

Socialist Organiser

APRIL 1979.

15p.

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

DEFEND THE UNIONS KEEP THE TORIES OUT

AS IN 1974, the Tories will be fighting this election on an anti-union basis. This time they think they can win. Why? Because for the last few months the press has been whipping a hate campaign against striking workers. Opinion polls put the Tories well ahead of Labour as a result of the strikes.

Over the last few years the Tories have been trying to present themselves as not so anti-union. Through James Prior they made efforts to get rid of the union-bashing image of the Heath government, remembering how in 1970-74 they took on the unions and lost.

Now the post-1974 caution is being shelved. The Tories believe they can take on the unions and win. They pro-

pose compulsory secret ballots, tighter laws against pickets, and restrictions on social security for strikers' families.



The reply of the Labour Government has been to add its voice to the anti-union chorus. Thousands of workers have come out to fight for what Labour promised in 1974 — 'a redistribution of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families'. Callaghan has defied the decisions of the TUC and Labour Party conference against pay controls, kicked the low-paid in the teeth, advocated blacklegging, suspended civil service

workers refusing to strike-break, and done everything to enlist the support of TUC leaders in stopping the present strike wave.

This, of course, simply paves the way for the Tories.

The Labour Government's deals in Parliament have further discredited them. Pandering to the nationalists then flouting the majority vote for Scottish devolution, making wretched concessions to Ulster Unionists and to the symbol of everything reactionary in Tory/Unionist politics — Enoch Powell — the Government has compounded the feelings of disgust which working people have for its record. Like all previous Labour Governments, Callaghan's has failed to confront the power

of big business, and ends up as the squeezed lemon. Millions of Labour supporters have been betrayed.

At the election, Callaghan will promise more of the same. The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory was formed last July to speak up on the side of the strikers, the unemployed, black people fighting the NF fascists and women fighting for equal rights and emancipation.



We have aimed to provide a voice for the thousands of Labour Party members and supporters who have rejected the deals and class compromise of the Parliamentarians. We have formed local groups, argued for our policies, supported strikes and demonstrations, organised lobbies and produced leaflets.

Hundreds of thousands of workers have been on strike in recent months, facing the hostility of the Government, sabotage or semi-sabotage by union leaders, and hysteria from the press. Now these workers and all others fighting for their rights and freedoms face a new direct danger — a Tory government elected on an open anti-union platform.

negotiations and step up the counter-propaganda; suspend 53 civil servants in the Scottish Office, Edinburgh, and threaten 60 more suspensions; and rush emergency scab legislation through the House of Commons to break the Scottish Courts strike.

On all three counts they have failed. Scottish Court Sheriff's clerks will black any scabs, and the judges don't want any bust-ups in the courts after the strike is over — so the court strike hasn't been broken.

The pay negotiating offer of 7% has provoked every civil service union into action, and will probably lead to the biggest civil service strike ever on Monday, April 2nd. And even six days after the news of the suspension came through, some branches were still out. Newcastle Department of Health and Social Security Central Office branch organised its own levy and fin-



The Tories want to deny workers' mass meetings the right to decide

Join us in the fight for a Labour vote and an organised socialist opposition. Don't abstain from the political fight against the Tories and the Labour leadership.

We want to re-elect a Labour government and build a powerful socialist alternative capable of challenging the leadership within the trade unions and Labour Party. Join us.

ance to shut down the main computer.

The full-time officials of the CPSA and SCPS face a grave danger, because for the first time in the history of civil service trade unionism the call for an all-out strike is getting a response way beyond the unions' militant left wing.

The full-time officials see their grip and authority over action slipping; and in the past week they have spent a lot of their time getting members back to work and keeping others from joining the strike wave. Like policemen they are getting nervous about their lack of truncheons in a more democratic than average union set-up.

The CPSA National Executive have called for a national one-day stoppage on April 2nd, which will be supported by other civil service unions. The rank and file, however, will organise unofficial action well beyond this.

WE NEED MONEY

SINCE THE SCLV was launched last June, we have survived from month to month on a shoe string budget. Conferences, public meetings, mailings, the work of local groups, have all had to be self-financing. We are grateful to those who have sent money, but it has been far too little.

Now, with an election looming, we desperately need cash.

★ We need money to print the election leaflets which have been in the last three Socialist Organisers.

★ We need money to keep publishing the Socialist Organiser during the pre-election period.

★ We need money to organise the Local Government conference on June 9th.

Get your Labour Party, LPYS, trade union branch, trades council, to sponsor the campaign and send a donation. Take a collection among local SCLV supporters. Send an individual contribution.

Contributions to: Stephen Corbishley, SCLV Treasurer, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16. Cheques should be made payable to 'Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory'.

**SOCIALIST
CAMPAIGN**

FOR
A

**LABOUR
VICTORY**

SCLV badges, in red, white and black: 20p each or six for £1. Add 10p for p&p.

ALSO: get your Constituency Labour Party's election agent to order the SCLV leaflets on trade union rights, racism, jobs, housing, Ireland and women's rights. As printed in *Socialist Organiser*. £5 per thousand. Rush orders to SCLV, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16. Cheques payable to 'Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory'. Posters are also available; details on page 2.

SUPPORT THE SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN FOR A LABOUR VICTORY!

☐ Send me a bundle of 10 copies of this issue, price £1 post free.

☐ Send me more information on the SCLV.

☐ Send an SCLV speaker to my ward/GMC/union branch/trades council.

Name

Address

CLP/Union branch/etc:

Send to SCLV, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16

**Going
down
fighting
.. against
workers**

by
**STEPHEN
CORBISHLEY**

THIS LABOUR Government may well end its days trying to break yet another strike by public sector workers — this time its own direct employees, civil servants.

The civil service unions have been hamstrung for years with a pay comparability scheme which has crippled militancy and produced a string of tame union leaders who have enjoyed feasting at ministers' tables.

This year — after promising since November 1977 to implement the Pay Research Unit (PRU) comparability recommendations — the Labour Government has been playing for time. The CPSA and the SCPS, the two largest and most militant unions, decided early on that they would not cooperate with this govern-

ment strategy to string out negotiations until the last minute.

Over four weeks ago the two unions jointly organised a series of selective strikes in certain computer centres and other areas. Now over 35 selective strikes are on. They range from the top-secret intelligence operations at GCHQ in Cheltenham to Scotland's entire legal system.

Revenue-earning centres like Customs and Excise, Southend, have been shut down; bill-paying centres like the Department of the Environment in Hastings and the Ministry of Defence offices in Liverpool have been closed; and the Government has lost the use of its secret cipher and signals operation in the Foreign Office (to the extent that news of the Grenada coup did not reach Callaghan until too late).

The Government's response was threefold: spin out the

The real McRoy: how the police recruited an informer

I FIRST met Tony McRoy, now a second year politics student at Hull University, at a Labour Club meeting. He got up and subjected the Labour MP for Coventry North West to a torrent of abuse, along the lines of 'I've lived in slums all my life, you've never done anything for the likes of us' — which in truth Mr. Geoffrey Robinson MP, a former BL Cars boss, has not.

Our hopes of recruiting a new activist were dashed when it came out in conversation that his class consciousness was matched by an unswerving Ulster Loyalism.

Looking back, we should have thought more about a UDA member who sprouted an Anti-Nazi League badge and played an active role in the occupation of the administration building over the Anti Apartheid disinvestment campaign.

But there was no mistaking Tony's enthusiasm, and didn't he share a room with an SWPer? Couldn't he be seen propping up the bar with Irish nationalist students? We put it down to a 'dual consciousness', we thought he was a bit mixed-up ... and we were soon to learn just how right this assessment was.

Butchers

When the police launched nationwide swoops on UDA supporters in Britain, linked it seemed with the 'Shankill Butchers' trial, Tony McRoy fell victim to the Prevention of Terrorism Act's midnight knock. The Student Union made vigorous and successful efforts to release him, and Tony McRoy returned their compliment by going on Radio Humberside, where he thanked the Students Union but declared that he had nothing against the PTA — it should be used against the IRA and not him. Tony McRoy was the centre of attention and he was wallowing in it.

It was apparently a police officer named Cook at Holderness Road police station who recruited McRoy as an informer. The police have not been exactly gushing with their side of the story, but the Hull students' paper *Hullfire* (8.3.79) suggests Cook is an Acting Detective-Inspector in the Nationality Department.

One thing I do know. When the Union president rang Cook in my presence, he was transferred to a Special Branch number.

The rest of the story has been documented in detail by the Students' Union. The police were interested in the disinvestment campaign, the activities of left wing students and of overseas students from Iran and South Africa. They were not interested in anything that wasn't legal, and they didn't want to know

HULL University Students' Union is calling for a national campaign against police surveillance in student unions. This follows the confession by Hull student Tony McRoy that he was a police informer and a long-standing member of the National Front.

Although McRoy was active in left-wing politics at Hull, he was already known as a member of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). As such, he was picked up by police on February 6th, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The police told McRoy that they knew he was a NF member. They would expose him, or charge him with involvement in UDA bombings, unless he became an informer.

McRoy agreed, and during February and March met several times with the police to give them information on left wing students. But he told some friends about what he was doing. In early March he finally admitted to some left wing students that he was a NF member. The Students' Union newspaper came out with the whole story.

At a special Students' Union meeting on March 14th, moves to have McRoy expelled from the Union were defeated. But a call for a public inquiry into the action of the police has been taken up by the National Union of Students and by Hull Labour MP Kevin Macnamara.

ANDREW JENKINS describes the background to the story.

about the UDA, and in fairness to McRoy he had no interest in informing on his own organisation. The police showed him photos of student demonstrations, and McRoy obliged by identifying activists.

The police showed a cool duplicity in the affair. On Thursday 1st March Peter McCabe, the Union president — who at first disbelieved reports that McRoy was a police spy — met Cook representing the police, who assured McCabe that the police didn't go in for spying on students. That same evening the very same police officer met Tony McRoy outside the *Black Prince* pub in a small village outside Hull, for another informing session.

The Broad Left in the Students' Union have argued that McRoy is just a 'shrimp' who represents no danger, and the real issue is the police. Of course police spying is the main issue. But McRoy is still dangerous. He is now giving the appearance of full cooperation with the Students' Union, to protect his place in the University ...

and to establish for the National Front a continuing presence in the Hull Students' Union.

He has confessed to taking part in the NF attack on a National Council for Civil Liberties meeting in Manchester in 1976 which left one socialist with wounds requiring 16 stitches, and permanent eye injuries. Now he accepts NCCL support when arrested under the PTA himself. What will he do tomorrow?

Half told

Hull Trades Council is now taking up the question of Tony McRoy. His attempts to go respectable, which are to be taken with a pinch of salt at this stage, ensure that this story is still only half told. Readers anxious to get in touch with Acting Det.-Insp. (?) Cook and his colleague Les might like to ring him on Hull 26111, ext 3162. Be sure to ask for his code name 'Rowley', and be sure to do it soon... If the police know what's good for them, he'll soon be directing traffic.

An open letter to the LPYS National Committee

Dear comrades,

Why does the Labour Party Young Socialists [LPYS] National Committee not support the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory?

The only official response the SCLV has received from the National Committee was a letter last August, just after the campaign was launched, saying that 'the SCLV is a collection of a small number of individual members of the Labour Party... neither a mass movement nor a reflection of a political current with which the LPYS National Committee could agree on political perspectives'.

Not a mass movement? Yes. But the SCLV has got official support from four CLPs, two trades councils and many LPYS and union branches. It has the backing of five Parliamentary candidates, over 30 Labour councillors, and hundreds of activists in the Labour Party and trade unions.

At the London Labour regional conference this year, six SCLV supporters were elected onto the London executive and the SCLV had a 70-strong fringe meeting.

No political agreement? The YS National Committee calls for opposition to wage controls and government strike-breaking, for a 35 hour week and the nationalisation of firms creating redundancies, and for opposition to immigration laws. The SCLV calls for 'making the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control'. What are the differences?

Do you insist on chapter and

verse of your recipe for socialism: 'a Labour Government pledged to nationalise the 200 monopolies'? If so, you are making the recipe more of a principle than the basic idea of socialism itself!

Or is your objection that the SCLV declares unequivocally, without afterthoughts or preconditions: 'The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now!' If so, it would be best if you said it clearly.

But the gist of it, we suspect, is the argument raised by YS chairman Phil Frampton at a fringe meeting at the North West Regional YS conference. 'We are not going to support the return of a Labour Government just to attack it'. The LPYS NC's new Charter for Young Workers argues that 'A glimpse of the Tories ... is enough to make any young worker shudder', but has little to say about the record of the present Government.

In the 28-page 'Charter', there is one open criticism of the Government: 'The cuts in public spending, wage restraint and other Tory measures were forced on the Labour government which attempted to work within the system. That is a salutary lesson to us all'.

The SCLV says that these right-wing Labour Government policies — whether 'forced' or carried out willingly — must be condemned. Those policies are not only aiding a future Tory election

victory, but hitting the working class now. It is vital that we start a fightback today, not simply promise that someone else will start a battle for socialism tomorrow.

For the SCLV, turning the words of our platform into action is vital. In September 1978 the SCLV organised a large contingent to defend Brick Lane against the fascist march left unopposed by the Anti Nazi League. The same month, SCLV supporters moved the main anti-government resolutions on immigration controls and black self-defence at the Labour Party conference.

More recently, SCLV supporters have been organising solidarity for the low-pay strikers, and in Haringey we initiated a labour movement based support committee.

Now the SCLV is organising a conference, sponsored by 35 London councillors, to launch a campaign on local government finance.

The SCLV has become an important force on the left of the Labour Party — largely because of the inactivity of much of the 'mainstream' left around the Tribune group. It would greatly advance the SCLV if the LPYS participated. It would greatly enliven the LPYS if it were prepared to join a forthright battle against the Government.

Yours fraternally,
NEIL COBBETT
London LPYS Regional Ctee.
GORDON BREWER
Sec., Edinburgh Central LPYS
JOHN COSBY
Chairman, Brent East LPYS.

