to have spawned its own mini-version of Woodrow Wyatt. Every week in the Willesden and Brent Chronicle, Bill Montgomery regales us with the facts about Brent Labour Party and the imminence of a Soviet Republic in these quiet parts.

Nothing, however, has captured this budding columnist's imagination like the Asian Peril.

The aftermath of the Wembley conference decision and a hotting up of the fight against the cuts have seen the defection of one Labour councillor, with possibly a few more to follow, as a lot of militant workers have been joining the Party and kicking the dead wood off the council.

The trouble is, though, a lot of these militants are Asian, and that's just not cricket for the likes of Bill Montgomery, who reckons that they're just voting fodder for their shadowy left wing allies. He stresses the lack of English of these comrades and asserts that there are Asian women 'unable to follow the proceedings of the [Stonebridge selection] meeting and merely vot[ing] as they had been instructed'.

The concept of using Asians as voting fodder is not a new one in Brent, where the left has fought to proscribe the RSS (an offshoot of India's main fascist party) from joining the Labour Party. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to work out who supported the RSS.

What rankles most is that many of the Asians joining the Party are members of the Brent Indian Association, which favours fighting for black rights in the Labour Party, and/or supporters of the newly-formed Asian Labour Party Alliance.

The ALPA aims to ally itself with those prepared to fight against racism in the labour movement. Subhash Patel of the ALPA writes in *London Labour Briefing*: 'Just as there is no struggle to bring down this Tory government without the struggle to remove the mis-leaders of the past — Callaghan, Healey, Rees, and Co, so we cannot even hope to unite the working people of this country behind a socialist Labour Party if we allow

racists to continue in positions of responsibility'.

The possibility of a Left/Asian alliance in the Party must be worrying the fakery on the council who recently voted for cuts *plus* a big rate increase of 47.6%. The immediate effects of the cuts are difficult to assess as yet, but from what's leaking out they will include compulsory re-deployment of staff, the loss of 170 teaching posts, and the closure of Morgan Lodge hostel for disturbed adolescents.

The 500 Asians who have joined the party must be integrated as fully active members, to build a real fight in Brent against the Tories and their agents in our ranks.

JOBS ON THE SIDE

Question: Who's this?

A Director of the Bank of England, Member NEDO Section Working Party for the Paper and Board Industry, Chairman of the Insolvency Law Review Committee, Member of the Energy Commission, Member of the National Economic Development Corporation, Member of the Central Arbitration Committee, Trustee of the Community Projects Foundation, Member of the Committee on Finance for Industry.

Answer: A top boss? A Tory MP? Wrong! It's Geoffrey Drain, the General Secretary of NALGO and a member of the TUC General Council.

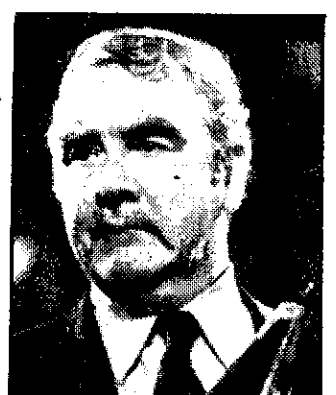
And he's not the only member of the leading committee of the trade union movement who spends a lot of his spare time and gets a lot of money sitting on committees with bosses and with representatives of a right-wing Tory government dedicated to destroying the jobs and services of his members.

Between them 34 of the 41 members of the TUC General Council share over 100 government appointments.

But is there, perhaps, some advantage for work-



Chapple, Fisher, Gormley: Prison Industries Committee, British Airways, Wm Hudson...



ing people if our leaders sit on committees with Tories and bosses? A look at the types of appointments involved may be quite illuminating.

A number of council members are on the boards of various state-owned companies and nationalised industries, such as British Shipbuilding, BP, British Airways and Rempoy Ltd. Such concerns, it should be pointed out, are run on strictly capitalist lines. Others sit on organisations supposed to be about capitalist planning of industry such as the NEDC (with six General Council members).

Others serve in bodies such as ACAS, CAC and EAT, which shunt off

industrial struggles into usually disastrous arbitration procedures.

Some of the QUANGOs may be positively dangerous to workers (the Territorial Army Advisory Committee on which Stan Pemberton of the T&G sits, or the Prison Industry Joint Committee with Frank Chapple) or plain ridiculous (the Horse-racing Totalisator Board — Frank Chapple again). While many QUANGOs appear harmless or even beneficial (such as the Radiological Protection Board), all in all, the picture presented is one of massive collusion and collaboration with a government of naked class struggle.

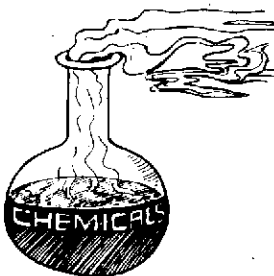
This collaboration is not restricted only to right-wing leaders — Brothers Buckton and Fisher are in it as much as Chapple and Jackson (indeed, more so).

Some union leaders also serve on the boards of private firms. For example, Joe Gormley is on the board of William Hudson, Canada Ltd, and the British Investment Trust, while Alan Fisher of NUPE is on the board of Harland and Wolff (whose workforce in Belfast is 98% Protestant).

Our fight against the Tories is being sabotaged by activities such as these. All trade unionists should demand that their leaders: **Break Collaboration now!**

Les Hearn

Socialist Organiser SCIENCE



by Les Hearn

WHILE THE possible link between valium and cancer is worrying, a recent survey of long-term valium users who stopped taking the drug highlights some more common and more definite ill-effects of the benzodiazepine tranquillisers.

The subjects of the study were psychiatric outpatients

Valium makes you sick

and general practice patients in Nottingham and London whose doctors thought they no longer needed to take anti-anxiety drugs. Withdrawal symptoms reported after they had stopped taking the drugs included anxiety (!!), tension, depression, shaking, nausea, palpitations and faintness. Over two-thirds had insomnia, one third had headaches, and one-third had pain and muscle twitches.

Not only do benzodiazepine tranquillisers not cure the symptoms that they are prescribed for, they actually increase the problems of patients taking them, who become addicted to them. The patients had been taking benzodiazepines for an average of 3½ years. Nearly nine-tenths of the patients who had been asked to participate in the survey, but did not, were still taking the drugs three months later — as opposed to one-quarter of the patients in the survey, who had gone through a complete withdrawal course.

These drugs are virtually useless to the patients... but they do have the merit of getting anxious people out of doctors' surgeries and cutting NHS costs.

POISONING THE SOIL FOR PROFIT?

The contrast between capitalist farming methods and the sort of techniques that might well be employed in a socialist society is displayed in the results of two surveys by the US Department of Agriculture and Washington University. The efficiency and productivity of conventional farms (i.e. capital-intensive farms with high use of artificial fertilisers, herbicides, insecticides, etc. — all the things that are at present poisoning our environment and us) was compared with those of 'organic' farms (where no artificial chemicals are used).

Organic farms were found to be 'productive, efficient

and well-managed'. They used less than half the amount of energy per unit output of conventional farms, they were not at all primitive in techniques, they used modern equipment, new crop varieties, and advanced management and conservation practices.

Because of the crop rotation scheme which keeps up the fertility of the soil, the 'organic' methods were less profitable, and of course capitalism is about profits.

However, if the long-term costs of conventional capitalist farming in terms of soil erosion, falling fertility of soil, silting up of rivers and water pollution are taken into account, organic farming comes out on top.

While capitalism says, 'Never mind the environment, feel the profits', a socialist society will be thinking about future, as well as present, food production, and 'organic' methods could well be an attractive model to follow.



Rachel Lever reports from the Festival Planning Group

"I'm a teacher for the WEA in Stoke, and want to bring my whole class to the Women's Festival. None of them have ever been to anything like that before."

The National Festival for Women's Rights on May 9th has been designed to lift the spirits and inspire the fight of women 'who have never been to anything like that before'. Even the planning group is largely composed of new enthusiasts.

But there'll be plenty of political meat on the day.

It's been arranged in eight themes, and generally the pattern is that there will be a main debate on ideas, and workshops that concentrate on action and information.

There are plans for some thirty workshops, among them nine on how to organise as women in specific unions. It is hoped that some of these get-togethers of rank and file women

will lead to the setting up of permanent trade union women's caucuses and campaigns.

One such campaign will be set going at the rally at the end of the day, which will concentrate on a woman's right to work. Women will be urged to turn out in force for the People's March, especially the 'women's day' at Luton, and the final demo.

And a resounding message will be sent to the leaders of the labour movement: organise a demonstration on the scale of Liverpool and Glasgow, for a woman's right to work!

The rally will hear speakers from the Lee Jeans occupation in Greenock, a woman from the People's March, and Marissa Casarcs Roach, who has organised a militant union branch among migrant workers in the notoriously difficult and anti-union hotel industry.

Jo Richardson will also be speaking. And because the whole Festival has been organised to celebrate our

fightback and our victories, Anwar Ditta has been asked to speak, and also to lead a workshop on how to fight the Home Office.

The rest of the day will offer a varied programme of short and feature films, five women's theatre groups, exhibitions by the TUC, Spare Rib, Women in Manual Trades and others, rock bands, stalls, kids' events, festive food and above all good ideas from dozens of struggles against the Tory attacks on women's lives.

What do we want Socialist Organiser readers and groups to do?

First, publicise the Festival in your locality, organise transport, and bring as many women as you can on the day — especially those new to 'this sort of thing'.

Tickets are now available (£3 all-in or £1.50 for wage-less), with lower rates for block bookings from out of London.

There's a new leaflet out, two posters, and a set of stickers.

Help

Second, we need help. Londoners with any time to give in the next five weeks will be more than welcome to join the planning group (every Monday at 7pm at 374 Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross). We need stewards for the day (women) and creche helpers (either sex), who will be rewarded with free entry, a festival T-shirt, and our undying gratitude.

Contact the Planning Group at 374 Grays Inn Road, WC1 — and come to the stewards' meeting at the General Picton pub, Wharfedale Rd/Caledonian Rd, N1, at 12 to 3pm on April 26th.

THE FESTIVAL THEMES: Work, Jobs, & Unions • Racism & Imperialism • Child Care • Fertility Control • The Welfare State • Violence Against Women • The Nuclear Threat

TOUR DE FORCE
A day's programme of short FILMS made by women, selected and shown by CINEMA OF WOMEN. Full length features include: Blow for Blow, Double Day, Take it Like a Man, Maam, and With Babies and Banners

GUEST STARS

THEATRE GROUPS:
Spinsters • Bloomers • Women's Theatre Group • Lottie & Ada • Mrs. Worthington's Daughters

EXHIBITIONS BY:
TUC • Spare Rib • Women in Manual Trades • Hackney Flashers • Women in the NUT • National Association of Youth Clubs

WORKSHOPS • TRADE UNION WOMEN'S CAUCUSES • KIDS' EVENTS • DEBATES • FILMS • VIDEOS • PLAYS • BANDS • FOOD • SONGS • INFLATABLES • CARTOONS • and a RALLY at the end with speakers from our struggles •

PAK PAIRS

Bring your banners to display

Women for socialism

by Gerry Byrne

A Socialist Organiser women's caucus was set up at our day school on March 22nd. We decided to meet at least four times a year and to set up a commission based in London to deal with the day-to-day running of the work of the caucus.

We discussed some problems. Partly due to the success of Women's Fightback, which Socialist Organiser launched last year, we found that SO women who had set up Fightback groups locally had become identified more with Fightback than with SO.