Remember the last time:

ANTI-UNION LAWS
PICKETS JAILED
COUNCIL RENTS UP
THREE DAY WEEK

Keep
the
Tories
out

Vote
Labour

Boot
out
Callaghan's
Tory
policies

The SOCIALIST
CAMPAIGN for a
LABOUR
VICTORY
fights for:

NO WAGE CURBS
CUT THE HOURS,
NOT THE JOBS
TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND
SCRAP ALL
IMMIGRATION ACTS



SCLV poster, in three colours. Five for 20p, 30 for £1; add 20% for post and packing. Order from SCLV, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

Why blacks need self defence

by
GEOFF BENDER

THE INSTITUTE of Race Relations' (IRR) submission to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure gathers together a comprehensive dossier of the suspicion, threats, harassment and intimidation of the police against black people in Britain.

Its catalogue of police violence and racism will come as no surprise to those who have been active in the anti-racist movement, but may have a salutary effect on those Labour Party members who console themselves with platitudes about the 'rotten apple in every barrel' when confronted with evidence of police racism.

Against those who call for an extension of police powers, the IRR argues that 'to extend police powers would not be to protect society against the offender but to put the citizen at risk to the police'.

The IRR places the black communities' suspicion of the police in the context of colonialism. 'The first experience of a police force that the colonies ever had was that of the British police force... To continue the same policing tradition in the black ghettos of our inner cities is not to win black people over to the traditional English view of the police but to confirm them in their traditional view of the English police — as a police against the people'.

Just how justified such a view of the police is, becomes



clear in the pamphlet.

On the Chapeltown (Leeds) Bonfire Night 1975, a police car was driven into a group of young blacks at high speed, and police raids on black homes took place throughout the night. In raids on black meeting places, like the Mangrove in Notting Hill and the Carib Club in Cricklewood, police used dogs and truncheons.

'From all over Britain — from Handsworth in Birmingham, from Wolverhampton, Cardiff, Brixton, Lewisham, Islington, Waltham Forest — we have received recent reports of police excesses and harassment on a community-wide scale'.

The use of the Special Patrol Group and the Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit is also described.

The unwillingness of the police to give protection to victims of racist attack, their delay in investigating reports, their tendency to play down the racist dimension in clearly racist incidents ('in the inter-

ests of community relations') and put the victim on trial rather than the racist, their failure to prosecute racists — all this is recorded under the heading, 'Not policing for the community'.

The pamphlet describes 'Sus 1', the now infamous section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act, and 'Sus 2', the provisions of the 1971 Immigration Act which allow widespread powers of arrest and detention of 'suspected illegal entrants' to police and immigration officials. With both these statutes the onus of proof falls on the accused, not the accuser.

Each chapter ends with conclusions and recommendations to the Royal Commission. These are drawn up with the intention of presenting both 'realistic' minimum demands, such as the restoration of foot patrols and the distribution by the Home Office of cards detailing people's rights on arrest — demands which might get some hearing from the Royal Commission — and far-reaching proposals which

no Scotland Yard Commissioner is ever going to accept, such as the demand to take charging out of the hands of the police.

The police/community liaison structures are described as worthless by the IRR. Set up by the police, they are frequently ignored by police chiefs themselves. In Lewisham and Lambeth, the SPG were called in without the knowledge of these liaison committees and over the heads of the police's own Community Liaison Officers. The IRR call for these committees to be abolished and replaced by control of the police by the community as a whole.

Socialist Organiser already supports demands to weaken police power and limit the arbitrariness of police activity. Yet the evidence the IRR presents indicates that the racism and the monopoly of force which the police possess cannot be reformed away.

The IRR correctly argues for self-defence as a 'way of ensuring the rights that every member of the white population takes for granted: that children return unmolested from school, workers reach home unharmed, youth walk the streets without fear, houses and businesses be free from attack. Self-defence is not a choice that black people make but something they have been forced into by choicelessness — which is an indictment not of them but of society'.

★ 'Police Against Black People', Race and Class pamphlet no.6. 95p.

Support Abdul Azad

FOR THREE months Abdul Azad, an 18-year old Bengali worker, has been detained without trial in Risley Remand Centre, on the suspicion of being an illegal immigrant.

A signed confession was forced out of him. As he put it in a statement issued through his defence committee, 'They

made me sign a paper... They said if I didn't sign they would hit me more. I was hit so much I felt sick... then they took me upstairs, hit me again, and made me sign the paper'.

Abdul was first taken in by the police last October, when he returned home to find his mother had been murdered. Since then the immigration laws have been used to terrorise him with the threat of deportation.

He was temporarily released last week, but the deportation threat still stands. His deportation came as a result of a picket at Risley organised by the Azad defence committee and the Bangladesh Association on March 17th. Last Saturday [24th March] a demonstration through Oldham and another picket of the remand centre were held.

About 150 people attended both events, with contingents from Asian groups and the Anti-Nazi League coming from as far afield as Liverpool and Bradford.

Abdul Azad is yet another victim of the openly racist immigration laws: deportation threats, detention without trial, and police brutality all flow from these laws.

The scrapping of these laws and any immigration controls is crucial to the fight against racism. Many of the demonstrators on the 24th were chanting, 'Black people must unite, here to stay and here to fight'. They should get the labour movement's support for their struggle.

CLIVE BRADLEY



IMMIGRATION CONTROLS: THE RECORD

'End all immigration controls' is a central plank of the SCLV's platform. SAM RICHARDSON reviews the Labour Government's record.

ON 1st JANUARY 1973 the most repressive of all Britain's racist immigration laws to date came into force.

Labour had opposed this law, the 1971 Immigration Act. When the new Labour Government took office in March 1974, it was not actually committed to repeal, but Labour had promised to review the nationality and immigration laws.

In 1979, the Act is still on the statute book, unamended and vigorously enforced. In the five years of Labour administration, controls have become tougher. Labour's record includes:

■ The continued use of the police Immigration Intelligence Unit for mass surveillance of black people (there are 29,000 people on this part of the police computer), and for large-scale raids on workplaces (e.g. East London, early 1976) and homes and businesses (e.g. Newcastle, December 1977). This goes on in spite of ministerial assurance that such raids would no longer occur.

Checks

■ The continuation of random passport checks on black people by police, immigration officials, and Social Security offices.

■ The continuation of illegal police 'fishing' expeditions for 'illegal immigrants', involving checks on black people in their homes, on the street, and in the course of enquiries into other offences. These checks seem to have increased over the past few years.

■ The use of 'amnesties' on 'illegal immigrants' to catch and deport overstayers.

■ The continuation of

queues in High Commissions in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh which mean that dependants may have to wait up to two years before they get clearance to join their families in Britain.

■ The harassment of black applicants at British High Commissions, with virginity tests, health checks, interrogation-style interviews which cause anxiety to the point of mental illness for some would-be applicants, demands for documents which are known to be little-used in rural communities, and refusal of applicants on spurious grounds.

■ The harassment of black immigrants at points of entry, including virginity tests, dangerous X-ray tests, interrogation style interviews again, searches, and detention or deportation on the whim of immigration officers.

■ The harassment of black people through detention in prison as 'suspected illegal immigrants' — often without charge, trial, right of appeal or right of habeas corpus. According to figures given on 2nd February 1979, some 137 people were in detention under the Immigration Act as of 30th November 1978.

■ In March 1978 work permits were ended for unskilled migrants in hotel and catering were ended. This was a result of TUC pressure. The message is as obvious as it is reactionary: exploitation of migrants is to be dealt with not by giving greater legal security to migrant workers and aiding their fight for better wages and conditions, but by the removal of the migrants.

■ The Franks Committee was set up in August 1976 to look into the idea of a Register of Dependents of those settled in the UK. The Committee's report in February 1977 came out against the register idea: but why was it being investigated? A Labour Government in 1965 had already proved such a register unworkable. Investigating again gave credence

to the idea lurking behind this proposal: that black people from the Indian sub-continent are pouring into the UK in vast and unknown numbers, often illegally, and that Britain needs to limit the numbers and eventually stop entry altogether. It fed all the racist fantasy fears, and implied that being black was sufficient reason to force a person to register all their dependants.

The investigation gave a fillip to the Conservatives, who have since made the idea of a register a central part of their 'induced repatriation' policies.

■ The Labour Government has failed to reverse rulings made by the courts which either extend the scope and repressive powers of the Act or reduce rights of appeal. For instance: a ruling in the case of Sadfer Hussain, on 26th May 1977, effectively accepted a doctrine of infallibility of immigration officials.

Illegal

■ The Home Office made an administrative decision to treat people who entered by deception before the 1971 Act came into force — and are therefore not illegal under the Act — as illegal entrants if they leave and then return. Many of the hundreds of black people affected by this have been settled in the UK many years — indeed, many are known to the Home Office.

■ In April 1977 the published immigration rules (not to be mistaken for the secret and unpublished instructions to immigration officials) were changed to give immigration officers powers to reject an entrant who came to join a wife or to marry, on the grounds that it was a marriage of convenience. Alternatively, the immigration officers can have the marriage watched — for three months for persons already married, twelve months for fiancés.

■ Labour Home Secretaries have used clause 3(5)b of the 1971 Act to expel people as 'not conducive to the public good'. Franco Caprino, a militant worker from Italy, was arrested in December 1974, but allowed to stay after a campaign had been waged. Mark Hosenball and Philip Agee, two radical American journalists, were issued with deportation notices in November 1976, and subsequently expelled, despite a campaign. There is no right of appeal in such cases (section 15(3) of the Act).

RACISM: FIGHTING ON TWO FRONTS

by
Marian Gerrard
Secretary, LPRAG

RACIAL violence operates at two levels.

At the crude primary level it consists in the verbal and physical assaults associated with (but by no means the monopoly of) the National Front.

At a secondary and arguably more cancerous level, it takes an enormous variety of forms, from the institutional racism of the immigration laws through to the psychological violence done to black kids in a world of white dolls and white heroes and heroines. They are taught by white teachers in institutions where black adults are likely to be the cleaners.



Racism — the daily insults are as cancerous as racial violence

Much of the cruder racial violence in our society arises from ignorance cynically fostered by vested interests and from the frustrations of those whose only outlet under the present system is to 'kick the cat'. The immediate solutions lie in anti-fascist activity and the use of anti-discrimination laws. The first of these is proving quite effective.

But the real solution lies in fighting these vested interests and in changing the system. And that puts the onus squarely on the political

left.

To date the left has put an enormous amount of energy into fighting racial violence at the primary level, and that effort will have to be sustained as long as the conditions which foster prejudice exist.

But as long as these conditions do exist we must not lapse into deluding ourselves that anti-fascist activity is any more than a holding operation and that we can afford to ignore the secondary forms. The suffering that results from these is as real and immediate and is experienced with even more frequency by even more people than the primary form.

Again the real solution lies in eventually changing the system, but the immediate solutions lie in changes of political policy.

wider support around policy issues on race and immigration than we have seen until fairly recently.

The Labour Party at large has come to realise that passing the 1976 Race Relations Act and dolloping money on to the Commission for Racial Equality does not absolve us from continuing responsibility for fighting racial disadvantage. We have to start by rooting out racism among our own members and move on through education to build up a grass-roots demand for positive discrimination policies and the repeal of racist immigration laws.

The London region Labour Party RRAG was set up two years ago on the basis of affiliations from CLPs, branches and individuals committed to those aims. Last year we had 26 London CLPs, 23 branches and organisations and 63 individuals affiliated.

Our members have taken up the recommendations in our publications (*) at local level and have been able to let us know how they have been received.

Centrally we have organised political education meetings for all Labour Party members on, for example, Sus and on immigration and citizenship law, as well as making representations on a wide range of issues from the report of the Select Committee on Race and Immigration to the fate of UK passport holders in the Solomon Islands, to police training. Having said that our membership is our strength, it is also true that we are only as strong as our membership. But with active support of a growing membership we shall — and must — succeed

[* 'Racial Equality — the Role of Local Authorities' and 'Local Authorities — Ethnic Record and Monitoring'. 30p each from LPRAG 2 Campbell Rd, London E17.

Several readers had criticisms of our draft election leaflet on women's rights, published last month...

Don't let Labour off the hook

A pathetic leaflet

Comrades,
We didn't think much of your proposed election leaflet on women. Apart from being rather lame and even dated (a lot has happened since Milk-snatcher Thatcher was the schools' worst enemy) it tends to let Labour off the hook — and that surely is not what the SCLV is about.

May we propose the following re-draft, which seems to be more in line with SCLV policy?

MARY CORBISHLEY
RACHEL LEVER
Workers' Action

WE WANT EQUAL RIGHTS

Despite the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act, the present reality for women is:

- ★ On average women still earn less than men. Women's earnings are only 63% of men's earnings.
- ★ Women are still mostly confined to low-paid jobs like nursing, office and shop work, and doing the cleaning-up in schools and hospitals.
- ★ Public spending cuts have hit women doubly: they have been pushed out of their jobs through productivity and redundancy schemes; and childcare facilities have been hit, making it impossible for many women with small children to get out to work. Surveys show that more than a million women are unemployed against their will, though many are not

included in the jobless figures.

These things have reinforced the old shackles on women, turning their homes into prison cages of drudgery and isolation.

The Tories have no intention of even pretending to change this. They say they are the party of the family — and they mean by this that hearth and home should be the limits of women's ambition.

The Tories and their boss-friends think it's fine that women should go on being paid peanuts and being hired and sacked as the bosses

please, all under the excuse that motherhood is a woman's prime function and working is just for pin-money.

Under a Tory government it is very much more likely that the law that made abortion legal will be amended and made even more restrictive than it is now. More women will be forced into unwanted motherhood.

The Tories' main plank is a big cutback in public spending. This will mean more women thrown out of work, and more nurseries and geriatric wards shut down, leaving women to mind the children

and the old people at home.

FIGHTING FOR OUR RIGHTS

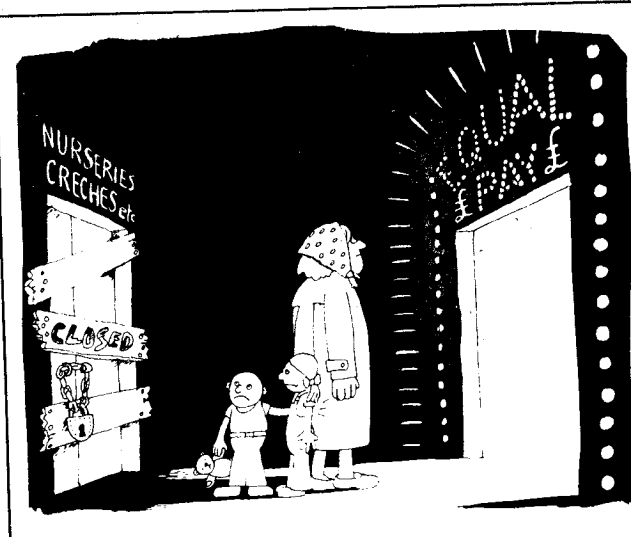
It was the struggles of women that led to the Labour Government passing the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay acts. Women have had to organise and fight for every gain under those acts, often in the face of great loopholes, and hostile tribunals appointed by the Labour government. Women will have to fight for any further advances.

Successive Labour Party conferences have reflected this struggle that women have fought in the community and at work. Resolutions have been passed calling for an end to all discrimination against women, for better nursery provision, and for a woman's right to choose an abortion without having to pass through a forest of red tape.

Your local Labour Party will be fighting for the next Labour Government to act in line with these resolutions.

Vote Labour — and join us in the fight to ensure that the Labour leaders act in our interests and not in the interests of the bosses.

- ★ Free abortion and contraception on demand!
 - ★ For a woman's equal right to work!
 - ★ Full equality for women!
- VOTE LABOUR BUT MAKE SURE LABOUR BACKS THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS**



POWER AND VIOLENCE IN THE HOME

Members of Hackney Women's Aid provided these questions and answers on violence against women in the home.

'I'd forgotten to iron his shirt, and he just threw a pan of scalding water at me, scarring my arm'.

'My husband was in a temper with me over something. I refused to have intercourse and he hit me in the face and tried to suffocate me with the pillow'.

'Because he'd got sausages for dinner instead of fresh meat, he cut my lip and badly bruised my face'.

The women talking here are just three of the many thousands who are battered in the home. In fact, violence in the home accounts for 25 per cent of all violent crime.

■ What do we mean by domestic violence?

Violence in the home conjures up a picture of actual physical assault by men on the women they live with. Many women do suffer in this way — punches in the face or stomach which can involve internal injuries, air gun pellets in the legs, broken arms, burn and scalds, knife wounds — the lot.

But violence also goes deeper and hits in more subtle ways.

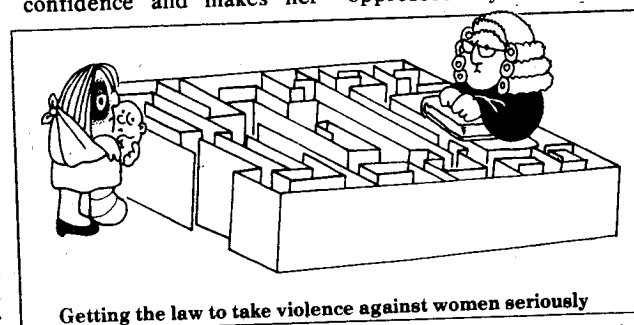
Thousands of women are violated as human beings because they are women and are expected to behave in a particular way. So violence is also when a man refuses to let his wife go out to work, to have her own friends in the house, to have a night out on

her own. Violence is expecting a woman to give in to every sexual demand whether she wants sex or not.

Physical violence may accompany these forms of oppression and coercion. But the mental battering can be just as damaging. A woman is often made to feel inadequate by the man she lives with ('who else would put up with a meal like that') and at the same time taunted with 'get out if you don't like it'. The stress which results destroys a woman's self-confidence and makes her

Both of these explanations suggest that violence can be coped with within our existing society. All you need is more resources, more social work, better mental health care. However, many battered women do not fit into any 'problem' category. Neither do these explanations question why stress of deprivation occur anyway.

We have to look at the foundations of our society for a real understanding of battering. It is just one of the ways in which women are oppressed by the double



Getting the law to take violence against women seriously

increasingly dependent on a man whose behaviour toward her is intolerable.

■ What are the causes of domestic violence?

We have two accepted explanations of domestic violence. One is that it is the fault of the man and woman involved — they are mentally unstable. The second sees violence as linked to deprivation — poor housing, unemployment, lack of education, and so on.

burdens of capitalism and of patriarchy — the power of men over women.

■ How does this double burden give support to violence?

Women's oppression is experienced through the economic and emotional dependence of women on men within the family. Although women form over 40 per cent of the workforce, their low wages and lack of job security make them dependent on

the man's wage which is supposed to support the whole family. It is in the employers' interest to maintain this dependence. It sets men and women against each other.

In the home women do a number of tasks which keep the economy going. They produce children, cook and care for the present and future workforce and create a warm and happy home where the man can forget the irritations and insecurity of work.

So the family is very important and it is no surprise that a Minister of Marriage has been proposed. In many ways the State pushes women to live with men, though the system of allocating taxation, pensions, welfare benefits, and through housing policies. As a result the relationship between men and women is one of unequal power in which men control women's lives. Violence or the threat of violence is inevitable where one side has more power.

And in a thousand ways, culture and education and media images depict women as subservient to men, whose purpose is to serve and to please. Little wonder that a man, once set up as master of 'his' home, feels he can deal with his woman as he pleases.

■ How does Women's Aid try to help women who suffer violence?

Women's Aid is an organisation consisting of women's groups all over the country who are concerned about domestic violence. (*) It has two main functions.

The first is to provide refuges for women and children so they can get away from a violent man. Refuges offer a secure home and the companionship of women who have shared similar experiences.

If a woman decides to end her relationship with a violent man, then this support is immensely important. Getting a divorce, a decent



A safe refuge from violence

permanent home and sufficient income for herself and her children needs a lot of determination. It's a little easier if you're not on your own.

Women's Aid's second task is to bring the issue of domestic violence to the attention of the public. Campaigns are taking place on changes in the law, on local authority housing policy, and on the inadequacy of social security.

■ Do the majority of women suffering violence eventually come to a refuge?

No, and there are many reasons for this.

First, many women are unaware that refuges exist, or they cannot find one in their locality. This is particularly so outside the big cities. The government has suggested that each local authority needs one refuge place for every 10,000 inhabitants, but nowhere near this number are actually available.

Second, many women see no alternative to continuing to live in a violent home. Living separate from a man is very difficult in our society especially when you have children. Most women are naturally reluctant to spend

Labour Government bending over backwards to give in to their justified demands either!

At least the second half of the leaflet realised 'that there's still a long way to go'. But this leaflet is not the way to get there. Do the authors of this leaflet really believe that the majority of women are so stupid that they'll be taken in by this Nasty Tories, Labour's not perfect but we're not as nasty as them ploy for vote-catching. Surely, as the SCLV, we should be pointing out the diabolical record of the Labour government up to now, contrasting what they're actually doing with the positions carried at the Labour Party conferences of the past two years: positions against health cuts, against education cuts, against public expenditure cuts, for free abortion on demand, for more nurseries.

The leaflet begins to get there right at the end, but after all that has gone before, it tends to get lost.

There can be no room for complacency when it comes to the Labour's government's record on women's rights. This government must be taken to task for not carrying out conference policy — and we must be the ones who are seen to be criticising their anti-working class, anti-women policies, and not just criticising the Tories for what they plan to do.

ANNA GALVANI
Southwark Peckham LP
and Socialist Charter

years on social security, getting their clothes from jumble sales, begging for charity holidays, and all the other demoralising actions which our society demands of people who are unable to support themselves.

Third, some women who do leave a violent home don't need a refuge.

Finally, many women are afraid that living in a refuge may be like the workhouse, where they will be told what to do. This is in fact not the case. Women's Aid refuges are run by groups of women and are self-managed. Refuge workers are there to offer advice when requested, to organise activities for the children and to negotiate over long-term policy with housing departments, social services, etc. Women living in the house make their own decisions about running the refuge, what they want to do for the future and when they want to leave.

We need more publicity so that women know that refuges are safe and happy places to live in.

[* There is a national office at 374 Grays Inn Road, WC1X 8BB, tel: 01-837-9316, which coordinates the work.]

Our view on the SCLV: Yes, but...

Comrades, I have been asked to write and let you know what Dundee Labour Party policy is with regard to some of your aims as outlined in the leaflet 'Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory'.

As a Party we are of course opposed to wage curbs, cuts in public expenditure and unemployment as is the whole labour movement. Your Aim eleven has been Dundee LP policy for several years. We are bitter opponents of racism whether it occurs here or abroad.

With respect to the remaining aims, we already have our own policies which go beyond slogans and which would disagree in certain ways with your own.

For example, 'not a penny for defence' is an unrealistic demand in our view. We are committed to a call for a far-reaching democratisation of the armed forces coupled with the institution of trade union bargaining rights for all the

Services. We would like to see similar rights introduced for the police to draw them into the working class. This seems to us a much more positive approach than denouncing them.

On the subject of Northern Ireland, we support the TUC's demand for a Bill of Rights for Ulster. Further we consider that withdrawal of British troops will create a political vacuum which we think should be filled by a UN peacekeeping force to allow the Irish nation as a whole to decide its future, free of the threat of British imperialism.

Dundee LP has been in the forefront of the movement demanding automatic reselection of MPs, but we are of the opinion that the trade unions are entitled to make their own arrangements for the election and payment of their officials. We feel that this is not the legitimate concern of CLPs.

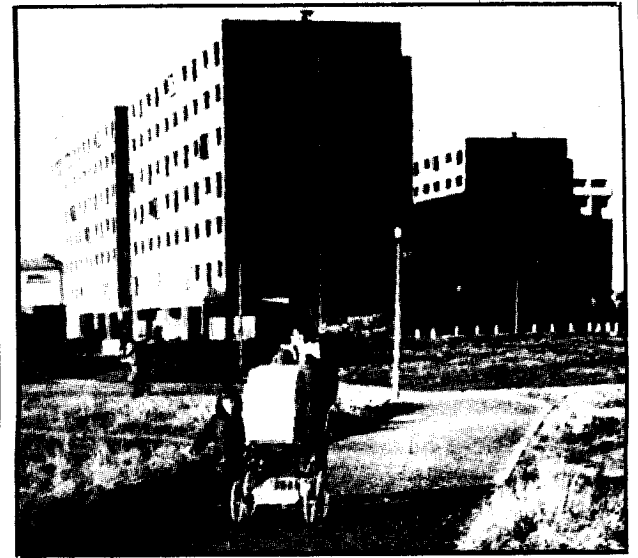
We would agree that nation-

alisation of the banks and financial institutions is a crucial step on the road to socialism but we would suggest that 'without compensation', while attractive, is unrealistic.

Our policy on women's rights unhesitatingly supports equal status for women in every walk of life and we would want to see contraception free and available on demand. On abortion, we see a woman's right to choose as being important but we also recognise that there will be individuals in the labour movement who oppose abortion for genuine religious or moral reasons.

We will continue to fight for our policies through the forum of the National and the Scottish Labour Party conferences. We hope however that this exchange of views has been worthwhile. Thank you for your leaflets and the copies of your paper.

R M SEYMOUR
Secretary, Political Sub-Committee,
Dundee Labour Party



SMASHING UP COMMUNITIES

Comrades,

Your readers may be interested to hear about a conference organised in March by the New Architecture Movement Feminist Group, on the effects of recent building styles on women in the home.

Today, women stuck at home are more isolated than ever before by the way in which modern architects and planners have tucked us away at the ends of cul-de-sacs and dead-ends. Instead of the street-life of the old terraced back-to-backs, there is now just the empty balcony or corridor outside your flat in a tower block, or the empty and desolate open spaces of a modern suburban estate.

It seems that the planners and architects have physically hived us off with their bull-

dozers and their concrete walls and smashed up the old community life.

Le Corbusier, one of the founders of the idea of tower blocks and plenty of empty space, had actually advocated this as an antidote for revolution early in the 1920s. Today for many women it is the road to tranquillisers and nervous breakdowns.

The conference (attended by about 200 women rather than the expected 70-80) discussed these issues, and also heard about housing in Cuba and women's life in ancient Greece! There were lots of pictures and slides, and the Shoe-string Theatre Group put on a performance of their play Housework.

ANN BLISS

Yes, this deal is a swindle

May I congratulate Stephen Corbishley on his article 'The full £60, no less in your February issue. Being a member of my local Borough Council and a London Ambulance Service driver I fully agree that we in the public sector should oppose any pay comparability scheme. We do not want state legislation but full collective free bargaining for a wage that is equal to our skill, dedication and unsocial hours of work.'

No longer must the low wage of the workers employed in the public sector be used for the artificial subsidy of rates and taxes. The rank and file must keep the pressure on our political and trade union leaders in order to obtain a just reward for our labour.

I am not surprised that the Government's 5% guideline is being ignored. No doubt the Treasury officials did advise Jim Callaghan that the country could not afford more than 5% but it would not be the first time that they have got it wrong.

Most other authoritative views reckon that ten to fifteen per cent is more appropriate. The Government may well have known that, and used the 5% in the hope that some unions would settle for the lower figure. A cunning ploy, perhaps, but not very honest.

Who reaps the benefits of this onslaught on inflation? Can it be the ordinary working class people, or is it our real overlords, those financial Tory wizards in the City of London who are more interested in the bank balance of their shareholders, or of their foreign bank accounts.

It always seems to be the working class that have to toe the line.

High wage settlements have never caused inflation (for which the working class is always blamed). But while the

Government fails to maintain the bare necessities of life at a cost that we can reasonably afford, we need to fight to maintain our standard of living. The initial cause of price rises can be traced to a mixture of bad harvests around the world, shortages of natural resources, and a capitalist monetary system based on the dogma of winner takes all.

The capitalist economy will always have a permanent inflation and deflation problem, and until the workers can break through to socialism the present kind of crisis will always be occurring.

The police seem to be keeping out of the way during this industrial struggle. This seems to coincide with their attempt to gain additional powers. The sort of thing they want can be seen from their evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure:

■ Arrestable offences to be increased. The right of the police to go to the home of any person (included someone not suspected of an offence) and ask what they were doing the previous night. If they refuse to answer or seem evasive, the right of the police to arrest them.

■ The right of police to search suspects would be extended to people simply because of their presence at a particular spot.

■ The use of 'necessary force' in searches.

■ To be able to hold suspects for 72 hours before having to charge them or bring them to court, and to have this extended by a further 72 hours on application to a magistrate in private and without the person detained having the right to be represented.

■ The right of police to photograph people after they are charged.

■ The right to do random searches of people and property on the grounds that this will deter crime.