The other side of that coin is a tendency in SO groups for 'women's issues' to be channelled into Fightback, rather than being the work of the whole SO group.

With Fightback as the women's paper, SO tends to be seen as the "men's" paper.

Many ideas came forward to tackle this. We decided to have a series of day schools or meetings on women's liberation for all SO supporters. The Women's Commission should organise these. The women's commission should also provide a regular input to the SO information circulars.

SO group meetings should always have a part in the agenda on the work of the Fightback group, as well as having public meetings and education meetings on women's oppression.

We also agreed to make sure that more women would write for SO, so that the image of it being a 'men's' paper would be overcome.



The next SO national delegate meeting will be discussing these points and working out how they can be put into practice.

The commission will be meeting soon, and we should be discussing how we can organise a Socialist Organiser women's stall for the Women's Festival on May 9th.

Contact: Mary Corbishley, Basement Flat, 118 Tollington Park, London N4.

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

Name

Address

Send to: SO, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.

IT ISN'T YOUR IMAGINATION

by Rachel Lever

IF YOU think sexual harassment at work is confined to the occasional grope and the rare rape, you should see a new Canadian film called, "It isn't your imagination".

Women who have suffered 'shame and humiliation' talk about the dirty jokes, the pin-ups, the sexual overtures both crude and subtle, the questions about their private life, pointed comments on their clothes (all often passed off as a joke or friendly banter), the pornography left around for them to see or the paternal arm on their shoulder, and condemn it all as sexual harassment.

The film suggests that the industrial revolution was where it all started, with women being herded from the cottage industries where they had some skill and standing into factories completely beyond their control.

It is certainly true that women working in 'a man's world' — a fact constantly underlined by the sexism they face — must be doubly alienated as well as doubly exploited. And perhaps their male workmates' treatment of them is (to paraphrase Engels' definition of anti-Semitism as 'the socialism of idiots') 'the workers' control of idiots' — seeking the consolation of their male power and assertion as a distraction from their class subordination.

In other cases, sexual oppression and class oppression are combined, when bosses, managers, supervisors or foremen harass women workers.

One of the women in the film 'could never face work-

ing in an office again' — which shows that there are more ways of driving a woman out of work than you might think. And another had mysteriously lost her job after refusing the boss's sexual advances.

Their message was: don't keep quiet about it — though they admit that kicking up a fuss takes a lot of courage or, better still, organisation and solidarity.

First of all, the women must get together and talk about it. They can then take action — anything from posting up notices warning women about a particular man's behaviour, to raising it in their union.

Interviews with union officials bore witness to the Canadian women's success in even making this a 'trade union issue'.

In this country, only one union, Nalco, has a reputation for campaigning on the issue — and this is almost certainly a reputation still to be earned. When I tackled Nalco official Tess Woodcraft on what the union was doing nationally, I got an evasive reply, abdicating leadership — "It's got to be tackled in the branches". (This is something, of course, that no union national officer would say if the subject in question was a wage claim!)

Actually, women are so eager to take up this fight that several Nalco branches have organised events (showing this film, putting out a questionnaire or special bulletin) merely because the national Equal Opportunities Committee has nodded in the direction of a campaign against sexism.

So why not accelerate it

with an campaign of articles in the union paper (not just the women's bulletin), the drawing up of a union code of practice to make sexism a disciplinary offence, and the special showing of this film to delegates to national and regional conferences and at union training schools, with discussion about its implications and suggestions for its use to raise the issue in the branches.

Once again, it's a case of 'if the leaders won't lead, the rank and file must'. You can book the film (20 minutes, 16 mm, £15) from Cinema of Women, 27 Clerkenwell Close, EC1. Phone no. 251 4978.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK 10p

NORACIST PASS LAW

ARE YOU A REAL lady?

NO MORE RACIST KILLINGS! SELF DEFENCE

RENTS: Don't pay!

APRIL 1981

Step the Nationally Bill! Demonstrate Sunday 5th April Assemble Hyde Park at 1pm

April issue of Women's Fightback — out now. 3 page feature on 'Black Woman, White Britain'. 21p including postage, or £1.20 for ten, from Women's Fightback, 41 Ellington St, London N7.

Mass strikes in New Zealand

by Paul White of
SOCIALIST FIGHT
(Australia)

A battle by airline workers over basic union principles, in Australia and New Zealand, has just been sold out by trade union and Labour Party leaders.

In Australia, workers at the national airline Qantas struck against management's use of scab labour in an earlier dispute over manning levels.

Across the Tasman, about 1200 Air New Zealand engineers went out initially for a 16.8% wage increase. But when 48 picketers were arrested at Auckland International Airport, this escalated into a fight for the right to picket, as sympathy strikes erupted throughout the country.

By the end of February, 5100 Qantas workers were out, and major industries in New Zealand were forced to close, as 100,000 New Zealand unionists struck. Support was growing daily in both countries, and the solidarity of airline unions in Fiji and Britain was enlisted.

Right from the start, however, union leaders played a limiting and restricting role. Australia's equivalent of the TUC — the Australian Council of Trade Unions — firmly resisted spreading the action to workers in the two Australian domestic airlines. And workers in white collar unions affiliated to the other main union federation, the Council of Australian Government Employee Organisations, were not asked to join the dispute until it had gone on for over two weeks.

General

In New Zealand, sympathy strikes occurred in the metal and freezing industries, the pulp and paper mills, public transport, the maritime industry and among petrol tanker drivers. For a while, it looked like developing into a general strike. But the New Zealand TUC — the Federation of Labour — successfully isolated the action to a few select sectors — mainly in the metal industry.

NZ Labour Party leader Bill Rowling showed his true colours, by calling for a return to work 'out of respect for the law'. And at a meeting of about 2500 delegates on 26 February, FOL president Jim Knox indicated agreement with this — if only the government would agree to 'talks' on the anti-picketing legislation.

While the bureaucrats undercut the action, the governments of both countries prepared their trump card. Having tested the labour movement tops, they knew they could afford to be bold.

On Sunday 2 March, the Royal Australian Air Force

and the NZ Air Force ferried home travellers stranded by the disputes.

Having made his bed, FOL leader Jim Knox was loath to lie in it, and he lamely 'protested'. ACTU chief, the newly-elected 'left' Cliff Dolan, was at least more consistent. Dolan declared his support for this blatant scabbery, claiming it wasn't strike-breaking.

On 3 March, the FOL Executive ordered all strikers back to work, so that talks with the hated New Zealand prime minister, 'Piggy' Muldoon, could proceed. Meanwhile, ACTU president Dolan had been preparing a 'deal' with Qantas executive Keith Hamilton and the Liberal Minister for Industrial Relations, Andrew Peacock.

In short, this involved the ACTU agreeing to shelve the scab labour issue, and to try and reach agreement on a 'disputes settling procedure'. At the core of this procedure were provisions aimed at freezing out of future disputes the powerful 4,500 Transport Workers' Union members servicing Qantas.

It is also understood to provide for future industrial action to be rendered ineffective, by restricting it to grounding only one plane at a time.

Deal

Dolan's deal was opposed at the ACTU Executive on 4 March by officials from the Transport Workers' Union and the Storemen and Packers' Union. Officials from both unions stressed that the scab labour issue remained central for them.

"We cannot reconcile ourselves to the use of staff labour by Qantas during industrial disputes", he said. "We were against it yesterday, today, and will be forever."

Unfortunately, these fine sentiments were not backed up by action at the mass meeting called on 6 March. Officials of both the TWU and the SPU sat silently on the platform while the official recommendation was put. Evidently loyalty to their fellow bureaucrats comes before loyalty to their own members.

In both Australia and New Zealand, the action was taken off just when it was at its highest point. In New Zealand, this resulted in the Muldoon government going ahead with the prosecution of jailed picketers under the Police Offences Act. Dropping of all charges and repeal of the Act had been central demands of the strike movement.

Predictably, the FOL/government talks used as an excuse for stopping the strikes have resulted in nothing beyond a substantial amount of hot air.



The CND Labour Movement conference

JOHN SMITH (IFL)

How Labour can ban the bomb

by Rex Roberts

ON SATURDAY 28th March, 702 delegates to the CND labour movement conference called upon the whole labour movement to organise for unilateral disarmament and for withdrawal from NATO.

Reg Race MP detailed

the barriers which stand in the way of disarmament:

- NATO. "It is", he said, "an organisation of militarism, arguing for increased spending... there is an increasing likelihood of war because of our membership of that alliance".

- Secrecy in government.
- The independence of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

- The present political structure, which tries to make us believe "that we need a warfare economy to create a welfare economy", and "that nuclear weapons protect us from the Red Menace".

We need, said Reg Race, to make people aware of the Tory strategy. Equally, the trade unions must be prepared to hold the next Labour Government to its commitment to unilateral disarmament, and not get 'loyalty jitters' if they see that Government backing away.

The campaign against the missiles is not a single struggle, many speakers emphasised. "We must be crystal clear", said Pete Keenlyside, a Socialist Organiser supporter from Manchester, "that it is

not an isolated issue, but part of the fight against the class that rules us".

"Remember that we have, if necessary, the power to strike out the bomb", a POEU delegate reminded us, and others spoke of the need to:

- organise at the workplace.

- unite the campaign with struggles against unemployment and racism.

- mobilise massive support to 'swamp London' in an October demonstration for jobs, not arms.

- Elect councils which will challenge, rather than manage, the system.

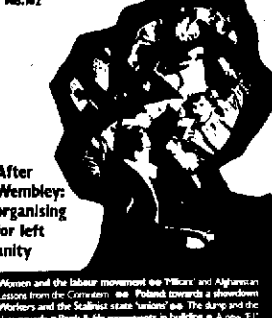
- Commit union leaderships to the campaign.

- Ensure that we have a Labour government committed to unilateral disarmament, through the fight for Labour Party democracy.

- Gain more workers' control in production throughout industry, to show the way to more vulnerable arms workers in their struggle for conversion to socially useful production.

But now the real work begins. As Reg Race said, "Resolutionary politics is not enough".

WORKERS' ACTION



After Wembley: organising for left unity

Workers' Action now out in magazine format. 62p including postage from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD. Subscriptions: £3 for five issues, £5 for ten.

Socialist Organiser NEWS

Another 100 by May Day

by Martin Thomas

TO RECRUIT another 100 supporters by May Day: that's the target Socialist Organiser set itself at our national dayschool on March 22nd, the day following the joint cuts conference with the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.

Militants from the rent strikes that will start in April; new activists drawn into the Labour Party, specially round the campaigns for the May 7th elections; and comrades in Women's Fightback, are some of the major groups we will be approaching to win new support for Socialist Organiser.

A Socialist Organiser women's caucus was established at the dayschool [see report, p.4], and has started working out some ideas to make Socialist Organiser groups more habitable and accessible for women.

The dayschool discussed the need for a higher profile for SO. The SO Secretariat proposed that we should adopt the name 'Socialist Organiser Alliance', as preferable to the vague description 'Socialist Organiser groups'. The basic idea of a new name was widely accepted, but the specific proposal, 'Alliance', was narrowly voted down. So we're looking for new ideas!

Workshops at the day school discussed factory bulletins, support work for industrial disputes, the role of Marxist councillors, and the Liverpool to London jobs march. A workshop on Party democracy focused specially on local government, and is reported by Nigel Williamson on page 7.

The workshop on the youth movement discussed preparations for the Labour Party Young Socialists conference over Easter, and made some plans for the next issue of the youth paper linked with Socialist Organiser, 'Barricade'.