■ Top police officers are openly hostile to the Judges' Rules. They want the rule about cautions ('everything you say may be used in evidence against you') to be abolished. They want to restrict access to solicitors, and to caution people that if they are silent this will weaken their

case in court.

Quite apart from seeking these changes, the police are constantly being strengthened by new devices, such as computerisation of records.

Taking into consideration all that is now known, the working class, and in particular strike pickets, should heed the warning and oppose any extension of police powers.

CLLR. SYD HAMILTON
Barking



Indochina: the Vietnamese are right

Dear Comrades,

The article US gives the nod to Chinese attack on Vietnam by comrade Cheung Siu Ming in the March issue of Socialist Organiser was a very welcome one. Its tone and position was in sharp contrast with the expressed opinions of the majority of the left here in the US.

Most of the left here has reluctantly drawn some proper conclusions about China's reprehensible conduct and international orientation over the past six to seven years and has condemned its invasion of Vietnam; but it has nevertheless tended to link the demand for Chinese withdrawal with a call for Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea (or, in the better cases, to draw wholly inappropriate parallels between the two actions).

I believe a very good case can be made that Vietnam's political and military support for the Kampuchean opposition to the Pol Pot regime was a

progressive response to a situation all socialists recognised as intolerable. But what other term can one use to describe the Chinese invasion of Vietnam — 'to teach them a lesson' for their militancy — than purely and simply reactionary?

We do not know whether President Carter encouraged the Chinese in their adventure, actively playing the Chinese card against Vietnam and its ally the Soviet Union — or whether he merely indicated that he would stand by and let them do it. But he was undoubtedly warned of the invasion beforehand.

So far as Vietnamese participation in the armed overthrow of the Kampuchean regime is concerned: well, the communist movement is not based on pacifist or abstentionist principles. That is, it has always refused to condemn military action in and of itself, rather, it has always asked whether any recourse to arms has a pro-

gressive or regressive content.

Toward the end of the article comrade Cheung, while rejecting any parallel between the Chinese and Vietnamese actions, weakens an otherwise excellent argument with an unfortunate qualifying phrase: 'Whatever reservations we may have on the Vietnamese regime's intentions...'

Perhaps these reservations reflect a conservative reflex to Vietnam's decision to offer aid and participation in a liberating insurrection against another workers' state, but I do not see why without any evidence one should question its intentions: they appear to be quite straightforward.

What is really unfortunate is has not been Vietnam's intentions, but the barbaric and murderous course of the Pol Pot regime over the past few years, beginning — unless everything I have read has been a lie — the day they came to power. The regime's cruelty

is well-attested, and it would be incredible to attribute all knowledge of this fact to a few fertile brains in the US propaganda machine.

Comrade Cheung suggests that perhaps a majority of the population of Kampuchea welcomed the Vietnamese as liberators, and I see no reason to dispute this.

I would suggest that the Vietnamese response to the situation in Kampuchea is in fact precisely what used to be known as proletarian internationalism (in the good sense of the term, before it acquired a more sinister flavour under Stalin). And if this seems too high-flown let me ask, what else could — or should — the Vietnamese have done? And, once more, had we the opportunity or the power to have done anything, would we not do exactly the same thing?

DAVE CUNNINGHAM
Berkeley, California

Gay rights are vital

Dear Comrades,

I'd like to support Ian Dunn and John MacDonald (March SO) on the issue of gay rights. To place preconditions on our support for gays is despicable — are we trading our support for theirs?

On the question of gay caucuses, particularly in the unions: in my experience the 'left' in unions have a great tendency to try 'trading', and the SCLV must maintain a principled position: unequivocal support for gay rights and the right of gays to

caucus without preconditions.

Ian and John refer to the question of gay teachers but we should also remember social workers — comrades will recall the case of Ian Davies who was victimised by the (Labour controlled) Tower Hamlets Council in 1976, and the fight by Nalگو for his reinstatement.

Comrades in the SCLV must fight for the Party as a whole to adopt a policy of uncompromising support for gay rights.

DAVE STATHAM
Brent East CLP

Briefing hits the wrong target

I would like to take very strong exception to your comment in the SCLV Briefing [at the London Labour Regional Conference]. You wrote in the report of the debate on composite D, on employment: 'As usual the right wing tried to confuse the issue with empty rhetoric, notably the Newham South delegate...'

It's the first time I have ever been called right wing! The report of my speech did not get it right. I did not say we ought to support government interference in wages because it can lead to the establishment of a minimum wage. I did say that you will not obtain a minimum wage if there is no government interference in wages.

I prefaced my remarks with the comment that I did not believe in wage restraint, that I was against the 5% limit, public spending cuts, the government's economic strategy and high unemployment.

Resolution D on employment did not put forward an alternative economic strategy, nor did it make clear in places what was meant. Nationalising firms that threaten redundan-

cy and bringing the careers service under full trade union control are slogans and it is not clear what they mean. To disagree with a resolution does not mean that the speaker is right wing nor a supporter of government economic policy.

The composite D had some good phrases in it, especially in its condemnation of government policy. However I felt it could not be supported because of what it required the London Region to do.

I do feel that a four-day week without loss of pay would go a long way towards solving unemployment, together with voluntary earlier retirement.

South Staffs LP have already expressed their amusement at your comments — the same GMC criticised me last month for my constant attacks on government policy in the local press — I had demanded Healey's resignation!

By the way, not everyone from Newham South has the same political viewpoint.

GRAHAM LANE
Newham South delegate to London Labour conference; PPC for South Staffordshire

LIVERPOOL: DOWN BUT NOT YET OUT

by
BAS HARDY

SHORTLY BEFORE Christmas 1977, James Henderson stabbed his wife Dawn six times with a hypodermic needle. The autopsy on Dawn later revealed a further 122 puncture marks on her body.

Dawn, who suffered from advanced multiple sclerosis, lived in isolation on the top floor of a ten storey block of flats called Wingate Towers in Huyton. Her husband, a former patient at Carstairs Mental Hospital, told the court that he committed the murder because they were both depressed with their living conditions.

Three months ago a 19-year old woman who was six months pregnant jumped from the 14th floor of Towerdene, a block of flats in Cantliff Farm. She apparently decided on suicide after repeated attempts to get rehoused by the local council.

Brutal and sad cases like these are extreme examples of the hopelessness and despair many working class people feel. They occurred not in the 'inner areas' of the Merseyside region — central Liverpool and Birkenhead — but in the borough of Knowsley, a local authority set up to deal with the housing 'overspill' from Liverpool. The new council estates have just reproduced the problems found in the inner city, and with the destruction of the old community spirit life for the rehoused population has become bleaker.

The 'massacre of Merseyside' has decimated jobs and industry, and housing conditions, education and social services have all suffered in the general economic run-down.

According to the EEC Regional Policy Committee, Liverpool, along with Glasgow, is the most 'down and out' city in Western Europe. In Edge Hill, facing a by-election on Thursday 29th, some areas have 34% unemployment, and 40% of

Edge Hill's houses have no indoor toilets or hot water.

Edge Hill is probably the only constituency in the country which the Liberals can hope to win from Labour, and all but one of its City Councillors are Liberals.

Liberal 'community politics', which pander to parochialism, have caught on because of Labour's neglect. The thankfully departed former Labour MP for Edge Hill, Sir Arthur Irvine QC, neglected his constituency to the extent of not even bothering to visit it during the last four years of his life.

But the image of 'concern for the community' which Liberal candidate David Alton projects isn't matched by his actions as a City Councillor. The main

vate market has been matched by a rundown in the maintenance of existing council housing stock. The multi-storey blocks of flats in Everton known as the Piggeries were sold off at a fraction of the cost it took to build them, and the council is still paying interest on them.

Dilapidated housing is always blamed on vandalism. But there are 50,000 outstanding repairs on Liverpool council housing alone, not including repairs which people don't bother to report. The story is the same in Knowsley where tenants have to wait three years or more for serious repairs to plumbing, roofing, and so on.

The cuts in council spending promote the vicious circle of a rundown of the Direct

there was something amiss from the start, because the radiators were installed on the ceiling! Fortunately (and surprisingly) there were no serious fires, and the councillor was prosecuted.

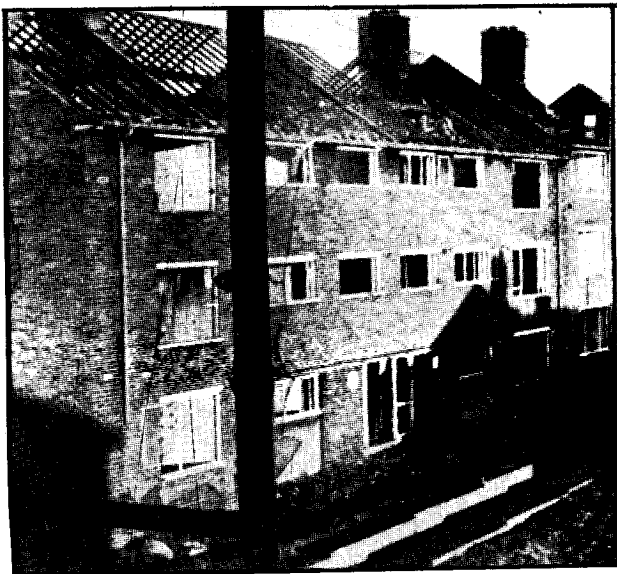
At the other end of the corruption scale are Leatherbarrow and blunder and Temper, an ex-Labour council leader in Kirkby, who conspired together to secure £4 million in housing contracts in the 1960s. A great deal of sub-standard housing in Kirkby, including schools, is the result of Leatherbarrow's quick-buck jerry-building.

The private companies win out in other ways too, especially the banks and financiers. Although the local press complains with front page headlines about £2 million rent arrears, there is no fuss about the fact that £30 million a year is paid by the City Council in bank interest.

There has been a concerted attack on education, too, spearheaded by the Liberals under the label of 'comprehensive reorganisation'. There will be more single-sex places, Paddington and Arundel comprehensives in Liverpool 8 are to be closed, and small secondary modern schools in Edge Hill are to be kept on.

With a view to presenting a socialist answer to this chaos, Edge Hill Constituency Labour Party voted to have its election material decided by the General Management Committee (GMC), rather than just by the agent and candidate. The Region-Office steamrollerled over this vote, announcing that the election address had already been censored by Transport House and sent to the printers.

An opportunity to develop the fight back was lost. The Dunlop workers in Speke, however, are stepping up their fight against the job cuts there. They stress that their battle is not just for their own jobs, but an attempt to show the whole labour movement that unemployment can be combatted. The Liverpool labour movement is down... but not out.



Kirkby — new slums for old

aspect of Liberal housing policy is building and/or selling council housing in cooperation with private firms such as Barratts. Yet the sale of council housing — in the £9,000/£18,000 range — will in no way solve the problems that the vast majority of the 16,000 on Liverpool's housing waiting list face. Workers have to take home at least £55 a week to qualify for a mortgage, and of course the unemployed stand no chance.

The emphasis on the pri-

Works department, deterioration of property, and further excuses for cutting housing expenditure. Private contractors and estate agents are the ones who win out.

There have been numerous cases of bent contractors and councillors on Merseyside, both big-time and small. There was the famous case of a Birkenhead councillor who secured a contract for his own firm to install central heating in council houses. The tenants thought

Managers c

Rate rises or cuts in services? The fight must be against the system that poses these alternatives, argues ANDREW HORNUNG

BRITAIN'S BIG cities are rotting at the core. They are the scene of a vast accumulation of social ills, like a modern version of the plagues of Egypt.

And outside the big cities there are hundreds of towns that equally reveal the sores of poverty and dereliction: dole queues, slums, crumbling social services.

The same capitalist crisis that has blighted these areas also determines that capitalist governments enter on a policy of cut-backs and austerity. Money is cut from housing, health and schooling in an effort to boost

profits.

At the same time dramatic changes have taken place in local government. New city hall management systems make local government more and more remote from the electorate and even from most councillors, and more and more geared to the planning needs of private industry.

Secrecy and bureaucracy are increased. And the crisis breeds corruption, as firms try to ensure their profits by bribing and price-fixing.

The decay of services, the whittling-down of real wages, the loss of jobs, and the increased burden of taxes and rates — all are only different forms of the bosses' drive to make workers pay the cost of the crisis. They don't become any less so for being pushed through by Labour governments or councils and accompanied by assurances that Tories would be worse. The working class needs to resist these attacks.

The battle with wages and job with the struggle for improvements in health, education, provision, recreation, and the struggle for social and against cut-tres round the lo

But central income, forces within govern and aims. We areas are hardest rateable values are usually low fore council rev Any attempt by to operate neatly system and according to ho council can raise workers to po or extortionate rents and rates. To break the

THE RO CITIES O

How Clay Cross d

by
IVAN WELS

"IN 1970, when we paid 55 shillings to the council workers, the auditor didn't complain. But when we paid 33% bonus payments to the workers in 1973 to keep their wages in line with those of other councils, the council's officers refused to cooperate, and the auditor supported them."

Graham Skinner was describing the events which led up to the bankruptcy and disbarment from office of the 'first 11' Clay Cross councillors (of which he was one).

Clay Cross became a symbol in the labour movement for its principled stand against the demands of capitalism. They were the only ones — in the end — to face the

odds when Labour councils one after the other were caving in to the 'law of the land' as then enacted by Ted Heath.

The first issue was the Housing Finance Act, which forced authorities to increase rents in order to place a greater burden of local finance onto the shoulders of the working class.

The second issue was fighting the Tory incomes policy of 1973. The Clay Cross councillors refused to have anything to do with incomes policy or with Tory 'fair rents'.

"At first the officers of the council tried to baffle us with figures, making out we were nothing but thick miners and therefore didn't know anything. But we informed them that they were employed by us, not us by them, and we questioned their figures.

They didn't like

"For instance a small tight Clay Cross, so better positioning manager to allocate council Also he wanted about collecting but we told him The council that the decision taken by the e entatives, not Two of the office suspended for out decisions.

The auditor's 33% bonus pay not be made, council workers lot' and in any no incentive involved.

The Clay C ors, after a changed the ments' into

What answer to the councils' cash crisis?

35 London Labour councillors supporting the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory have put out this call for a conference on Labour and the Crisis of Local Government Finance & Services

1 HARINGEY LABOUR group of councillors has called for a conference to discuss the crisis of local government in London. We are a group of councillors who back the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory and urge full support for this call to discuss in conference a socialist strategy for London Labour.