We also discussed the paper. Views differed, but as at previous national meetings there was a widespread feeling for a more popular, less crammed, paper, with more space for articles on aspects of society and everyday life which aren't always seen as 'political'.

At present we're terribly limited by space and resources. More papers sold, more supporters recruited, are essential if we're going to overcome those limits with a bigger and more frequent paper.



Socialist Organiser badges — ready soon. Get your orders in now. 20p each from 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Join the fight

THE LABOUR Manifesto for the Greater London Council election — due to take place, with other council elections, on May 7th — promises a 25% fares cut followed by a freeze, cheaper school meals, and a freeze on GLC rents.

There will be a Greater London Enterprise Board; office and hotel development will be blocked; and 'civil defence' will be scrapped.

Rate rises to finance this programme will amount to perhaps £1 a week by 1983-4. Because much of the burden will be born by the City and Central London, regular users of London Transport should have a clear gain of about £1.50 a week.

Recent big borough council rate rises have only postponed cuts and allowed the councils to put off a clash with the Tories. But these 'municipal taxes', in contrast, will be levied for a positive programme.

Such pledges, however, are not the most important things.

What's important, and unique, about the London Labour Party's campaign for the GLC is:

• The Manifesto was decided by a special conference, following long de-

bates. And the London Labour Party has demanded a written pledge by each candidate to consider himself bound by the manifesto and by London Labour Party policy.

It has also proposed that the GLC Labour Group leader should be elected by conference rather than by the councillors; but the Labour Party National Executive has refused to ratify this.

• There was an open, organised campaign to get left-wing candidates selected by the Labour Parties. If Labour wins on May 7th, an organised left wing will have a majority in the Labour group.

• The Manifesto declares: 'A Labour GLC and Inner London Education Authority will resist any cuts and demand that the Tory Government provides the necessary finance to maintain and improve all council services. Understanding that the Tory Government does not listen to pleas but only responds to pressure, a Labour GLC and IEA will appeal to the Labour and Trade Union movement to take action, including industrial action, to support its stand.'

'Mass opposition to Tory policies led by a Labour GLC could become the focal

point of a national campaign against the cuts, for an immediate General Election and a Labour Government'.

So a Labour GLC does not promise 'socialism on the rates'. It promises to use County Hall as a platform for the fight against the Tories.

Strong grounds for any working class person to vote Labour on May 7th. But voting plus reliance on good intentions at County Hall is not enough.

40-odd Labour men and women on the GLC can never beat the Tories without an organised mass campaign behind them. Many of the left GLC candidates have already supported climbdowns from left manifestos on borough councils. And right now there is no clear pledge of Labour GLC policy on one close-to-home issue: the London Labour Party's call for an immediate 35 hour week for GLC employees.

Socialist Organiser says: Join the Labour Party. Work to get out the Labour vote. Help recruit to Labour. Organise the Left in the Labour Party on a clear fighting policy, to mobilise support behind the Labour GLC when it fights the Tories, and to lead independently if it wavers or cops out.

RED FLAG COUNTY

KEN LIVINGSTONE, a left wing minority voice in the present Greater London Council Labour Group, could well be the Leader of a new Labour GLC.

'How we start will be important. On May 29, the day after we take control of the Council officially, the Liverpool marchers reach London.'

'It's been agreed that the marchers should be accommodated in County Hall, as a gesture to show that Labour identifies with them.'

'Then, wherever there is an industrial dispute in London, we shall go down and support it. Local GLC facilities will be put at the disposal of the strikers.'

'The GLC should produce a regular newspaper, going out to every home in London, spelling out what it's doing, why, and what money it needs from the Government.'

Labour councils supporting firmly socialist policies and replacing their present leaderships'.

But so far left Labour councils have come up against the Government one by one. One by one they have said they're isolated, they've backed down, and they've made sure the next in line is isolated, too. Will a Labour GLC be prepared to be the FIRST to take on the Tories?

THE LESSONS OF LAMBETH

'WE HAVE to learn', Ken Livingstone says, 'from the successes and mistakes of Lambeth' — where left wing Labour councillors played a big national role in the anti-cuts fight, but this month buckled and went for 10% cuts.

'If I'd been on Lambeth council, I would have voted against the cuts package and for the full 57% rate increase to fund the programme'.

What about the working class anger against the supplementary rate rise in January?

'If the Labour group had gone for a large rate increase in 1980, it could have been avoided. But the pressure on them to keep the rate down led to a budget with a very narrow margin, and the Heseltine penalties were the last straw.'

'I think there's been a lack of understanding on the Left of the redistributive effect of rates'.

'Yes. Having set our policies, and having got a solid bloc within the GLC Labour group that isn't prepared to compromise on them, we have no alternative but to lead.'

'We've formed a Briefing group, analogous to the Tribune group in Parliament, and a majority of the next Labour Group has been attending it. The next Group will be predominantly Tribuneite, with all the strengths and weaknesses that implies.'

'Perhaps part of the failure in Lambeth was that they didn't make structural changes in the relationship of the Labour Group to the constituencies. I will be proposing in the new GLC Labour Group that we implement recorded voting from the word go, and that we open Group meetings to observers from each Constituency Labour Party and trade union.'

'At next year's Labour Party conference there should be a session set aside for a debate about what the Labour Group has done at County Hall. There is also an idea that the Regional Executive should have continuing working groups, with an input into GLC policy.'

Attack

'There will be no U-turns'.

What about the 'Social Democrats' — including Jim Daly, who is standing against Ken Livingstone in Paddington?

'If we have a public debate in Paddington, I shall attack the Tory for having voted to increase rents by 110% in four years, and attack Jim Daly for voting to increase them by 105% in two years. We'll have to get home to people that there are really two Tory candidates standing.'

'When we're canvassing in working-class areas, no-one mentions the Social Democrats. They mention getting the Tories out'.

The next step for the Left?

KEN Livingstone sees the GLC manifesto policies as 'something like the Alternative Economic Strategy. Not in any sense revolutionary — because the Labour Party isn't at that stage.'

'The problem isn't so much what your notional policies are, but whether you'll fight to implement them.'

The policies of the independent Tribuneite people who provide the majority of the London Labour Party may not be ideologically perfect, but they have a strong commitment to make sure they're implemented — while some more theoretical tendencies are unwilling to take on the leadership of the Labour Party at any level.

'You cannot have a revolutionary policy for a local council. A revolutionary base can only exist in industrial struggle, it cannot come from the council chamber or from Parliament.'

'The next stage should be a left Labour government, following Bennite policies. You can't jump from the Callaghan government to a perfect revolutionary position. You've got to go through a spectrum of left wing opinion'.



But if the Bennite government turns out like Allende in Chile, we won't get a chance to try the 'next stage' after that.

'You're right. It's a problem. It's a dilemma for the Left.'

'If the policies of a left Labour government are doomed to fail, then it's a question of whether it has the sort of leadership that can learn from its failures and develop and appeal for support, or whether it will retreat and make cuts as the only way to survive.'

'I think, on balance, that Benn would most probably take the first course'.

Despite his previous record? Despite his previous record?'

Areas

'If the Government tries to prevent our policies of, for example, subsidising British Rail, we shall go into the area of each Conservative MP in London, call public meetings, explain what we want to do, and organise.'

'Also, we should have a public meeting at least twice a year in every constituency, called by the GLC, to explain our policies.'

'We shall go into the areas where there are Tory councils cutting services. Take the example of Ealing, where the Council for Community Relations has had its grant cut because it denounced the police murder of Blair Peach. The GLC should step in and fund the CCR.'

'We should do the same with right-wing Labour councils — people should be able to look to a socialist GLC to defend their interests.'

'There's no way we can supplant the primary drive against the Government, which has to be industrial. But we can forge links with the trade unions.'

Parts

'There are two parts to our manifesto. We'll be cutting fares and school meal prices, and so on. And secondly, we'll use the whole structure of the GLC to support trade unionists in struggle throughout London — set up a trade union resource centre, identify the council with trade union struggles, and work with the trade unions to try to bring this Government down ahead of its time.'

'A socialist GLC could also provide an impulse as Labour Parties are drawing up their manifestos and selecting their candidates for the borough elections in 1982. A year after the election, in boroughs like Camden, Islington, Southwark, Hackney, and Wandsworth, we could have not just Labour control, but

HOW THE LEFT WON NORTH ISLINGTON

NORTH Islington has seen some of Labour's hardest left/right struggles over recent years. Steve Bundred, a left-winger, was named as North Islington's Labour candidate for the Greater London Council by the London Labour Party Executive after long battles — and six Islington borough councillors soon resigned from the Labour Party to announce that one of them, Pat Sheeran, will be standing against Steve Bundred as a 'social democrat'.

Steve Bundred told Socialist Organiser:

The struggle has been going on in North Islington for many years. The Left has now become strong enough to win — over 400 people voted for left candidates in the branch AGMs at the beginning of the year.

The activities of Islington Council since 1978 have disaffected many of the people that the Right traditionally relied on for support. Old age pensioners, for example, can no longer be turned out for the Right in the way they could, because Islington Council has been slashing pensioners' lunch clubs and social services provision.

Also many people who in the past had written the Labour Party off, and would have regarded themselves as vague non-aligned socialists, have realised that membership of the Party is essential simply to defend their own interests.

The Social Democratic candidate standing against me represents a small faction from the North Islington Labour Party. They've been defeated by socialists after years of struggle, and they've decided they can't stomach that defeat.

They're getting a great deal of help from the press. They've got no support, no organisation, in the constituency, but they're getting support from the press because it serves the inter-



Steve Bundred, Labour GLC candidate for N. Islington

ests of the press to see the Labour Party lose these elections.

So what next for the Left in North Islington?

The first perspective must be the 1982 Islington council: the sort of manifesto we'll have, the type of candidates we'll be putting forward.

But the Labour Party is not just a vehicle that selects councillors. It's a political campaigning body. Or it ought to be — it's not been in the past.

We need to mobilise the party and turn it into a political propaganda machine.

What about your role as a GLC councillor?

Our manifesto will bring us into direct conflict with the Government. There's no doubt about that. The role of the GLC, in my view, will be to tackle the Government head-on, and lead the political struggle in London.

What if the Tories threaten to use the courts against the GLC?

I think we defy the law. The labour movement has never achieved anything by meekly acquiescing. Major changes in the law have always come about as

a consequence of direct action, and that direct action in most cases has been in contravention of the previous laws.

The Labour GLC will be pledged to accountability. And I want to see it happen not just within the Party itself. I would like to see the Party going out to the electorate.

Because when we reach the point of confrontation, our chances of success will be very much strengthened if we have made sure that tenants' associations, community organisations, and so on, know what we've been doing in County Hall, and why we've been doing it.

When Poplar Council defied the Government in the 1920s, one of the ways they did it was through rent and rate strikes. That made the powers of the district auditor ineffective. The Government and the London County Council [as it was then] could be assured that tenants would refuse to pay unless the council advised them to — so there was really nothing they could do other than to reach an accommodation with the council.



London Labour GLC to a fight



London Labour GLC to a fight

London Labour GLC to a fight

London Labour GLC to a fight

London Labour GLC to a fight

London Labour GLC to a fight

GOVERNMENT HALL?

HOW LABOUR CAN CONTROL THE COUNCILLORS



4pc swing needed

The Greater London Council has 92 members, one for each parliamentary constituency in its area. The Tories won control in 1977. To win back the GLC, Labour needs a 4.1% swing in its favour compared with the May 1979 general election.