We are campaigning hard against the Labour Govern-

ment's (and any future Tory government's) cuts in public expenditure and system of cash limits. We have argued for a massive injection of central government funds for the inner city areas to cater for the employment, housing, social and special needs of these decaying areas. We believe that only a fundamental reorganisation of finance to local authorities and a break in the debt stranglehold can solve these problems.

2 The Government's much lauded Inner City Partnership scheme has been little more than a cosmetic exercise. In Lambeth, for example, most of the £5 million annual injection has had to be used to offset cuts in other sources of central government funding like the Area Health Authority budget and locally determined needs allocation. Moreover, councils them-

selves have to find 25% of the partnership money.

3 The whole system of local government financing is wrong. Hackney, for example, the London borough highest on the needs league, is 22nd on the cash receipts per head of population league. A 1 penny rate yields one of the lowest amounts in Inner London, £340,000. In Camden, rich in commercial and industrial property, a 1p rate yields £1 million. 75% of any rate increase in Camden falls on these commercial dwellings. Even more astounding, a 1p rate in Westminster yields £2,880,000 and in the City of London £2,100,000.

4 It is not only central government that exercises a stranglehold over local authorities. The banks and money-lenders take their pound of flesh.

Hackney has an estimated

debt for 1978-9 of £215 million (£200 million in 1977-78). Interest charges on this debt are a colossal £23 million (estimated) for this year — that's almost a third of Hackney's £80 million-plus budget. Put another way, the debt is £1065.45 per person, two years ago it was only (sic) £772.80.

In Islington the total debt in 1974 was £137 million. This year's budget projects it reaching £352 million. Interest payments increased from £10 million in 1973-4 to £36 million for 1978-79. Rate income for the same periods by comparison was £20 million in 1973-74 and £40 million this year.

This means that all the money council tenants pay in rent and much of the rates in these boroughs — and they are typical — is consumed by the money-lenders. Finance capital and government are literally holding

local authorities And the problem every year. At est takes a th penditure.

5 Controlling groups in Hackney, Haringey, Is Camden were radical reform pledging expansion care and nurse day care centres elderly, house improvement an end to slum equate recreation for young and enterprises, direct works eliminate private and a range ity and public jects. This is necessary to continuing inner ci its attendant heightened racial vandalism, vio

or fighters?

ch starts on
a continues
le for im-
housing,
on, nursery
ation, social
port. This
al services
often cen-
al councils.

government,
al councils'
hem to act
limits
dding class
hit because
of property
and there-
ue is low.
councillors
within the
ly spend
much the
condemns
r services
levels of
circle, we

need nationalisation without compensation of the banks and finance institutions, an end to the interest burden, and full central government funding of councils — at the expense of the capitalists.

Labour councils, almost without exception, have presided over the decay without challenging the system. They have operated the system of local government as faithful servants of capitalism and the capitalist state. They have either denied working class residents much needed improvements because 'there's no money', or carried out some of these improvements by raising rents and rates.

They have been ready to say to working class families, 'sorry, no new houses', but they have not been prepared to say to the money-lenders, 'sorry, no interest payments'.

Of course, denying resid-

ents housing, improved schools, and nurseries, and refusing council workers pay increases, are not against the law. And defaulting on interest payments is.

Breaking the chains of capitalism is not something that can be done overnight. Labour councillors are quick to tell you this, and of course they are right.

But where have they started to organise to force concessions from the Government? Where have they gone out to the factories and estates and started organising workers and tenants to strike in support of the council bucking the system? Where have they appealed for support, and earned that support by showing that in any clash they side unconditionally with local workers against the state and the money-lenders?

So long as the working class is not organised for struggle, so long as lobby-



Corrugated iron screens urban decay in Southwark

ing the Minister or sipping sherry with the Secretary of State is the limit of action, so long as workers allow our representatives just to run the system within the system's limits — so long as all this is the case, the councils will be nothing more than another link in the capitalist mechanism for oppressing, robbing, and deceiving the working class.

The socialist Labour councillors are the ones who are not content to be cogs in the

wheel of capitalism and minor servants of the local state machinery — the ones who act, not as good managers getting the best deal for the working class within the system, but as 'cogs' in the working class struggle against capitalism.

Local Labour Parties and trade unions must start organising this struggle now — and judge councillors according to how they line up in the struggle, not according to their promises.

U.S.A.: THE RICHEST AND THE ROTTENEST

by
JOHN CUNNINGHAM

INNER CITY decay and poverty is not confined to Britain. Even the richest country in the capitalist world, the USA, is struck by the blight of 'urban decay'.

The inner cities of New York, Chicago and Cleveland are simply falling apart. It's not just the abandoned tenement blocks, but the lack of essential services like garbage collection and fire service. Probably nowhere are the contradictions of capitalism seen so sharply as in New York. In the money capital of the world, garbage lies knee deep in the streets because the City authorities haven't got enough collectors to pick it up. Those they do have may well be laid off at any time. Private contractors won't do the job as there isn't enough profit in it.

On Wall Street, the financial heart of the capitalist world, millions of dollars change hands every hour, yet for over one million New Yorkers Wall Street may as well be the dark side of the moon. They are a part of the growing army of destitute people who form the base of the American pyramid, living on food stamps because they have no income or insufficient income.

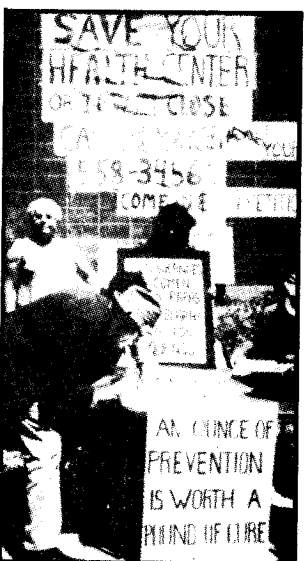
In 1978, 884,426 people were on the New York welfare register. The figure for 1976 was 1,002,847, but the decline is due to the considerable tightening up of eligibility for welfare. Not that welfare grants are a big deal — a family of four can expect a maximum of \$258 a month, with separate payments of up to \$218 for rent. To give you some idea of what this means in American terms, the average weekly wage of a public transport/utility work in the USA in 1977 was \$278.

On December 16th, 1978, the city of Cleveland, Ohio defaulted on \$15.5 million worth of loans from the city's banks and thus became the first major city in the USA to become bankrupt since the Great Depression of the '30s. Mayor Kucinich's answer to this is to raise the city income tax by

50% and to lay off 15% of the city's workforce, including 400 safety officers, 250 police officers (Cleveland's police have twice been on strike in 1978 over other lay-offs) and 150 firefighters. The lay-off of the firefighters is particularly deadly, as the city's fire department was already 300 workers below the safe limit.

The hardest hit in America's cities are, of course, the blacks. According to a report by the National Urban League, one in every four blacks is either unemployed, underemployed, or has just given up looking. For black youth in the cities it is estimated that 50% have no work and no chance of getting it.

All American cities have to be self-financing, and in the heartland of capitalism what more could one expect. The system has now broken down, as it inevitably must.



Urban crisis means cuts even in the cities of the USA

The working people have always financed the cities through their taxes, but you cannot squeeze money out of people who haven't got any. The multi-million corporations get away with the most minimal taxes, many using all sorts of financial skulduggery and swindling to get their hands on public money to finance their projects.

The corporations should pay for the crisis of the inner cities, not the working people, black or white.

PUTTING CAPITALISM

defied the system

that!
we live in
community in
were in a
an the hous-
know who to
houses to
to be hard
rent arrears,
to forget it".
ers insisted
as would be
ected repres-
the officers.
ers were then
at carrying

ated that the
ents should
because the
were 'a lazy
se there was
scheme in-

ss council-
few weeks,
bonus pay-
ment for

standby duty'. The officers, later supported by other staff, took on the role of spokesmen for Ted Heath, bleating about the councillors 'wasting ratepayers' money' and breaking the law.

Nevertheless, the councillors felt that they would continue to carry out the programme they were elected on — not foist the capitalist crisis onto working people. This was especially so since it could all be paid for out of rates without big increases. (Clay Cross did have higher rates than other areas in Derbyshire, but there was not a crisis situation then like in London now, and there were no complaints).

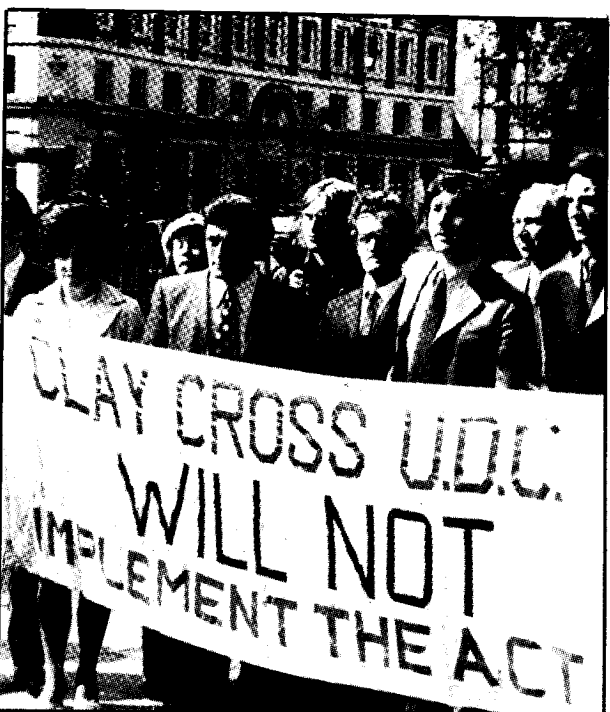
Later, as a protest against high interest rates, the councillors refused to pay money to the Public Works Loan Board. But when loans

dried up they were forced to give in.

The councillors had overwhelming support in Clay Cross, but still they were disbarred from office, held personally responsible for the 'surcharges' on the council workers' bonus payments and the 'rent arrears', and made bankrupt.

All eleven still face that situation today, with no help forthcoming from the Labour Party National Executive (despite conference resolutions) and with the active antagonism of the Labour Government.

This should be a source of shame and anger for us in the labour movement. Clay Cross showed how to stand up for working-class interests against the demands of the system. We should follow its example — and make sure we win this time!



Clay Cross 'first eleven': they took on central Government

to ransom.
gets worse
resent inter-
d of all ex-

Labour
broughts like
Lambeth,
ngton and
elected on
manifestos
on of child
y provision,
es for the
uilding and
programmes,
housing, ad-
on facilities
l, municipal
ansion of
artments to
the profiteer-
of commun-
works pro-
e minimum
avert con-
decay with
blight of
prejudice,
nce, unem-

6 We are also committed to freezing rents while wages are restrained and paying local authority employees a £60 minimum wage for a 35 hour week. We oppose the rent increases in Islington and Hackney which put an extra penalty on council tenants over that which they are already paying.

7 We have no time for the Tories' hypocritical carping about 'spend-thrift councils'. They have no time for the unemployed, those in housing need, the sick and the victims of their market system which throws the weakest to the wall. Their policy of savage cuts in spending will only exacerbate inner city decay.

8 But short of abandoning our manifestos we see only two ways of implementing our programmes for

inner city rejuvenation.

One is enormous rate increases or a form of deficit financing. For example, in Hackney it is estimated that a 233% rate rise would be necessary to begin implementing our main pledges. Clearly this is not on. It is not on because it still hits at working people's pockets. It is also an illusory solution while the present system of finance exists. Rate rises can only be a stop-gap measure to maintain jobs and services and marginal expansion.

9 Hence we are fighting for a massive increase in central government finance and rate support. We want to see public ownership of banking and finance and a centralised scheme of finance protected from inflation. Enormous resources and labour exist in the inner cities to renovate production and services. The financial

lubricant is necessary to set them in motion.

Private enterprise is daily failing to employ these resources and meet social needs. That is why we believe production should be geared to socially useful products and requires a socialist reconstruction of society.

10 The current Labour Government is refusing to take responsibility for the inner city areas. Hence councillors are faced with the Hobson's choice of bankrupting the council or bankrupting the people. In Lambeth the rate has been increased by 39.8%. 28% is merely to stand still, the rest is to continue expansion programmes. Camden's rate is up 17.7%, but because of the high rateable values this can also finance the local settlement of £60 and a 35 hour week to the council manual workers.

11 As socialist councillors we are committed to the provision of jobs and services. Until we successfully force the Government to restructure finance to local authorities we are forced to use the least anti-working class means of raising finance. We aim to coordinate activities in as many boroughs as possible to achieve this fundamental overhauling of local authority finance.

Small initiatives are already being made in this direction by Lambeth, Islington and Hackney, but these are behind closed doors and inadequate to achieve the necessary changes. We need to turn the local councils out into the community, involving the Labour Parties, tenants and entire organised labour movement. Only with the full involvement of the working class community can we build a strong and united movement to renew

the inner cities.

12 Mindful of these problems we call on all Labour Groups, CLPs, trade unions and labour movement bodies to support the call for a conference on the crisis of local government finance and services. We ask you to sponsor the conference and come as delegates or visitors. The conference is scheduled for Saturday June 9th at Lambeth Town Hall.

TED KNIGHT
SYLVIA INGERSON
BRYN DAVIES
MIKE JERRAM
BILL BOWRING
KEVIN MOORE
PAUL MOORE
MATTHEW WARBURTON
[Lambeth council]
JOHN SWEENEY
RON HEISLER
DINAH MORLEY

KEITH LICHMAN
PETER KAHN
PATRICK KODIKARA
GEORGE ARMSTRONG
[Hackney council]
JENNY MORRIS
VAL VENESS
ALEX FARRELL
CATHY POWLOWSKI
JANE STREATHER
IAN WILSON
[Islington council]
KEN LIVINGSTONE
ANNA BOWMAN
PAT DRISCOLL
NEAL FLETCHER
MICK MORRISSEY
PHIL TURNER
TOM DUVINE
[Camden council]
JEREMY CORBYN
RON BLANCHARD
COLIN SHERIFF
JANE CHAPMAN
BERNIE GRANT
[Haringey council]
ENDA DONNELLY
[Hounslow council]
BOB LEWIS
[Hillingdon council]

We can't be stand-in class enemies

by
PETER KAHN

THE PROPOSAL to increase domestic rates in Hackney by 50% can be largely explained by the refusal of successive Governments to inject the necessary large sums of money into the borough. Instead, there has been a huge shift of resources away from deprived inner city areas.

The Government has handed back to big business much-needed financial resources which should rightly have been directed towards local authorities. Last year the payola to private enterprise amounted to a staggering £1,200 million; or £11.1 million which should have gone to each of the 108 local authorities.

In Hackney, where a penny rate means only £340,000, that means that the ratepayers are subsidising private enterprise to the tune of 32p in the £, because that is how much the council has to increase its rates in order to get that £11.1 million.

In fact, the situation is worse than that. While central government has the ability (if not the will) to pay that money to local authorities, it prefers to engage in cash limits and reduction of subsidies.

With the Inner City Partnership scheme, central government (belatedly) recognises certain inner urban

areas as being especially deprived and acknowledges that under existing arrangements they are not able to cope. But granting Partnership status is all that the government is prepared to do. The receipts are not very high (£5 million in Hackney), and 25% of that has to be raised locally.

With the bite of cash limits and the rise in interest rates forcing local councils to consider swingeing rate increases, now is an excellent time for united action by left councillors to force the Government's hand.

In Hackney council, the leadership are to put up the rate by 23p in the £, but this will still mean some hefty cuts in services. What then is the prospect for Hackney residents? Well, they pay their money and they get no choice.

Minimum

The election last May was fought on a manifesto which represents a minimum programme for Hackney. But nobody expected the people of Hackney to have to pick up the bill. The introduction of the manifesto would cost a rate rise of at least 233% in the first year alone! No — unless central government money is forthcoming it will mean no improvements to Hackney.

Some left-wing councillors are calling for a much larger

increase in the rates which will at least enable the council to implement some part of its Manifesto. My response to that sort of argument is "Why not go the whole way with a 233% rate rise and force the Hackney people to foot the entire bill?"

Additionally, since left councillors in Hackney don't control the council, I suspect that any extra revenue from further increases in the rates would be given to private enterprise as loans (this mysterious doling-out of local rates is called 'economic regeneration' — but doesn't it sound just like the central government's £1.2 billion?)

The correct course of action at this time in Hackney is to resist any rate rise at all. We stood for a minimum programme, and that is the only sure base upon which to build a campaign against the present system of local government finance.

It is argued that the campaign can still be built after a huge rate increase — but I simply don't see how local councillors can be stand-in class enemies, hitting working people's pockets to the tune of about 86% and at the same time saying "join us in a fight-back". Rather, I suspect, the fight-back will be against that massive increase.

How then does the council resist rate rises?

The answer isn't easy.

First, it must refuse to implement cuts in any services.

Second, it must move to a rapid expansion of services in every area where they are weak. An expansion of services that can be seen and felt by people to represent an improvement in their lives.

Third, it must publicise what it is doing by meeting local people and organisations such as Trades Councils, tenants' associations, single-issue campaigns, etc., and getting their support to pressurise central government.

Bold

Fourth, it must be prepared for the eventual bankruptcy of the council. Given that any expansion programme would take time to move into top gear, one might expect that this would occur after about eight months. At that time central government would try to put a commissioner in to manage the council's affairs.

That gives a bold and adventurous socialist council eight months or so in which to build the popular support they need to resist any central government intervention, to build the working class unity that governments can't defeat.

If a council can start these major programmes, it leaves any government with an impossible task of trying to stop them. What government —

Tory or Labour — would dare to tell people in a deprived inner city area that they have no right to improve the squalid environment that the government itself recognised was appalling when it first granted partnership status?

How could any government go about doing it? Mass sackings? I doubt that in an area which already suffers from 12% unemployment. How would a government buy its way out of a legally-signed building or rehabilitation contract? How would a government cut back increased under-five provision when Hackney is already, or still would be, well below the national average for such provision?

And if the government insists on crushing the council, let the people be in no doubt about their locally elected representatives. Let them fight against that government policy together.

Nobody can believe that central government will, of its own volition, pay up for local services. Sooner or later there has to be a confrontation. I only hope we have that fight sooner rather than later, and that we haven't been party to savage attacks on the living standards of the people of Hackney before then. If we have been, we must not be surprised to see other people leading the working class fight back — against ourselves as the willing agents of central government.



The Stock Exchange: finance capital's temple

What the Town Halls do

BY 1974 local authorities were employing 2½ million people — 11% of the country's entire workforce. The councils accounted for 31% of all government spending.

In the early days of capitalism, there was unchecked squalor in the slums of the new factory cities. Except in the very short term, this was a spendthrift policy from a strictly profit-making point of view: capitalism needs a regular supply of more or less healthy, more or less educated labour.

But the bosses themselves always tend to take the short-term view. And so the growth of public services to their present scope — although it corresponds to capitalist needs — has been prompted at every stage by working class action and pressure.

Now councils run a wide range of services: social and community workers, homes for the elderly and for children, 'meals on wheels', parks, libraries... The two biggest items of council spending are housing [62% of capital spending] and education [52% of spending from current income]; other sizeable items are transport and police.

There is a two-tier structure for councils. County Councils are responsible for education, police and fire services. District councils are responsible for housing. The National Health Service is run by appointed Area Health Authorities, on which councils have only a couple of representatives.

The London structure is different. The police force is run by the non-elected Metropolitan Police Authority, which takes a slice of council's rate income. The Greater London Council runs some housing estates, and education in inner London is run by a separate authority (ILEA).

In most big cities councillors are elected every four years. This May about a third of the councillors in provincial cities come up for re-election on a rotating basis.

Councils' income comes from four main sources: council house rents, rates, central government grants, and borrowing. Rents are about a third of the total income; central government grants are about 60% of the remainder. The rates — just over 10% of the total tax income collected in this country — are collected by district and borough councils, and a slice is then passed on to county councils (or the GLC), water authorities, or the Metropolitan Police.

RATES: WHO PAYS WHAT

Domestic	44%
Industrial	14%
Offices	10%
Shops	10%
Other commercial	9%
All others	13%

(1973-4 figures)

RATE INCREASES: TWO VIEWS

Two Hackney councillors debate the issue

Raise rates, begin the fight

by
KEITH LICHMAN

IN THIS election year, with Tories promising ever more beguilingly to give everything away if only they can get their hands on it, the paradoxical position of socialists in local government has reached crisis proportions. Throughout the country Labour councils, fundamentally committed to the extensive provision of public services and urban improvement, as part of the socialist redistribution of resources, have been forced to raise local rates by unprecedented amounts.

The biggest increases have been in London. In Hackney, the proposed increase, much paraded in the Tory press as a 'swingeing' 50% (on the domestic rate) is in fact 23p, a similar figure to the increases in Brent (22p; 38.6% on domestic rate), Haringey (22.0p; 29.5%), Islington (20.3p, 32%) and Lambeth (23.9p, 39.8%).

There are two main causes for these increases. Firstly the annual rate of inflation of about 10%. Secondly the loss of subsidy on the housing accounts brought about by the Government's policy of discouraging new building developments, for which High Cost Subsidy was available, and encouraging rehabilitation, which does not draw significant subsidy. In Hackney, the Housing Account received 53% gov-

ernment subsidy in '75-'76. In '79-'80 it will receive only 40% subsidy. To make up the deficit from the rates on this alone would mean roughly a 10p increase.

The position has been further worsened in Hackney by the cumulative misjudgements of an incompetent right-wing Labour council. Between 1975 and 1979, the total rate increase was 5p, barely a penny a year. The result was that in '78-'79, the Hackney domestic rate of 46.5p was the lowest of the 33 London boroughs, and in most cases by a wide margin.

As a consequence, the borough that was compelled to instate the highest percentage rate increase in the country is in the ludicrous predicament of levying the 14th lowest rate in London, while needing to cut services and jobs in order to prevent the increase from being still higher.

To further embitter the pill, the 1978 council election manifesto, seen by the left as a minimum programme of improvements, desperately needed in Hackney, has been jettisoned by the ruling right-wing majority.

The need to confront this problem realistically has thrown the left into disarray, with some of the usually most reliable comrades reaching for their deadliest utopian rhetoric. A number intend to vote (with the lone Tory on the council) for no

rate increase at all, arguing that central government should be made to pay for Hackney's problems, and that if we cannot have all the manifesto at once, then we should have none of it.

The left is agreed that we must fight for a new and socialist system of local government funding. In Hackney, loan charges alone swallowed up a quarter of the borough's £92 million expenditure in '78-'79. Clearly this money would have been better spent in Hackney than by City financiers.

To expect, however, that money will be handed over to us by a government breathing its last gasp, or by an incoming government, whether of the blue-nosed Callaghan variety or of the true-blue Thatcher type, simply because we demand it, is so far fetched as to

deserve a page to itself in Grimm's Fairy Tales.

The issue — whatever we would like it to be — is not whether Hackney's services are paid for by central government or by the people of Hackney. The issue is whether we have the services at all. The necessary implication of a nil rate increase, of savage cuts in services and jobs, seems to have been overlooked by some members of the left, in spite of the fact that such cuts are the rallying cry for Tories throughout the country.

The only principled position that doesn't avoid reality is to resist all cuts in services and to fight for an expansion in accord with manifesto promises. Unsatisfactory though they are, rates in inner city areas effect a significant redistribution of income from capitalists to the working class. Even in Hackney with its shortage of industry and employment, 58% of the rate revenue in '79-'80 will come from non-domestic sources, including commerce and industry. In 1978-79, the average Hackney domestic rate payer paid £2.24 a week. The new rate will put the weekly average up to £3.34, compared, say, to £6 in Camden. Even the poorest inhabitant of Camden would prefer to remain there where the services are better, than move to low-rated and poorly-served Hackney.

An increase of 40p instead of 23p on the Hackney

rate would mean an average weekly rate of £4.16 and would net an additional £5.8 million, enough to ensure no cuts in services and to make worthwhile starts on key programme areas from the manifesto. It would also enable the Council to begin a campaign to educate the Hackney ratepayers about where their hard-earned money goes, and in particular to explain that debt charges in '78-'79 cost them a rate equivalent of 66p in the pound. The fight against capitalist finance needs to move people — not a handful of idealists — and to move, people need facts, and decent services to defend.

There is no doubt that the higher rate, although much less than neighbouring Haringey, would cause hardship. Not to levy it, however, would cause even greater hardship. Those most in need of the homes, jobs and social services and amenities a Council can provide are the poorest in the community, and they would benefit most from a steep rate increase.

It is not a solution to Hackney's problems, but it does at least begin the fight. A party that washes its hands of difficult immediate problems while waiting piously for the revolution has nothing to offer, and contributes nothing to the struggle for socialism. The fight is about today's issues, not tomorrow's.



Money-men like Keith Joseph gain from council's debts

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN TEHRAN

by
MARY CORBISHLEY

"THE NUMBER of women who have participated in demonstrations and meetings is unprecedented in Iranian history", Azwar Tabari told a packed audience of over 300 women at the Socialist Feminist conference in London on March 24th. Recently returned from Tehran, Azwar spoke enthusiastically of this 'first historic opportunity to organise for women's rights'.

After the insurrection in February, several women's groups were formed to organise for International Women's Day on March 8th. The first planning meeting of an ad hoc organising committee attracted 250 women instead of the expected handful.

The anger of women was rising daily. Prior to the insurrection, the religious leaders had either evaded questions concerning women's equality or given vague answers. Many women had believed their situation would change under Khomeiny, only to discover that the Bakhtiari government's ban on abortion was reaffirmed, the Family Protection Act was suspended without replacement, and finally, on March 7th, Ayatollah Khomeiny announced that women could still work but they must wear the veil.

The reaction of women was overwhelming. "On March 8th they poured out spontan-



March 8th, and 20,000 women marched in Tehran for the right to dress as they please.

eously onto the streets to join the march. Several girls' high schools decided to go on strike. For days afterwards there were continuous demonstrations and rallies. The rally on March 8th, in the evening, was attended by feminists from many countries, and messages of solidarity from abroad were received. "It gave the women confidence and a sense of solidarity with their sisters abroad which they had never felt before".

At present in Tehran there are four women's groups. Three of them are sections of political organisations, the Tudeh party and two Maoist groups. The other is called the "Women's Rights Defence Group".

Groups are now being set up in the neighbourhoods and

workplaces. At the moment, they mainly involve middle class and student women, but working class women are becoming more active.

The demands the women are raising concern equal rights at work and in society. Free childcare has been one of the central concerns of women over the last year.

It came up because women wanted to take part in the demonstrations and meetings. The demand is aimed not simply to enable women to go out to work but to enable them to get out of the home and play a fuller part in society.

Women also want freedom from oppressive laws like having to obtain a husband's permission in order to travel. Equal opportunity to work and equal pay are further demands

The questions of abortion and sexuality are not raised, however. "Women are just not used to talking about such things, you never talk about your personal life. In fact", Ahwaz said, "there has been almost a puritanical backlash, as issues such as more open sexual relationships are associated with western decadence, with imperialism".

Although the movement is independent of any political organisation, it has the support of the revolutionary socialist groups, the Moscow-line Tudeh party, the bourgeois-liberal National Democratic Front, the Fedayeen, and the left-Muslim Mujahedeen.

"In general", said Azwar, "the reaction of male workers has been positive. They are grateful for and support this continuing opposition to the government". The oil workers already had equal pay and equal opportunities for women as one of the demands of their strike committee.

"Women welcomed the participation of men in the demonstrations. They see their struggle as part of the class struggle, they support and welcome the struggle of national minorities like the Kurds".

Militant women in Iran are planning a National Conference in April or May. They need maximum international support. An International Women's Day rally in Australia sent a message of solidarity to Iran, and the Socialist Feminist conference discussed plans for sending a delegation of British women to Iran.

KURDS FIGHT FOR THEIR FREEDOM

FIGHTING IN the Kurdish city of Sanandaj, in western Iran, has stopped for the moment, but the Khomeiny government's emissaries have been left in no doubt that fighting will start again if the Tehran regime tries to impose itself on the Kurds.

20,000 Kurds chanted their demands: that the army should be withdrawn and that the Kurdish region should be given 'self-determination'.

The Kurdish people is divided between five countries, and its national rights are crushed everywhere. The fall of the Shah gave a considerable boost to the struggle of the Kurds in Iran. Some want a large degree of autonomy

within Iran, some a federal solution, and others a separate state.