Help is specially needed in the marginal constituencies. Phone the Labour Party, [01-703 0833, for constituency contact addresses and phone numbers.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON, a member of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy's Local Government Action Committee, reports on the discussion about Labour councillors and Labour democracy at the March 22nd Socialist Organiser day-school.

'THE FIGHT for democracy and accountability in local government must not be forgotten', wrote Jon Lansman in SO 37. At the Socialist Organiser day-school, it became increasingly apparent that in fact it is rapidly moving to the top of the political agenda.

More and more ruling Labour Groups are making large-scale cuts, against the wishes of their local parties, and against the manifesto on which

on which they were elected.

If any new information makes them wish to vote in a manner contrary to the manifesto, then they must seek a joint meeting with the local Party — and 'no contrary policy shall be followed by any Group member without the express permission of the General Committee of Stirling District Labour Party'.

Stirling now also elects its Labour Group leader at a joint meeting of the Labour Group and the District Party. It is, of course, only logical that the party body that controls the manifesto and selection process should be given the power to elect the Labour Group leader.

London Labour has proposed some similar reforms.

Of course, there are large areas of local government

That apart, these bodies have other unsatisfactory aspects, and one possible solution would be to abolish the two-tier system of representation from GMCs and replace it with direct representation from the wards, union branches, women's sections, etc.

Again, Stirling has done this. According to Labour Group leader Mike Connarty, it has brought greatly increased attendance and improved the representative nature of the District Party.

It must be stressed that democracy and accountability cuts both ways. If we champion accountability, and the local Party agrees that a package of cuts is the only option open to the Labour Group, then progressive councillors will find themselves having to vote for unpalatable decisions.

This would not, of course, stop them from taking the argument out to the local party and the local community, and campaigning against the decision; indeed, it would be essential for them to do so. On particular points of principle where the councillor could never bring him/herself to support Party policy in the council chamber, s/he would have to consider the option of resigning.

To champion democracy and accountability only when it works in our favour is to play into the hands of the right wing opponents of reform.

The current position on local government reform is that the NEC has established a sub-committee to enquire into amending the model rules and standing orders of Labour Groups, inviting submissions from all party organisation. It then plans to bring forward 'detailed proposals' to the 1981 Annual Conference.

This would appear to be unwise, particularly following the defeat of a motion calling for reform at the recent Scottish Annual Meeting. This defeat was due to the abstention of the TGWU, and in fact not one union has policy on local government democracy yet.

Therefore, any such measures brought before Annual Conference this year are likely to be defeated heavily, and the issue will then be buried for three years with the re-introduction of the three year rule for constitutional issues.

If proposals are brought to the 1982 conference instead, it will allow 18 months to mount a rank and file campaign, greatly increasing the chances of success.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is circulating a model constitutional amendment this year which, in many ways, is far more conservative than the rule changes already agreed by either Stirling or London Labour Parties. CLPD is in great danger, in fact, of being left completely behind in the demands for democratic reform of local government structures.

The rearguard action against local government democracy is going to be even more bitter than the arguments over accountability of MPs, if only because instead of one elitist group, the PLP, we have 454 Labour Groups all attempting to preserve their privileged and elitist position. Nevertheless, we must remain confident that we can win this crucial reform.



PHOTO: TESSA HOWLAND (JFL)

...r's Manifesto was decided by a special conference [above] not by the usual cabal. And it commits a Labour against the Government like Poplar's fight in the 1920's [top].

or against the state?

ST Organiser standing in

are only one which the work-express its they should be period of pol-and the start tion to drive Parties out-ting new forc-of struggle.



m happens, the es an opport-ere promises h to be for-mands that an illor collabor-

the workers who elected them.

At the moment, of course, Marxist representatives are in a minority in Labour Groups. However, such is the pressure from central government that there is very little middle ground left.

Cuts

A few years ago, when the cuts were introduced by a Labour government, Coventry Labour councillor Harry Caplan said angrily: 'You people don't know the half of it. This is a snowstorm before the blizzard. We'll all be Tories or Trots before this lot is finished'.

Cllr Harry Caplan is not one of the 12 Coventry rebel councillors expelled once

again from the Labour Group — but perhaps it's not too late.

Ross Catlin is standing in Boughton Green Ward, Northampton.

'I am standing to further the campaign of the Trades Council, whose policy for 18 months now has been to oppose rate and rent increases as well as the cuts.

The Labour Manifesto does not fully reflect this militant stand, but it does say Labour will use all means at its disposal to force the Government to pay up for the services we require.

My Labour Party branch will also be publicising the Liverpool to London Jobs march at the same time as electioneering. And I shall argue for an immediate 35 hour week for council employees.

they were elected. So the campaign for democratic reform in local government forges a very close, visible, and relevant link between Labour's constitutional debates and the immediate political issues.

At the dayschool, speaker after speaker referred to the issue in general debate, and the workshop on Labour Party democracy concentrated almost exclusively on it. The need for the accountability of councillors was realised by all, and there was fairly clear agreement about how that accountability should be achieved.

Signed pledges and loyalty oaths were dismissed as not worth the paper upon which they are written. As some of those who have freely signed such a pledge in the GLC elections prove, little bits of paper are not going to stand in the way of the determined careerist.

At present, Labour councillors are only bound to abide by Group standing orders, not by party policy — surely a strange set of priorities. The solution, then, must be to write into those standing orders a commitment to follow party policy.

This has already been done by the Labour Group on Stirling District Council. In May 1980, the National Executive Committee agreed a series of amendments to their standing order, so that councillors are bound by the manifesto

democracy which remain unchartered. In Stirling, for instance, although the Group leader is chosen by a wider franchise, the selection of nominations to civic offices (including chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of committees) still lies firmly in the hands of the Labour Group. And the local party does not have full control over Group discipline and the withdrawal of the whip.

Councillors in Manchester, Bristol, Coventry, Southwark and other areas have had the whip withdrawn for voting against cuts implemented by the Labour Group, despite Party policy locally being against the cuts, and national policy being for 'a united fight... on a firm no-cuts position' (ironically, an emergency resolution moved by Ted Knight at the 1980 Annual Conference).

It also emerged very clearly from our discussions on the 22nd that we need reform of the party bodies to which councillors are to be accountable.

In many instances, district parties, county parties, and local government committees are totally unrepresentative. In Lambeth, for example, the majority of the delegates from at least one GMC to the Local Government Committee are also councillors. There is clearly little point in making councillors accountable to another body which they also control!

Where to begin

**Socialist
Organiser
DEBATE**

by John Watts

VLADIMIR Derer's article in *Socialist Organiser* 32 raised issues of strategy and tactics that have been the subject of debate in the socialist movement from its early days. He said, "The programme of the left, at any given stage, must correspond to the existing level of consciousness of the people to whom we are appealing" and that "... people can be organised only around such demand as they are prepared to support".

In his excellent reply, John O'Mahony correctly answered this line of argument by saying that the left must base itself upon "an overall analysis of society and a basic historical programme for the working class to create a socialist society". He went on to explain, in very clear terms, how this involved the use of transitional demands, rooted in the needs of the working class.

I would like to develop these ideas in the form of a critique of Vladimir's method.

In any given struggle the left has to represent the

of the working class which, in this period of the dominance of the multinationals, is an urgent and practical necessity in day-to-day struggles.

There are worse examples. The French Communist Party, in calling for an end to immigration, is undoubtedly putting forward something which "corresponds to the existing consciousness" of big sections of the French working class. But where does this take the French CP and the French working class? Along the racist road of blaming their problems on the immigrant workers!

Sectarian

Obviously Vladimir does not think along these lines — but this is the logic of his argument. The least one can say is that his method gives no guidelines as to how to combat such wrong ideas. Rather than using Vladimir's formulation as a guide to action, the left must, when it sees the existing level of consciousness leading to

arguments of John O'Mahony. On the contrary, the concept of transitional demands (and of course the transitional programme) is based upon the recognition of the need to get workers into "real movement". And is it true that we can complacently say, as Vladimir does (perhaps unwittingly) that anti-Tory battles "are already going on"? There is a crisis of strategy and tactics for the struggle against the Tory government. This crisis is impeding the real movement of workers. There is a growing awareness that traditional methods of struggle (e.g. those which sufficed in the period of capitalist upswing) are inadequate in this present period. Some sections of the class are reluctant to go into action because of this.

The left, through trying to learn from the historic and international experience of the working class, is seeking to resolve that crisis. This means suggesting demands and methods of struggle which are, in many cases, in conflict with the existing level of consciousness.

class's low level of consciousness.

Moreover, Vladimir's prescriptions cannot really be put into effect. How do we know what are the demands around which workers are "already prepared to struggle"? As O'Mahony demonstrates, this can only be determined in the process of struggle. If we say in advance of the struggle that the workers are unwilling to support certain demands or methods of struggle, even if these correspond to their interests and needs, we are running the risk of holding back the struggle. Thus, far from being a method which leads to the stimulation of the real movement, Vladimir's "lifeless formulae" are likely to lead to the inhibition of struggle.

Suppress

The weakness of comrade Vladimir's line of argument is further shown by what I would like to think is a slip of the typewriter: "Only if those who oppose major social reform resort

self-determination. This involves the suppression of the most elementary civil liberties and the use of torture and other forms of repression. This is not confined to the six counties. The Prevention of Terrorism Act and other similar measures are in operation in Britain itself.

Yesterday, the British ruling class used these methods over half the world. Every conceivable form of repression has been used to keep the jolly old British empire safe for imperialist exploitation. All this was done to meet a challenge to part of British imperialism's interests. With a record like this, isn't it obvious that when the loss of the whole of its power is posed the British capitalist class will use every method at its disposal.

Unfortunately, the mass of the British working class do not see things in these terms. Bourgeois ideology has mystified the nature of the struggles of the Irish people and other liberation movements. This is why it is doubly important to have solidarity with such struggles as part of

JOHN WATTS continues the debate on socialist strategy, with another reply to Vladimir Derer's article in *Socialist Organiser* no. 32.

means coming into conflict with existing consciousness.

But this is not all utopian or living in a fantasy world. Every factory occupation, every militant picket line, every refusal to be intimidated by the police and every militant demonstration, because they are based on the real movement of the working class, can take the workers along this road of understanding.

Finally, I do not think that our differences with Vladimir are anything like as big as he appears to believe. His own practice is in contradiction with his arguments. Vladimir and other comrades of CLPD have played a very important role inside the Labour Party. In the early days of this struggle, it was by no means the case that it "corresponded" to the existing level of "consciousness of the people" to whom Vladimir and co. were appealing. On the contrary, Vladimir and the other comrades of the CLPD had to wage a long educational struggle to convince people of the relevance, importance and possibility of this struggle. Sometimes, it might have appeared that the comrades of the CLPD were putting forward "lifeless formulae" and that they lived in a "fantasy world" when they argued for such things as the mandatory reselection of MPs.

We are all very glad that Vladimir and his comrades did not lose heart and confine their efforts to those political struggles which corresponded to the existing level of consciousness. Instead they helped to change that consciousness, and the left is in a much better position because they did.

Today, Vladimir is very active in the East European Solidarity Campaign. I am not at all convinced that this campaign corresponds to the existing level of consciousness of people in Britain.