But the Khomeiny government appointed one of its supporters — a Shi'a Muslim, like the overwhelming majority of Iranians — to take charge of Iranian Kurdistan, which is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim. Troops loyal to the Tehran government supported the appointment and fighting flared up between the Kurds and the government garrison.

Two thousand armed peshmergas (Kurdish guerrilla fighters) chanted, "We want an autonomous Kurdistan and a democratic Iran. We are not afraid to die. Kurdistan or kabrestan [the cemetery]". Demands were made that the garrison release Kurdish hostages, and the Kurdish insurgents denounced the "anti-popular army that must be destroyed and replaced by a people's army".

The rebels made a pile of empty mortar shells and set up a placard reading: "This is the revolutionary government's New Year present to the Kurdish people". (The Iranian New Year is March 21).

The Tehran government has promised to give Kurdistan the same rights as states have within the USA. But it remains to be seen how much these promises are worth.

ANDREW HORNUNG



Kurdish leader Mustapha Barzani waged war on Iraq with Iranian support, and was then double-crossed by the Shah.

NUCLEAR POWER: A POLICY FOR WORKERS' UNITY

IN APRIL 1976 a weekend camp held on the site proposed for the Torness nuclear power station in East Lothian was attended by about 100 people. Two years later a march and two-day occupation involved three to four thousand people.

On May 4-7 this year, a Torness gathering, organised by the Torness Alliance, will be held just off the site, where work has now started. It is expected to attract as many people as last year, or even more.

This growing anti-nuclear movement has provoked debates within the Scottish labour movement. At a heated debate last summer in Edinburgh Trades Council (TC), a motion from a branch of CoHSE calling for outright opposition to Torness and support for SCRAM (the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Nuclear Menace) was narrowly defeated.

Official labour movement

policy is in favour of the rapid development of nuclear power. The submission of the TUC to the Windscale Inquiry sums it up: 'Economic growth is needed to secure full employment and rising living standards... Economic growth requires increasing supplies of energy... The nuclear industry will need to be able to make a sizable contribution to Britain's energy supplies by the 1990s.'

The main unions in the industry, such as the GMWU, TGWU, EETPU and AUEW, all support the Government's nuclear programme. So do ASTMS, TASS and the NUM although some of them express concern about health and safety.

However, the bland acceptance of government nuclear policy by these unions is now coming under question. Both TASS and ASTMS have debated anti-nuclear motions at annual conferences. The

NUM in Scotland are opposed to Torness, and UCATT has passed a motion which questions the desirability of the programme.

At the 1977 TUC, local government union Nalco proposed an amendment critical of nuclear power. It was rejected. In 1977 Dumfries and Galloway Nalco had a motion against nuclear waste dumping passed by the Scottish TUC, although the STUC's general policy is in favour of nuclear power.

Last month at the Scottish Labour Party conference, a strongly pro-nuclear motion from the EETPU was passed, as well as a motion from Edinburgh Pentlands CLP which called for more public debate. Next month a CPSCA motion is to be put to the STUC which also just calls for debate in the labour movement.

These motions have been inspired by the 'left wing' of the anti-nuclear movement,

consisting of the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) and Energy 2000 (president, Arthur Scargill). Armed with facts and figures they have highlighted some of the key issues: the erosion of trade union and civil rights, the inadequacies of safety standards, the problem of disposal of nuclear waste, the resulting unemployment in other industries such as the coal industry.

However, at the same time as knocking down the myths propagated by the establishment, the anti-nuclear movement sets up a new myth — the idea that public debates, Government policy reviews, or (for the more radical) bans on nuclear development, can solve the problems under capitalism.

In short, the socialism of SERA is utopian; it becomes a new kind of reformism which Tribunes and MPs

like Robin Cook can latch onto.

On a different tack, a motion passed recently by Edinburgh South NUPE to go to Edinburgh Trades Council put the issues of nuclear power in the context of class struggle.

It calls for full trade union rights and workers' control of safety in the industry. 'All measures judged (by the workers' investigations) necessary (for safety) to be taken even if these make the further development of the nuclear power programme financially unviable compared to other energy options'.

The resolution insists on action to protect jobs in the energy industries, through shortening the working week.

Although the TC did not select the motion to go to the STUC, the TC delegates will be supporting these arguments.

Our approach has been

criticised as unrealistic, as the level of consciousness of the workers in the nuclear industry is not such that they are raising demands for safety protection and shorter hours. This is hardly surprising considering the political vetting that goes on before and during employment in the industry. But recent actions at both Aldermaston and Windscale suggest that nuclear workers, given the solidarity and encouragement of the rest of the labour movement, will find the confidence to start raising these demands.

Unity of nuclear and non-nuclear workers must be at the heart of any labour movement strategy on nuclear power.

DAVE SMITH
Secretary, Edinburgh
Science for the People group
[in personal capacity]
and **JOHN MACDONALD**

A fake peace in the Middle East

Mayors and leaders of the West Bank and Gaza issued this declaration

"We stand as one with all of our Palestinian people. We have reviewed the Camp David Agreements, and we wish to state that we reject them.

The so-called 'self-government' proposals for the occupied West Bank and Gaza only legitimate and strengthen the Israeli occupation.

1. The Palestinian Arab people inside and outside occupied Palestine are one; united through history, destiny and struggle.
2. The 'self-government' proposal is totally rejected in form and content because it strengthens Israeli occupation and perpetuates Is-

THE NEW Egypt-US-Israel deal lays down a timetable for Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai peninsula, the abandonment of Jewish settlements and military bases there and the creation in the Gaza strip of a degree of limited local autonomy. The diplomatic 'breakthroughs' did not lie in any solution to the question of Jerusalem or the West Bank, but in persuading Sadat to make a deal which did not commit Israel to the slightest change of policy on these questions.

Sadat, of course, in order to cover his sellout of the Palestinians, tried to make

- raeal oppression of our people.
3. The Palestinian people affirm and insist that the PLO is its sole legitimate representative and refuse any trusteeship or alternative, no

out that the agreement did provide points of linkage with those issues, even if they weren't spelled out clearly. But that idea was shot down within hours by Begin himself.

Addressing the Knesset, he ruled out any possibility of Palestinian statehood in the West Bank or Gaza, or of a comprehensive withdrawal. 'It will not happen. We shall not agree to it, we shall not allow it, we shall not make it possible.' And in replying to an opposition MP, he made it clear that 'autonomy will not lead to Palestinian statehood — there is no power on earth that will force us to allow a

- matter in what form or shape.
4. We look forward to a just and lasting peace in the area, achieved only through our people's exercise of their right to self-determination, and

Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria and Gaza...

Begin also stressed that expropriation of Arab lands and Zionist settlement on the West Bank would continue.

Israel had to be dragged to the negotiating table by the US and granted billions of dollars to shift at all. Egypt is bankrupt and very much a US dependency now. The deal will help stop up the holes in her economy and at the same time tie Egypt more closely to the US.

For the present, the other Arab states are expressing unanimous hostility to the agreement.

JAMES DAVIES

- national independence, after total Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories and after establishing an independent Palestinian state.
5. Arab Palestinian sover-

eighty must return to Arab Jerusalem which is an indivisible part of the West Bank. This is a historical and spiritual cause which cannot be compromised.

Signed by over 121 individuals, including the mayors and deputy mayors of 18 major towns and villages; municipal and village councillors; representatives of unions, professional associations and charitable societies.

NB: Point Four implies that there are legitimate boundaries to a state of Israel which would be respected if the Israelis withdrew within them.

For our part, we do not accept the legitimacy of the state of Israel at all. The Zionist state is nothing but the imperialist-backed expropriation of the national rights of the Palestinians.

A setback at Falmouth

by
PETER TEBBUTT
[PPC, Falmouth]

200 WORKERS at the Falmouth Ship Repair Yards have already accepted voluntary redundancies. These are part of the 450 job cuts demanded by British Shipbuilders as their price for temporarily withdrawing their threat to close the yard completely. Accepting the redundancies is a big defeat in the fight to keep the yard open. It undermines the case for saving jobs, and shows the bosses a weakness they will exploit.

Now the management are using their opportunity to get the Falmouth workers to work themselves out of a job faster. Overtime is being worked again in the yard, and the workers' main advantage in any bargaining — having ships stuck in the yard waiting for repairs — is being lost.

Of the three ships that were in the yard when British Shipbuilders threatened to close it, one has already left and another (a large ferry) is due to have its repairs completed by Wednesday 28th March. It was partly the thought of having ships worth £15 million left stranded that forced British Shipbuilders to any sort of deal at all. Now they have no such fears.

For the workers who accepted redundancy, the future looks none too rosy either. The actual amounts they are to be paid have not yet been announced, and the chances of getting other skilled work — or any work at all — in Falmouth are slim. For most, getting another job will mean leaving the area altogether,

and adverts for skilled jobs in towns hundreds of miles away, in Coventry or Scotland, are the only ones in the local papers. The management are making the generous offer of paying the interest on any bank loans needed for moving house — out of the workers' own redundancy pay!

The Falmouth Docks Action Group is still fighting against the very real prospect of a closure. It is calling for the Government and the nationalised British Shipbuild-

ers to open the yard to new work, to invest £2½ million immediately and a further £4 million over the next 12 months, and to push through no more redundancies. The group is also calling for a guarantee from the Government that the yard will be kept open for at least the next two years.

However, two years would hardly be a real guarantee for jobs. The world crisis in shipbuilding is not a passing problem.

At the end of 1978, world

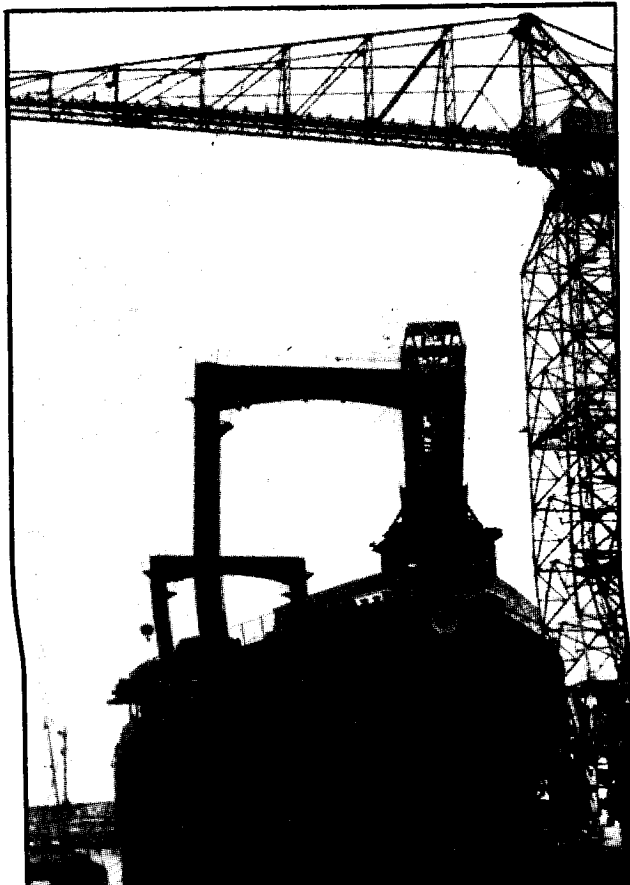
shipbuilding order books were down 30% from 1977. For British Shipbuilders, new orders fell by December 1978 to only a quarter their 1977 levels in both tonnage and prices.

It is the Falmouth workers, and other shipyard workers, who are being made to pay for British Shipbuilders' problems in the dog-eat-dog world of international capitalist competition. These problems will not simply go away. The question is: must the workers pay?

An offer by Christopher Bailey of Bristol Channel Shiprepairers to buy out Falmouth was met by the government with immediate talks, before they even bothered to talk to the workers in the yard. Now it's been dropped only because Bailey himself has lost interest — probably waiting for a better opportunity when the workers might accept such a deal with the 'gratitude', and at the sort of price, which he wants.

This is a familiar story in Cornwall. 'Entrepreneurial spivs' move in with offers to 'save' the area. The local papers splash front page headlines like 'new hope for the unemployed', and any real fightback is deflected by false hopes. The last example was the offer by a shadowy American businessman called Sprinkle to save the Wheal Jane tin mine. It later turned out Sprinkle had no money.

The attempts to buy off workers in Cornwall with 'new hopes', while redundancies are pushed through, can't go on working for ever. You can't compromise with capitalism, the only option is to fight the redundancies and closures or be driven under.



The crisis in shipbuilding is world wide. Orders have slumped to the lowest level since 1965.



Why the miners voted yes

by
PAUL OWEN

THE MINERS' majority vote to accept their 9% offer is a measure of how the Labour Government and its agent of intervention in the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the bureaucracy, have been able to control and manipulate the miners over the last four and a half years.

The 'don't rock the boat' loyalty which a large majority of the rank and file have to the Labour Party has had a subduing effect. And a series of packages — bonus schemes, travelling time and washing allowances, and a watered down version of the NUM's early retirement demand — have sugarcoated the token pay awards made since 1975.

The incentive bonus scheme accepted in the last ballot reintroduced productivity bargaining into the industry and also threatened the national unity of the

NUM by setting regions with rich coalfaces against those with poor and difficult faces.

The vote by several areas to reject the current pay deal — which forced the ballot — showed militancy is not dead in the rank and file. But Arthur Scargill's silence didn't help. An energetic and aggressive campaign for the 40% and 30 hours claim was needed. Scargill has never risen much above the horizons of regional militancy and celebrity demagoguery. Now it seems the gravitational pull of the presidency is also having its effect.

The task facing socialists is to build a rank and file movement in the NUM, which will rely not on one or two celebrities but on 200,000, and which will fight for a working-class answer to the National Coal Board and any wage-freezing, job-slashing government.

Fisher angles for defeat

by
JOHN MACDONALD
[Edinburgh
South Hospitals
NUPE]

THE NATIONAL Committee of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) has voted to call off action by hospital ancillary workers. As we go to press it is considering ending the ambulance crews' industrial action too.

Commenting on the London crews' vote to return to normal working, NUPE official Giles Duncan made it clear: "There is still considerable dissatisfaction among London ambulance men with their pay offer". Many of those voting to go back to work have simply given up trying to push the union leaderships into fighting on their behalf. They know they haven't got justice.