I believe that the majority of people in Britain — even the majority of those people to whom this campaign addresses itself — have a crude anti-communist understanding of, for instance, what is taking place in Poland today. Yet this campaign is vitally necessary both for the workers of Eastern Europe and for the workers of Britain (so that they can begin to learn from the experiences of the anti-bureaucratic struggle in the post-capitalist regimes of Eastern Europe).

Vladimir undoubtedly understands this, and this is why he is active in this campaign.



ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

Democratic reform is widely accepted in the Labour Party now — but it started with a minority

interests and need of the whole working class as opposed to those of a section of the class. This seemingly abstract statement has profound practical implications. Let us take a very topical issue: import controls.

Unfortunately, large sections of the British working class are "prepared to support" and are prepared to "be organised around such demands." And this does, indeed, correspond to the "existing level of consciousness."

But the left has to wage a struggle against the demand for import controls under the capitalist system. Why? Because such a demand counterposes the (apparent) interests of a section of the working class (the British) to those of the international proletariat. The call for import controls unites the workers and capitalists of one country against the workers of another. It is a demand to "export" unemployment to the workers of other countries. It prevents, in a very real way, the international unity

support for demands which are opposed to the international and historic interests of the working class, be prepared to fight tooth and nail against that consciousness.

There is the germ of a correct idea in Vladimir's argumentation. It is not particularly new. In arguing against sectarian currents in the infant German socialist movement, Marx said: "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes." (Letter to W. Bracke, May 5th 1875) and Marxists do consider it axiomatic that consciousness changes mainly through involvement in mighty class actions. And it is true that there are some to whom Vladimir's strictures can be applied — a classic example being the SLL (forerunner of the WRP) giving out a leaflet entitled "Why we are not marching" to one of Britain's biggest ever anti-imperialist demonstrations in October 1968.

But none of this applies to the supporters of *Socialist Organiser*, nor to the

This is not living in a fantasy world — it is trying to find a way forward for the real movement of workers. When the left puts forward the idea of factory occupations as a method of struggle against unemployment it is in response to a situation where the "normal" methods have proven to be inadequate. It is the oh-so-practical reformists who are holding back the real movement of workers by trying to prevent the adoption of such demands of the grounds that they are too advanced.

Risk

Comrade Vladimir's formulations leave out the vital question of the leadership of the class. The existing leadership of the class — primarily the reformists and the Stalinists — work consciously to hold back the real movement of the working class. Through his one-sided formulation of the problem, comrade Vladimir would blame this onto the working

to extra-parliamentary resistance will it be possible to convince people that extra-parliamentary means are necessary. It is living in a fantasy world to put in that qualification "if".

The real world consists of Chile, Germany, Spain, Italy..... the real world does not contain one single example of the ruling class giving up power without using every method of struggle to maintain its dominance.

Rather than being an exception to this rule, British capitalism is a typical (maybe classical) example. It is the height of irresponsibility for the left to say otherwise. Only in this way can we help to prepare the working class for the struggles which will face it.

One does not have to be a Marxist to draw this conclusion. It can be drawn from purely empirical experience. Today, the British ruling class is engaged in far-reaching extra-parliamentary methods of struggle to suppress the desire of the Irish people to complete their struggle for

the programme of the left.

This not only helps these struggles, it also lays the basis for educating the working class on these questions.

The main problem with the way Vladimir poses the problem is that by the time the British ruling class is actually engaged in extra-parliamentary struggle it will probably be too late to convince the working class to respond in kind.

Violence

Of course, we will not persuade the mass of the British working class of this necessity by propaganda alone. But this must inform our line in today's struggles. We will prepare increasing numbers of workers for this eventuality if, here and now, we introduce into the struggles of today the concepts of workers' self-defence and if we refuse to accept the sanctity of bourgeois property forms and the monopoly of violence by the state. This

Two more join hunger strike

TWO MORE Republican prisoners have joined the two already on hunger strike in the Maze prison in support of their demand to be recognised as political prisoners and not be considered as criminals. Ray McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara began their hunger strike on March 23rd, following Bobby Sands and Frankie Hughes.

The hunger strike began again at the beginning of March, following the British government's refusal to implement the 'step-by-step' agreement they offered in December to get the

original hunger strike called off.

It has been subject to an almost total press blackout, with British ministers trying to pretend that it is not taking place. This will be more difficult after the forthcoming Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election, where Bobby Sands will be standing in order to draw attention to the H Block struggle.

Both the other possible Republican candidates, Bernadette McAliskey and Noel Maguire (brother of the previous MP, Frank Maguire) stood down in

favour of Sands, who is likely to beat the only other candidate, Official Unionist Harry West.

The National H Blocks/Armagh committee has again been coordinating the protests in support of the hunger strikers on an all-Ireland basis. Callum McRae spoke to its international organiser, Vincent Doherty, about the reasons for the prisoners' fight and the campaign to support them.

This is a struggle about the right of the Irish people to resist the British presence in Ireland, not about prison

conditions. If Britain can effectively criminalise that right it is only a short step to the criminalisation of all opposition to the British presence in Ireland.

So basically a victory for the prisoners would signal the end of the criminalisation policy which has been vigorously pursued by both the present Tory government and the Labour government which preceded it.

The criminalisation policy was part of a package which included Ulsterisation, in other words a low profile for the British Army

and a prominent profile for the locally-recruited security forces — the RUC and the UDR. Alongside Ulsterisation there was 'normalisation', canvassing international opinion around the notion that Ulster was quite a normal bourgeois democratic society which is being opposed by a handful of criminals.

The three were part of one package.

Bobby Sands' candidature for Fermanagh and South Tyrone will clearly make the election centre on the H Block/Armagh issue. Obviously to some extent

this marks a new departure by the Republican Movement in allowing a candidate to go forward and actually participate in an election campaign — certainly a new departure in the conflict over the last 12 years.

Even two years ago, when in June 1979 Bernadette McAliskey fought an election campaign basically on the H Block issue, the Republican Movement at a rank and file level was at best lukewarm and at worst positively hostile. The Republican Movement launched a very sharp attack on her campaign.



DEREK SPEIRS (IFL)

Hoover: stop the lies!

by Ian McLeish

AFTER YEARS of retreat, the start of a fightback. Workers at Hoover, Cambuslang, are resisting the company's latest job cuts plan. And so far the company has been forced to postpone a week's shut-

down of the works planned for March 23rd.

The bosses' plan, presented on March 4th, is:

- A reduced range of products,
- Shutting the factory one week in four,
- 418 more jobs to go — which would mean the fact-

ory going down to 2,300 workers. It was 5,400 in 1975.

In response, Hoover workers are demanding:

- New products should come to Cambuslang,
- No compulsory redundancies,
- Full details of the company's plans.

They have, however, accepted voluntary redundancies — and 520 people have volunteered and been accepted. This is 520 jobs sold, and a weaker position for the workers still in the factory.

But anger remains strong. Convenor Eddie McAvoy told Socialist Organiser:

"Previous plans were accepted on the basis that they would give us job protection, but they conned us. Management have just been lying."

"Rutherglen Constituency Labour Party has sent a letter opposing forced redundancies, and giving their complete support for whatever action we take. Our MP has also pledged support. The AUEW District Committee and all the unions in the works, including the staff unions, are united in fighting management's plans."

"We also need more organisation and coordination between different factories. The strategy of all multinationals is the same. We could organise our strategy if we all sent out information to one another."

"We need some sort of multinational shop stewards' organisation."

National Organisation of Labour Students annual conference: Manchester, April 8-9-10. All SO supporters attending, especially London supporters who need transport, please phone Steve Macarthur, [01-] 226 9627.

Hands off workers' Poland

continued from page 1

that there is no solution in Poland alone. An anti-bureaucratic revolution begun in Poland will spread — or the surviving bureaucracy will stifle the Polish workers' movement.

The progressive struggle for Polish independence will set fire to similar movements in the other occupied East European countries, or it will be stifled by the Kremlin.

It is probably true that most Polish militants know this. That is why a man like Walesa, who has contributed so much to the working class movement, now plays the role he does, of a brake on the movement.

Yet there is no way of avoiding the choice. The central reason why Russia has felt able to hold back has been the apparent stability of the Polish bureaucratic state. Maybe, as in 1956, they could sort it out themselves.

Now there is reported to be a growing ferment in the lower ranks of the three-million strong 'party' (two million of whom are in Solidarnosc), focused around demands for 'party' democracy. The spirit of Solidarnosc is now beginning to infect the 'party' itself.

But if the 'party' is shaken, Russia will certainly invade. It is being shaken.

Meanwhile, in the impasse, the political sewers are opening and polluting Poland: anti-semitic rallies have been held and anti-semitism is being used against — as in 1968 — in inter-bureaucratic faction fighting.

During the crisis Stefan Olszanski, a one-time liberal bureaucrat, accused Solidarnosc of 'seeking to seize power in Poland from the party'.

The tragedy of Poland and the mortal danger of annihilation which faces the Polish labour movement lies in the fact that while the entire situation pushes Solidarnosc in that direction, Solidarnosc is not yet trying to take power. Self-proclaimed Polish nationalists like Walesa are not yet ready to challenge Russian power. Solidarnosc is not ready to go forward, and is marking time instead, patching up compromises that are inherently unstable.

But within the ranks of the 13 million who struck work at Solidarnosc's call, a political ferment is taking place. Until the last moment the compromisers around Walesa were, it seems, in a minority. What happens in Poland will be determined by whether or not the militants can clarify and organise themselves in time.

THE MARCH 21st conference showed a net surplus of £19.80 after putting £100 towards helping comrades from Scotland and Yorkshire with their fares.

So that was £9.90 towards our fund. We've had £36.14 in profits from the social on the evening of the 21st, with more to come as we collect the rest of the ticket money.

Standing orders in March totalled £214.70, and other donations and contributions, £162.60.

Overall total: £423.34 — £76.66 short of our £500

FUND

target.

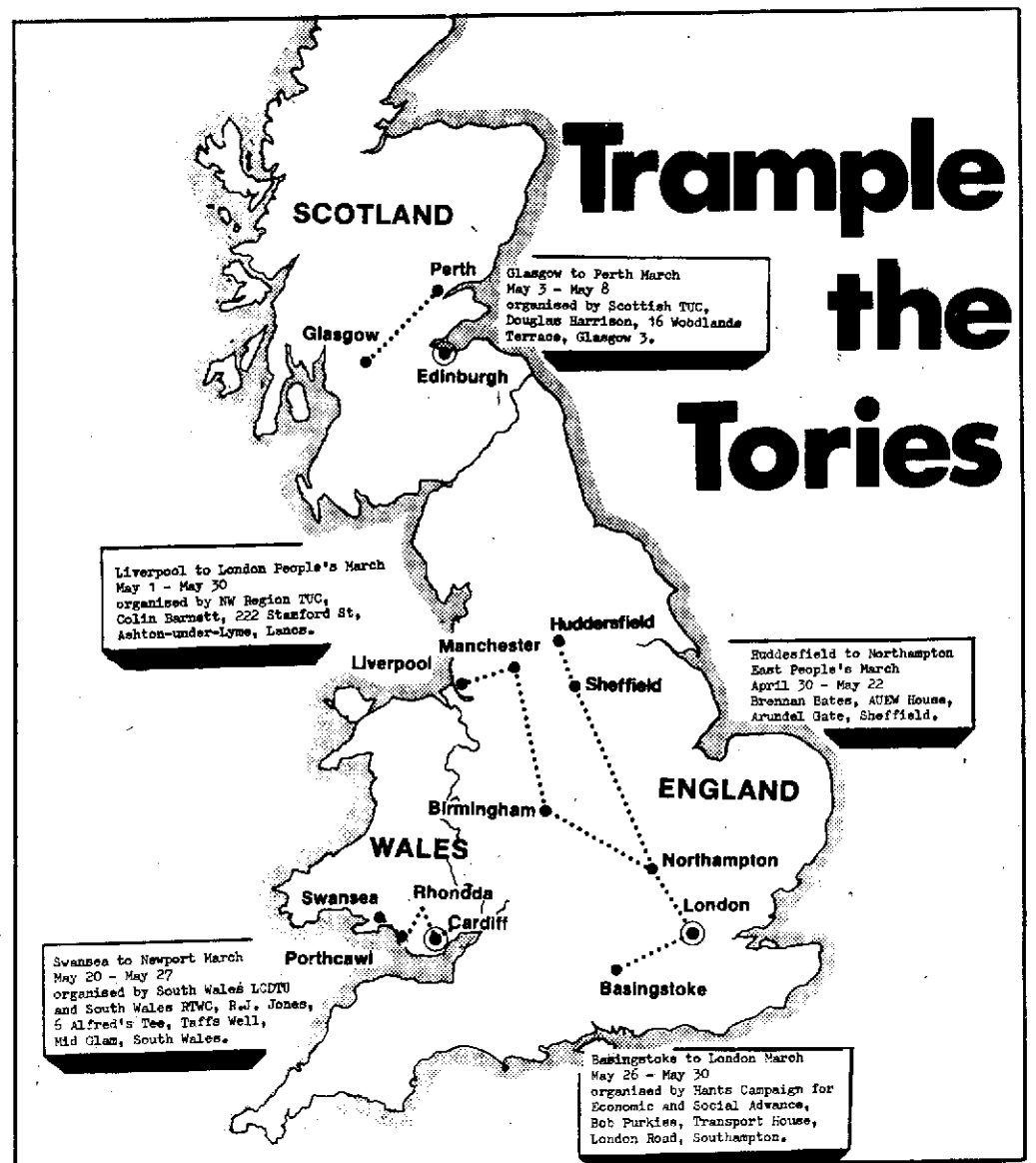
We need to make up that £76 on the April fund! Of course, travel to the March 21/22 events, and to the many demonstrations and conferences during April, is a big drain on comrades' finances.

So: dig deep. And go out especially to the readers who

WON't be at events like the Nationality Bill demonstration on the 5th, the 'Hands off Workers' Poland' protest on the 12th, and the El Salvador march on the 25th.

Try to persuade them that if they're not contributing that way, they should contribute by helping Socialist Organiser publicise and explain the struggles represented by those demonstrations.

Send money to: Socialist Organiser Fund, or Labour Movement Press Defence Fund, both c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



JOHN LISTER reports on a militant cuts conference

STOP THE EXCUSES! START THE FIGHTBACK

'Today's conference is very different from the endless one-day conferences on the cuts called by the union officials.'

'They blame 'apathy' — and particularly the 'apathy' of women workers — for their own refusal to fight. Yet women, searching for means to develop their struggles, are leaving behind them the union bureaucrats in their swamp of pessimism and gloom.'

'Today we are not going to hear their excuses for inaction. We are going to hear experiences of struggles against the cuts.'

With these words Anne Marie Sweeney, a delegate from Oxford Trades Council, opened the afternoon session of the Cuts Conference jointly convened by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement and Socialist Organisation.

And indeed the 300-strong conference did bring together a unique wealth of experience in the struggle for action to stem the Tory onslaught on jobs, conditions and services.

A major discussion point was the fight for rate and rent strikes to oppose the average 30% increases being forced through by Heseltine, and, in many cases, by Labour councils doing the Tories' job for them.

There were reports from hospital occupations at Longworth and St Benedict's; of nursery occupations and campaigns; from the fight to defend the

school meals service; of the problems in defending Direct Labour Organisations; and from the battle against the right wing of the teaching unions, to defend education.

Such contributions by no means simply idealised the struggles taking place; in almost every case they attempted to assess the

solutions: This is a statement not of the future, but of the situation here and now.

'We must fight to kick out the Tory government. But we must also fight for a government of a radically different sort — a workers' government. That is not the perspective of the Labour leadership.'



The conference adopted a detailed policy document

relative strengths, weaknesses and political problems of these actions. Some raised questions which time did not allow to be properly answered.

But the conference did vote to endorse the general line of a booklet submitted by the Organising Committee, incorporating proposals for action on rate/rent strikes, nurseries, education, and the NHS.

Crisis

'DO WE want to fight the Tories now, or do we want to leave it all to someone else?'

This was how John Bloxam introduced the morning session on the crisis of local government.

Piecemeal reforms are not on. Capitalism offers no

Instead of arguing that the choice is one between capitalism and socialism, Bloxam argued, Labour politicians are pretending to workers that the 'choice' is between cuts or rate and rent increases!

Pointing to the link between the cuts struggle and the fight for accountability of Labour councillors as well as MPs, Bloxam emphasised that the real issue now facing Labour's right wing is not to reverse the anti-cuts motions carried at last year's conference — which they have ignored — but to reverse the democratic reforms which seek to make them answerable to the membership.

Ray Davies, expelled from the Labour group on Mid Glamorgan Council for his opposition to the cuts, exposed the hollowness of

need Labour councillors?'

Dave Spencer, a prospective Labour County Council candidate, pointed to the expulsion of 12 Coventry councillors for opposing rate/rent increases.

Camden councillor Phyl Turner sounded a rather different note, explaining to the conference the background to the decision he and nine other left councillors had taken to climb down from a stand of opposing cuts and rent rises.

Law

'From my point of view, councils like Camden council cannot continue to operate unless they go outside the law', he argued.

'There are a lot of frightened people in the Labour group, scared of personal surcharges and the threat of disqualification.'

In the short term he had seen no alternative but to vote for a 'compromise' package of rent rises and cuts; but, he said,

'The Left must organise to get left wing councillors elected. Then maybe next year we will stand more chance.'

He was answered by Graham Shurety of the Camden Labour Left, who underlined the fact that:

'Phyl Turner focused all the time on the debates within the Labour Group. That fight has our full support.'

But you must also look outwards to the movement of the working class coming into struggle — the unions and tenants' associations.

From Lambeth, councillor Neil Turner showed how the latest cuts and rate increases had proved the November Lambeth conference right — the supplementary rate had not bought time but defused the struggle.

Knight had helped lead the fight against cuts in 1976 — but built no mass base of support. Now the local Party is dominated by the council elite — pushing through cuts.

'We must learn the lessons of Lambeth — and copy the kind of work done by the Camden Labour Left: linking up with the community, local Labour Parties and unions before the fight gets under way.'

THE NECESSITY to link up the various struggles against the Tory public service cuts was referred to by many speakers.

Eric Jones from the Lancashire School Meals campaign emphasised the importance of linking action by school meals workers with parents and with fellow trade unionists in local government and in the supply firms.

Anne McKinley, from the Oxford Nursery Campaign, charted the growth and development of the fight to defend nurseries from the time of the first occupation — at South Oxford nursery, three years ago in 1978.

She pointed to the development of the overall Oxfordshire Campaign Against the Cuts as one way in which the nursery fight had helped broaden the resistance — and also to the initiatives which had led to the formation of the National Child Care Campaign.

Colin Kenny spoke of the campaign to save London's medical schools from heavy



Veteran campaigner Charlie Taylor described the rent struggles in St Pancras from 1957 to '61.

cutbacks or closure, and emphasised the necessity of linking this fight to other campaigns throughout the London NHS.

And Mick O'Sullivan from Haringey DLO spoke of the fight for joint shop stewards committees of council workers to coordinate resistance to the Tory attack on direct works.

But a harsh reminder of the determination of the union bureaucracy to prevent such links being forged and to isolate sections of workers that do fight the cuts was brought by victimised National Union of Teachers militant Vanessa Wiseman.

Wiseman, President of Lambeth Trades Council, has been victimised along with five other Lambeth NUT members for refusing an instruction by NUT officials to withdraw branch support from the recent Lambeth Week of Action against the cuts.

Dented

This action by the NUT bureaucracy is part and parcel of its betrayal of struggles on pay and against the cuts.

But it has not dented Wiseman's determination to fight on:

'We are still against working people's living standards being attacked by whatever means. We will fight on for affiliation of the NUT to the Labour Party. We hope you will invite us to come and speak to meetings in your areas.'

Developing further on the role of the NUT leadership, Peter Flack, moving the conference proposals for action on education, pointed to the necessity to democratise the teachers' unions.

'Who are the NUT Executive responsible to? Who do they represent?'

'We must fight against restrictive rules, and fight for a programme of action.'

'To fight to defend education today is to fight against the capitalist system.'

TENANTS HAVE THE POWER!

From the lively discussion on rent and rate strikes a number of key elements emerged that are vital to build such actions.

Alasdair Jamison of the Basingstoke Tenants' Action Group underlined the necessity for extensive propaganda — in the form of bulletins, broadsheets and frequent estate meetings — not simply to persuade tenants of their strength, but also to make clear the limited powers at the disposal of the councils.

'We need to show that the struggle is a difficult one for the council, as well as the tenants.'

Linked to this fight to build the confidence of the tenants is the necessity to prepare well in advance the organisation of pickets against any possible evictions, and to seek out industrial support from local unions both in local government and in local industry.

The immediacy of the struggle means, as John Docherty from Paisley pointed out, that the tenants' organisations are now emerging in a new form, in which political leadership is necessary to meet the growing awareness that jobs and living standards can only be defended under a planned socialist economy.

And the reactionary role of the right wing 'mafia'



Rents campaigners march in Basingstoke — March 14th.

who run most Labour Groups was exposed by many speakers, including Coventry tenants' leader Les Bennett, who condemned the expulsion of 12 councillors from the Group for their 'no rate/rent increase' stand.

It became very clear that the fight must be taken beyond the tenants' movements, into a fight for new leadership and accountability within both the unions and the Labour Party, if the necessary movement is to be built.

'ONLY FEAR CAN MAKE US WEAK'

THE BIGGEST ovation of the day was given to Longworth Hospital occupation committee speaker Kate White, who made a moving appeal for action to defend the young, the old and the sick who cannot fight for themselves.

Condemning the inactivity of union leaders and the role of Labourite Area Health Authority chairperson Lady McCarthy, Kate asked:

'What has happened to the top ones in the Labour Party? They're all in with management, and more like the Tories than the Tories themselves.'

Though the Longworth occupation is at present suspended, the fight there is far from over, she stressed.

Her questions about the Labour Party leadership were amplified by Longworth Occupation supporter Dr Ken Williamson.

As a GP and a member of MPU/ASTMS, Williamson has played an important role in the fight to defend not only Longworth, but other hospitals in the area.

Yet for his pains he has been barred from joining the Oxford City Labour Party — of which AHA

chairperson Lady McCarthy is a leading member.

Oxford Labour Party apparently extends a welcome to those who close hospitals — not to those who fight to keep them open!

From the defeated occupation at St Benedict's hospital, Andrea Campbell stressed the main warning for militants in the health service.

'If you're going into occupation, don't rely on the bureaucracy, whatever you do. They won't do anything.'

'We had hospital workers who would have walked out in our support. But they were never called out.'

'The only reason people are weak is because they are frightened. It is up to us to provide them with leadership.'

'Let's end the defeats like St Benedict's, Etwall, and the raid at Longworth.'

Both Andrea Campbell and Geoff Williams, NUPE convenor in University of Wales Hospital, Cardiff, stressed the importance of health unions adopting a policy of no cover for unfilled vacancies in the fight to prevent the rundown of facilities and staffing levels.

PHOTOS: FIONA MENZIES

THE PRESS TV and radio have kept virtually silent about the lock-out at Southampton docks which could lead to a national docks strike from April 6th.

At the beginning of March, the Southampton dockers started a series of 24 hour lightning strikes in support of their pay claim. After the second of these they received a letter signed by the Dock Manager, Mr Williams, stating that they would not be allowed to restart work until they agreed to stop all industrial action.

Strike

The dispute has escalated to the point where the whole future of the National Dock Labour Scheme is at stake. Under this Scheme, all disciplinary measures have to be decided by the local Dock Labour Board — a statutory joint committee made up of equal numbers of unions and management.

Williams admits that by

acting unilaterally he is breaking the law, but he refuses to back down.

If the bosses can get away with this, the whole system on which unionisation in the docks has been built up over 30 years will be in ruins.

Since the lock-out started, the employers (the British Transport Docks Board) have upped the stakes even more by demanding 200 redundancies. And all the evidence is that the Tories are behind this piece of union-busting.

The BTDB, which runs Southampton, is a state-owned company. Southampton has suffered less de-manning than most ports, as its container traf-

ic has expanded. Its shop stewards organisation is very strong, and is now central to the unofficial National Port Shop Stewards Committee.

So a victory for the employers in Southampton would have a big effect nationally.

The near-total blackout in the media suggests direct government intervention, and is in complete contrast to the near-hysterical reaction that any 'trouble in the ports' usually provokes in the popular press.

Maybe the government, having got a bloody nose from the Liverpool dockers last year and the miners recently, are not too con-

fident of winning.

The T&G made the dispute official straight away, but has opposed any attempt to spread the action outside Southampton.

Area

The officials threatened to withdraw official backing if pickets were sent outside the area. And they have refused to call a national delegate conference, claiming that the issue does not warrant it.

But the dockers have ignored the officials' threats, and are energetically spreading the struggle. All the Freightliner/railway container terminals

and other deep sea ports have been picketed since March 14th. So have the smaller ports such as Harwich, Ipswich and Felixstowe, which had been accepting work diverted from Southampton.

Container haulage drivers in the well-organised areas such as Liverpool and Birmingham have given full support to the dockers. But in weaker areas like East Anglia, drivers have been crossing the picket lines, and trailers loaded with deep sea container boxes were getting out of the country via the Ro-Ro service from Harwich until the seamen there said they would refuse to sail with the boxes on board. This has now been endorsed officially by the National Union of Seamen Executive.

Meanwhile the four BT-DB ports in South Wales struck for the day on Thursday March 26th, and the National Port Shop Stewards Committee has called for an all out national strike from Monday 6th.

This play centre won't close

by Jayne Atkins

On Friday 27 March, parents and supporters occupied Beal St play centre in Leicester. They timed their entry to coincide with the finish of the children's farewell party at 3.55pm — the County Council planned to shut down the centre from 4pm.

The play centre staff were given a notice that it was a legal occupation, and notices were posted on the doors and windows. Staff continued with their usual duties until the last child had been collected, then left.

A local policeman came by, read the notice, and said, 'Oh, that's fine. Good luck!'

On the Saturday morning two councillors arrived to offer support. Nearly 200 people came to visit the play centre in the first two days, and support is growing.

Parents and supporters are asking that the County Council should continue to fund the play centre, or, if that fails, that the City Council should take it over.

They are holding a public meeting at the play centre on Thursday 2nd April at 7pm, and planning an open day on the Saturday afternoon.

Please send messages of support and donations to Beal St Action Committee, c/o 1 Pegasus Close, Leicester.

No sell-out at Ansell's

by Jim Denham

ANSSELLS brewery workers are stepping up their action after two months on strike to save thousands of jobs and force the re-opening of the Aston Cross brewery in Birmingham.

They're sending out teams of pickets to the Allied Brewery at Romford, East London, the main source of scab beer coming into the Midlands.

At a delegate conference on Friday 27th, representatives from every Allied brewery (with the one exception of Romford) agreed to limit supplies to wholesalers at last year's levels, to ensure that their production is not used to break the Ansell's strike.

Plans were also discussed for one day solidarity strikes at the other breweries. And additional pressure is being put on the Allied bosses by the decision of the National Port Shop Stewards to black all Allied imports or exports. (40% of Allied's profits come from imported wines and spirits).

The strikers are determined to fight for all 1000 jobs and not to accept any of the sell-out deals being peddled by the T&G officials. To drive home this message, the delegate conference demanded that T&G Divisional Officer Doug Fairbairn be stripped of responsibility for handling the dispute.

Messages of support, donations etc. to Joe Bond, 23 Barnet Rd, Erdington, Birmingham 29.

Women's picket at Royal Pride

by Maura Jones

WOMEN'S Fightback and Women's Voice will be supporting a women's picket at the Royal Pride furniture factory in Manchester on Wednesday 1st April.

The Royal Pride workers, mainly women, have been on strike since 27th February because management will not recognise the union and pay the nationally negotiated pay award. They are picketing every working day, as well as sending delegations to other factories to win support.

Messages of support and donations to J. Davidson, Flat 37, Anson Rd, Victoria Park, Manchester 14.

BL goes for the kill

FOR THE last three years, the management at British Leyland have set the pace for other employers in attacking rank and file trade unionism and eroding shop floor rights.

They have been aided at every turn by the cowardice and bureaucracy of the national union officials — and especially by the leaders of the AUEW.

However, rank and file militancy has not been destroyed in BL. Despite the sell-outs, the shop floor has repeatedly demonstrated its resilience and willingness to fight.

Now, in close collaboration with the AUEW leadership, BL has unveiled its 'final solution' to shop floor militancy.

The Socialist Organiser Longbridge bulletin reports:

BL Cars management have brought out a proposed procedure agreement 'for discussion'. If it is implemented it will take away all the power we have

left on the shop floor.

Para 4.2 on employee representation says, "Shop stewards shall be elected to represent definite constituencies". This means that each agreed section will have one steward, who may have to represent several hundred workers.

Para 4.10 states that members of each union shall elect one steward as senior steward. The company out of the goodness of their hearts will organise secret ballots for these elections 'on request'.

But this is nothing compared with Section 6 on 'Joint Works Committees'.

These would be joint union-management bodies, consisting of the senior steward from each union and an equal number of management representatives. This is old-fashioned participation — only ten times worse.

The Joint Works Committee will have all the power in the plant. It will be the final plant stage in the procedure,

and there will be no function for the Joint Shop Stewards at all.

If you think that is bad, read on: there is worse to come.

There would be a new national negotiating committee to replace the present Joint Negotiating Committee. The union side would be 11 full-time national officers (one from each union in BL cars), and 12 others. These other would either be local full time officials or Joint Works Committee members.

The new negotiating committee would do all the national negotiating and in practice would be the final stage for dealing with local issues as well.

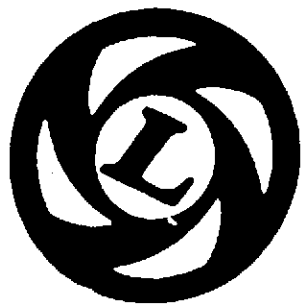
If management could not get their way on the Joint Works Committee, they could take the dispute to the national negotiating committee. It would be the 'external' [off-plant] stage for nearly everything except sackings.

The new committee would have all the power and would be accountable to nobody. There would be a consultative body of senior stewards to which the negotiating committee would report, but that's all.

We all know what the present Joint Negotiating Committee has done to our wages. The new one would be a lot less democratic, and it would not just control wages but nearly everything else as well.

Appendix B caps it all. It is headed 'BL Cars agreed check-off procedure', and part of it states: "The Company reserves the right to discontinue the operation of the agreement in the event of industrial action which is in breach of the collective agreement".

This means that if we take any industrial action — even an overtime ban — the company will stop the check-off. The unions won't get any money, and the officials will



be around telling us to stop it before you can say Derek Robinson.

At the AUEW senior stewards' meeting last week, everyone was totally opposed to the new agreement — except full time officer Ken Cure, who refused to allow a vote on it!

He admitted that he had already discussed the plan with the company and had only raised very minor objections.

The T&G senior stewards have voted against any change. But we cannot rely on the T&G officials. Only the rank and file can defeat this bosses' charter.

Ballot-rigging exposed in Boilermakers

by Lol Duffy (Boilermakers' shop steward, Cammell Laird)

THE NEW Stateman's recent exposure of rigging in the Boilermakers' Society elections for General Secretary give only a glimpse of the way our union has been run for years.

The second ballot in the election was a run-off between Barry Williams, a member of the Communist Party, and Jim Murray.

The Broad Left sent scrutineers all round Britain and the North of Ireland to try to cut down the ballot-rigging which is a known practice in the Boilermakers.

Hundreds of votes for Murray had to be disqualified by the Executive Council. To balance things up, large numbers of votes for Williams were disqualified on petty technicalities. Obviously the EC did not want Williams as the General Secretary.

Barry Williams is now going to the courts in an attempt to have the election result overturned.

But taking this case to court will take it out of the hands of the rank and file in the union — but what we need to do is to put the union back in the hands of the rank and file.

The boilermakers' union is bogged down with apathy because those who should be giving a lead to the rank

and file are too busy trying to win positions so as to enable them to change things from above.

The election of officials in the Boilermakers Union is in no way democratic. Once elected either to the General Council or the Executive Council, or as President, General Secretary, District Delegate or Assistant General Secretary, you are in the job for six years. The local district committee delegates are elected for three years.

There is no right of recall.

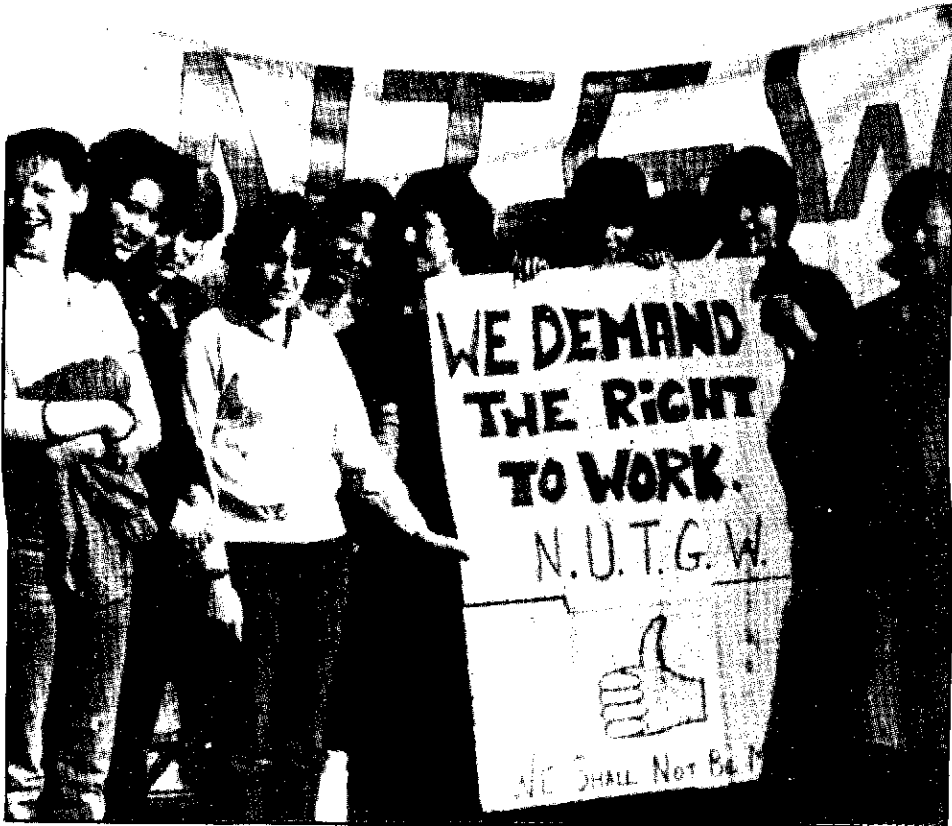
The National Conference takes place only once every two years and if an emergency conference is called the delegates are the same as for the previous regular conference.

Delegates are elected not from branches, but from regions.

Standing orders committee is not elected by the previous conference but from the eight lay delegates on the General Council.

At next year's bi-annual conference there must be a major push to democratise the Boilermakers. Resolutions for conference will be taken at the November and December branch meetings.

The work being done in the Labour Party should be carried back into the union, to gain control for the rank and file and not the full-time officials.



More support for Lee Jeans

by Dave Milligan

The occupation at the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock has now entered its third month and support for the 240-strong workforce [nearly all women] is growing steadily. The occupation has recently been made official.

The owners had informed

the workers that the factory was to close on April 30th with the work being transferred to the Irish factories and so far the management have refused to negotiate.

The women have been touring Scotland. They spoke to the Labour Movement Missiles Conference on March 28th and they have

been touring the Manchester area using the contacts built up during the Gardners' occupation last year.

Nearer home the Greenock shipyard workers are giving a voluntary levy which amounts to £1000 a week.

Send messages of support and donations to: NUTGW, Sauchiehall St, Glasgow.

Socialist Organiser

250,000 strike for women's rights

250,000 women — according to our first reports — struck for abortion rights in Holland on Monday March 30th. Proportionately, this is equivalent to one million on strike in Britain.

At present, abortion is illegal in Holland by a law dating from the mid-19th century. In practice, however, abortions are done in private clinics which resemble British charity clinics,

like the Pregnancy Advisory Service.

As in Britain, many foreign women depend on going to Holland for abortions because abortion is illegal or unobtainable in their own countries.

The effect of the new law, which was debated in the Senate of the Dutch Parliament on the 31st, would be to impose a requirement on a doctor's permission for an abortion, and a 5-day delay.

Threat to Filipinos

500 Filipino workers are under threat of deportation because of alleged irregularities in their immigration documents.

The workers came to Britain under the quota system for hotel and catering workers, one of the few ways in which overseas workers could get into Britain after the 1971 Immigration Act.

Immigrant workers were allowed in because the work is particularly hard and low-paid. And often their pitiful wages, over and above a bare minimum to live on and to send home, went entirely towards paying back their debts to the agencies, which demanded huge rake-offs — up to £1000 — to get them through the immigration formalities.

When the bosses needed cheap labour, the Government turned a blind eye to the vices of the agencies. Now they no longer need the immigrants, the Home Office has started a campaign of harassment aimed at the victims of the agencies, the 20,000-strong Filipino community in Britain.

The profiteers get off scot free.

STOP THE NATIONALITY BILL!

Demonstrate, Sunday
5th April. Assemble
1pm, Speakers Corner

Organised by Cam-
paign Against Racist
Laws.

by Alexis Carras

'THIS STATUS gives no right of entry to any territory at all, anywhere. Nor does it carry any other rights, except eligibility to apply for a passport which will take you nowhere'.

That's the new proposed status of 'British Overseas Citizen', described by the Action Group on Immigration and Nationality.

What use is a passport, if it doesn't allow you to pass any ports? It can only be for internal controls. And that's the sting in the tail of the Tories' Nationality Bill, currently in its third reading in Parliament.

The first purpose of the Nationality Bill is to 'rationalise' and square up Britain's racist immigration restrictions. The Immigration Acts of 1962, 1968 and 1971, passed by both Tory and Labour administrations, effectively disbarred people from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean from entering, even though they are UK citizens. The only exception, grudgingly granted, has been for dependants of people already here.

Only 'patrial' UK citizens — citizens with a parent or grandparent born in Britain, i.e. mostly white people — have the right to enter the UK.

The Nationality Bill rationalises this racism by re-defining 'patrials' as British citizens. People born, adopted, registered or naturalised in a British colony or 'associated state' like Hong Kong, will be 'Citizens of the British Dependent Territories'. And people who opted for UK citizenship when their countries became independent, e.g. Asians in East Africa, Indians in Singapore and Malaya, will be 'British Overseas Citizens'.

The first result will be that all UK passports have to be changed to correspond with the new citizenship categories. And that means that millions of people will be processed by the Home Office — in close liaison with the police computer files.

After that, British citizenship will become more difficult to get. At present, non-patrial UK citizens automatically become 'patrials' after settling here for five years. That will go; so will the simple process of 'registration' as UK citizens currently open to many Caribbean people living in Britain.

Britain's pass law

Alter the Nationality Bill becomes law, only 'naturalisation' will be possible — on condition that the person is deemed 'willing to throw in their lot with this country'. Anyone of 'bad character' or of 'dubious reputation', with 'no sense of loyalty', will be ineligible. The Home Secretary decides and there is no right of appeal.

'Naturalisation' is also slow and costly.

Children born in the UK will no longer automatically be British citizens. Children of work-permit holders, students and 'illegal' immigrants will not — bar some narrowly-defined exceptions — be citizens.

That means another internal passport check: a check on the immigration status of the child's parents every time a birth is registered.

The Nationality Bill will mesh into and promote a system of internal controls which is already develop-

ing.

The Tories have already warned that the right to vote, to serve on a jury, or join the civil service could in the future be confined to 'grade 1' citizens, the new-style 'British citizens'. And since 1975, immigrants have had to produce a passport to get a national insurance number.

Already, people not 'ordinarily resident' in the UK can't get treatment under the National Health Service. This is existing practice now, and the Tories plan to legalise it.

Moreover, the DHSS reckons that 'wives of men who are not ordinarily resident here are not entitled to NHS treatment even if they are British-born and bred'.

People who are not 'ordinarily resident' can be banned from the NHS by the immigration authorities. For example, Mohammed Aftab was allowed into Britain only on condition that he would get his

IB treated privately, not on the NHS. If he used the NHS, they reckoned, he would be a 'burden on public funds'. (This also applies to housing and education).

And the new citizenship system will create a whole, systematic regime of 'checking on papers' in the NHS. As the Daily Telegraph noted, 'some coloured Britons may be mistaken for foreigners and will be asked by hospitals to show some proof, such as a passport, that they are British'.

Social Security offices are another major wing of the welfare state already geared for surveillance over black people, and likely to be more so with the new citizenship system.

For dependants to be admitted to Britain (and practically no black people except dependants have been admitted since the 1971 Act came in), it has to be proved that they can be maintained in Britain

'without recourse to public funds'. The basis has been laid in law for them to be refused supplementary benefit.

And for every black person who turns up at a DHSS office to be asked for his or her passport to prove their status.

All the restrictions in obtaining social benefits and allowances will mean greater and greater cooperation between the various branches of the welfare state and the Home Office. The NHS, the DHSS, Housing Departments etc. will all become watchdogs for the Home Office's racist rulings.

There have already been many police raids, especially on London factories, to check whether people working there are 'illegal' immigrants or not. Even black workers whose status is perfectly in order have been held in detention pending the arrival of documentation necessary to prove their case.

SHE FOUGHT-AND WON!



... but it was six years of suffering and unhappiness

AFTER SIX long years, Anwar Ditta has won. It was 4½ years of private battle with the Home Office and 18 months of all-out day-to-day campaigning throughout the country, gearing her whole waking life to getting her children back into her family in Rochdale.

The Defence Campaign made so much noise that Granada TV made a World in Action programme which finally shamed Tory minister Timothy Raison into conceding that Anwar's children were entitled to join her in Britain.

ANWAR DITTA told ELEANOR TIERNEY:

"Now I don't need to talk about the past. I've said it all before and it's been very well documented.

"Now I'm looking forward to being with my children, and I can think in terms of being a family again.

"The last six years have meant that every penny we had has gone to the children or the campaign to get them back. We haven't bought clothes for three years. Look around our home, it's got no luxuries in it.

"But everything we've got we've worked hard for. I had to get a new coat for the World in Action programme. No-one was going to say that I looked scruffy!

I sew up pillow-cases for a penny each and I had to do 1900 to pay for that coat!

"If it hadn't been for the Defence Committee, we'd never have won. World in Action only took it up because of all the work the Defence Committee had done over the past year.

"Official labour movement response to the campaign and to the issue of racism in general has been very slow. The NEC of the Labour Party took ages to give us support. When we went to the Labour Party conference in Blackpool, it was absolutely scandalous that there wasn't even a debate on racism.

"And most trade unions aren't rigid enough in their fight against racism.

"But local Labour Parties, the rank and file if you like, have given their whole-hearted support, especially Rochdale CLP and Heywood and Royton CLP. I can never put into words how grateful I am for the amount of work these people did.

"The World in Action programme served to open the eyes of the public to my particular case, but I am not alone. I am not an isolated case. There was another case in Rochdale of a man who was fighting the Home Office to get his kids back from Pakistan.

"He felt his case was hopeless but we got his

documents and took up the case. One of his sons had committed suicide, they were so desperate. But now his children are here.

"I asked Timothy Raison how many white families were affected in the same way as my family and hundreds of other black families. He just didn't know! The whole thing is racist and directed purely against black people.

"I'm very bitter about the Home Office and the struggle I've had for the past six years. Some people have been saying that I ought to sue the Home Office for all the trouble and debts they've caused.

"I came from a broken family myself and I vowed that my children would never suffer in the same way that I had done. But they have, thanks to the Home Office.

"We'll never be able to make up the time that we've lost with the children — six years of suffering and unhappiness. The only happy years I've had in my whole life were after I married Sujar and until I came to Britain in 1975.

"The Home Office are to blame for the last six years. Now that the children are coming back I'll have less free time, but that doesn't mean that I'll stop fighting the racism I've suffered for so many years!"

Immigration controls mean discrimination. Early in this century they meant discrimination against Jews. Now they mean discrimination against black people.

They mean dividing people up into those who 'belong' here and those who don't. So the discrimination doesn't stop at the airport. The logic of immigration controls is that people already here must be constantly checked to see if they 'belong'.

Scapegoating and persecution of those who look as if they don't 'belong' — people with dark skins — is legitimised.

The official persecution has encouraged freelance

No frontiers!

racist persecution. And then the emboldened racists push governments into stricter and stricter official controls.

The government tries to exclude those who don't 'belong' from the use of public services — and in order to police that exclusion, it turns the public services themselves into agencies of surveillance.

And so the passport check at the hospital, the

social security office, or the job interview, is the logical follow-up to the passport check at the airport.

Immigration controls at the frontiers — any immigration controls — means police controls inside society.

For a free and equal society, everyone in the country — permanently or temporarily — must have the same rights. That includes the same rights to come in and go out of the country.

No national border is more important than the right of people to travel and live wherever they want, and to live as equals wherever they want.