They know that Alan Fisher, NUPE's leader, wanted to sell out. Fisher has hidden behind the excuse that NUPE can't "go it alone" when the other three health unions — CoHSE, TGWU and GMWU — have agreed to the 9% plus £1 offer. But NUPE has a majority among the hospital workers. Behind the scenes, Fisher was strongly encouraging the other unions to 'compel' NUPE to go

back. Fisher was sacrificing his members' interests in order not to 'rock the boat' for the Government. He has admitted that "The general election is clearly a factor which has to be taken into account. It is possible... we may see the Government defeated and a general election declared".

While Fisher wriggled, NUPE's rank and file was showing its militancy — fighting not only for their claim, but against wide-

scale organised scabbing and the threat of dismissal by Health Authorities. While the national negotiators were agreeing the 9% plus £1 offer, 8,000 ancillaries in Derbyshire walked out because the Area Health Authority sent fifty laundry workers home for working to rule.

In Stafford, 150 workers walked out of the General Infirmary after management threatened to cut off their pay if action was not stopped.

In Scotland, NUPE members voted 8-to-1 against the present deal, and the back to work call will not be readily followed. As that call went out, Glasgow hospitals were admitting emergencies only, because of a laundry workers' strike.

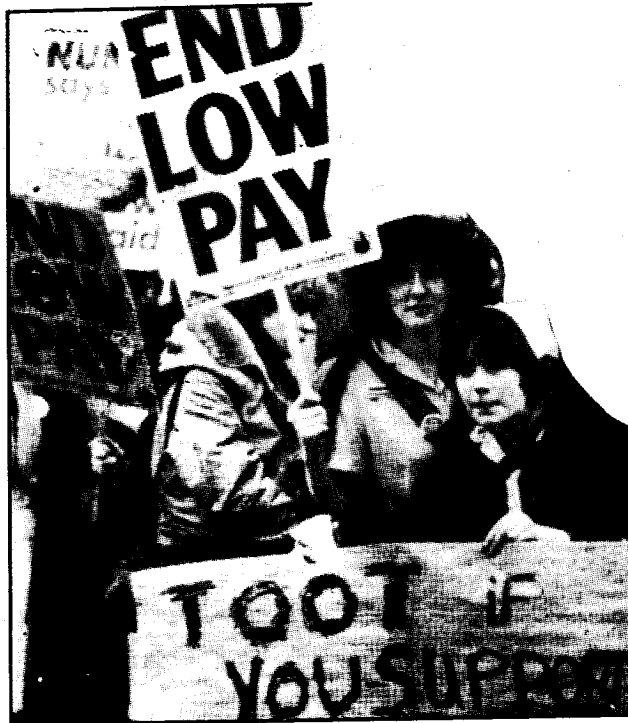
In Edinburgh, the ancillaries' anger against the Lothian Health Board spilled over on the 26th when members from the North and South hospitals occupied the Board's offices while the unions were negotiating the deal. In Edinburgh the strike wave has been growing, not petering out.

The fact that the nurses' representatives have accepted an offer was, of course, a setback for the health workers. Fisher will not be slow to use it to justify his call for a return to work. Yet there are hardly any health workers that have failed to draw some important lessons from this strike:

★ An all-out strike would have been infinitely more powerful than the 'selective action' strategy.

★ Keeping key sectors out of the fight — like the water workers — weakens the efforts of the others.

★ Strong rank and file organisation is needed. Reliance on the Fishers of this world, let alone the Donnets, Spanswicks, and Evanses, is a recipe for failure.



EVENTS

Saturday 31 March. Committee against Repression in Iran conference. 11am at University College, Gower St, London WC1. Credentials for labour movement delegates and observers from CARL, Box 4, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

Saturday 7 April. Demonstration against 'Sus' organised by the PNP Youth and the Labour Party Young Socialists. Assemble 1pm, Camberwell Grove, London SE5; march to Brixton.

Sunday 6 May. Benefit for the Tribunal on Britain's presence in Ireland. 4pm to 11pm at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19. Kenneth Griffith's theatre, Adrian Mitchell, Irish folk groups, Half Moon Theatre, Margaretta d'Arcy and John Arden, plus many others. Tickets £1.50 (OAPs & children 50p).

Saturday 12 May. Conference on Women in Iran. Morning session in Persian; afternoon session in English, 2.30pm to 6pm at City University, St John St, London.

8 pages,
10p.

Workers' Action

Revolutionary socialist weekly.

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

Out now:

Chartist no.74

In magazine format.

With articles on the Bolshevik tradition, Socialist Feminism, the Labour Left, immigration, local government. 32 pages for 35p plus 15p p&p from 60 Loughborough Rd, London SW9.

THE BENNETT REPORT:

Mason tries to cover up

By **PETER CHALK**
Islington
Central CLP

FOR THE second time in ten years, the British government has been forced to admit to ill-treatment of detainees in the north of Ireland.

Despite the government and media attempts to portray the brutality as the work of a few rotten apples in the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the Bennett Report reveals otherwise.

★ *Injuries 'sustained in police custody' were not self-inflicted.*

Well documented cases of ill-treatment being used to extract confessions have been made public by both Amnesty International and the Northern Ireland Police Surgeons Associations (of which Dr. Robert Irwin is Secretary). RUC chief Sir Kenneth Newman's rejection of Irwin's statements on *Weekend Television* as unsubstantiated shows the extent of the cover-up. A week later the Bennett report proved him wrong and it has since been announced that Newman is 'transferring' from the RUC. (Once the facts became undeniable, Newman had the arrogance to tell reporters he 'would not guarantee' that brutality wouldn't continue.)

★ *There should be closer supervision of interrogation by uniformed RUC officers.*

This recommendation has been seized on to imply that the uniformed branch of the RUC emerges unblemished from the Inquiry. Bennett actually commends the already existing role of uniformed chief inspectors supervising interviews. Clearly this means that he finds that the kind of brutality highlighted by police doctors and by the occasional acquittal of suspects who allegedly confessed could not

have gone unnoticed.

★ *'Disquiet about the effectiveness of the complaints procedure.'*

Bennett implicitly accepts the role of the RUC hierarchy in covering up brutality. Despite the acquittals in the courts and the extremely high rate of complaints (671 for assault by the RUC in 1977 when altogether 3571 suspects were questioned), not a single conviction of a police officer has resulted and in no case have disciplinary proceedings been brought.

Can the RUC be trusted? No, according to Bennett, who recommends the use of senior officers from Britain to investigate serious allegations in future. Even the Director of Public Prosecutions is asked to 'give fuller explanations' of why so many substantiated cases of ill-

treatment have been dropped.

Bennett's proposals, not as yet accepted by N.Ireland Secretary Roy Mason, hardly alter the present position of complaints held up for months. Mason's much publicised new Police Complaints Board has no power to investigate allegations of criminal misconduct.

The Police Authority has commented that the Report's proposals 'do not in themselves essentially improve the Authority's role'.

★ *'The consistent refusal to allow access to a solicitor throughout the whole period of detention'...*

Bennett accepts the RUC view that a suspect is unlikely to make a confession if a solicitor is present. However, even his suggestion that 48 hours of custody should be long enough before access is unconditionally granted has

already been rejected by Mason.

★ *Failure by the RUC to observe the rules governing access to medical examination.*

Paragraph 244 of the Bennett Report mentions a case in which RUC officers failed to arrange an examination following an assault allegation. More common is their zealous application of a change in the rules since June 1978 allowing them discretion as to whether to permit a prisoner to be examined by his/her own doctor. The virtual ban on private doctors that resulted was a factor that contributed to the concern felt by police surgeons who saw their reputation threatened by the continuous public denial of ill-treatment that they had documented.

The collusion of the RUC hierarchy and the British direct rule administration in the use of brutality has been justified (and even welcomed by Unionists) by the high rate of convictions obtained in the no-jury Diplock courts. That 80% of these convictions are based on confessions is justified on the grounds that evidence is impossible to collect and witnesses intimidated.

Hence the only basis for arrest is Army Intelligence and the only evidence in court is a confession.

The Bennett Inquiry assumed from the outset that this system 'will continue for the immediate future'.

It is imperative that Labour's recent record in Ireland does not go unopposed in Britain. Both Gerry Fitt of the SDLP and Labour MP Tom Litterick have called for Mason's removal. Constituency Labour Parties should add to this call and not let the Bennett Report get shrugged off. We must ensure a full debate on Ireland takes place at this year's conference.



A basis for class unity?

WHO WANTS ANOTHER ORANGE LABOUR PARTY?

by
COLIN ADAMS

THE PAST year has seen an increasing campaign for the Labour Party to organise in the North of Ireland.

The Campaign for Labour Representation in Northern Ireland (CLRNI) held a small meeting at the Labour Party Conference, and has had several letters pushing its case in *Tribune* and *Labour Weekly*. Cambridge CLP has published a pamphlet, 'Ulster: What the Labour Party needs to do'.

So far Labour's National Executive has turned down the idea of organising in the North, but the campaign continues.

The notion behind solutions such as the Better Life for All Campaign is to export the patterns of the British labour movement to Northern Ireland and thus to unite Protestant and Catholic, turning the struggle into an economic and social one. The CLRNI uses similar reasoning, but with a distinct Orange flavour. One of its leading supporters is the chairman of the dwindling Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP), and another is the assistant secretary of the Boilermakers' Union, which is strongly represented at the Protestant-dominated Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast.

Alongside its demand for the British Labour Party to organise in Northern Ireland, the CLRNI calls for the permanent integration of the

North into the United Kingdom. The Cambridge pamphlet says that because Protestant workers have turned to the Unionists and not the NILP the Labour Party would have to declare itself 100% for the union of Northern Ireland with Britain in order to win the votes of these workers.

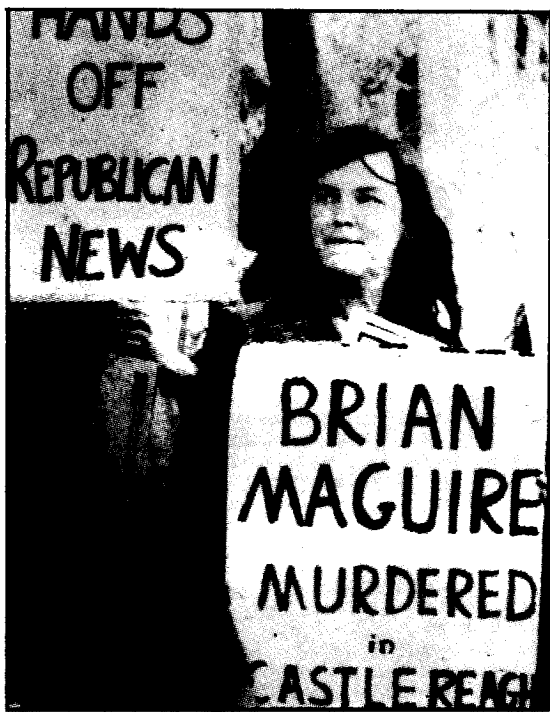
The pamphlet says that the NILP's failure has been due to its 'indifference to the question of the Border'.

The Border has acted as a bar to the development of a united labour movement in Ireland, as the great Irish socialist James Connolly predicted it would. The Protestant working class allied itself firmly with Unionism to do down the Catholic working class. So the CLRNI now adopts an unequivocal attitude to the Border: it must remain.

The Campaign claims to be working in the interest of democracy. It has little to say about the unfulfilled democratic right of the Irish people to self-determination. In fact, it is clearly an attempt by supporters of the NILP to save face. They hope to reform the Northern Ireland statelet and bring 'stability and security'. Like the British Army?

In fact the Campaign merely wishes to prolong Protestant domination of the North. The Labour Party is already tainted with the actions of the Labour Government in Ireland. It must firmly reject the aims of this campaign, and Labour activists must continue to put forward our call for:

- Troops out now!
- Self-determination for the Irish people!



In May 1978, shop steward Brian Maguire was found hanged in a cell in the Royal Ulster Constabulary's Castlereagh barracks. Workers struck in West Belfast and 3,000 marched in protest.

SENDING ANTI-EEC SOCIALISTS TO STRASBOURG

IT IS VERY easy to present a good socialist case for boycotting the direct elections to the European Assembly. It would be just as easy to think of good reasons for taking no part in the selection of candidates or in the campaign itself. It would be just as wrong.

Whether we like it or not, 81 members of the Assembly will be elected in the UK on June 7th. On current indications they will be elected on a low turnout and most of them will be Tories or right wing Labour Party 'Eurohacks'. They will see their main job as that of collecting generous expenses and preventing any serious challenge to the system that enables them to do so.

But they will each claim to be the legitimate representative of half a million people. On EEC issues they will claim greater legitimacy than Westminster MPs who are elected on a wider range of issues; and their claims will be taken seriously by the media and the public.

It will therefore be a major disaster if socialists opposed to the Community fail to

make their views heard over the next few months.

If the political implications of Community membership are to be brought to the forefront, full use must be made of the opportunity to launch vigorous campaigns throughout the country. In attempting this it will not be difficult to point to warnings which were issued during the referendum campaign and which have proved justified by events. But our major task will be to prevent the campaign becoming bogged down by the same narrow chauvinism that led to defeat in 1975. Only in this way can we hope to revive interest and build the Labour vote.

The British working class does not want to be told that it is somehow superior to the French or German working class. It will not be fooled by claims that the Community is a plot by Dutch workers to put British workers on the dole. It will not be easily convinced of the need to restore the sovereignty of a House of Commons which has for centuries denied workers' rights.

IN THE JANUARY Socialist Organiser we launched a debate on the EEC elections. Donald Sassoon argued a pro-EEC case, and Alf Lomas the anti-EEC position. Mark Douglas argued that socialists must 'break out of the nationalist ambush', and Simon Temple put the view that "In or out of the EEC is not an issue for the working class; international unity in struggle is". In the March SO, Graham Durham called for a vigorous socialist campaign to get Britain out of the EEC.

This month STEVE BUNDRED calls for an effort to send socialist anti-EEC Euro-MPs to Strasbourg.

Steve is the Labour candidate for London South-East on June 7th. He works for the NUM, belongs to Islington North CLP, and is an active supporter of the SCLV. He is a former Islington councillor and was a leader of a tenants' campaign there to get a slum estate demolished.

Instead the issue will be whether the Community has advanced or impeded the cause of socialist internationalism; and whether continued membership will make the advent of socialism more, or less, likely. As in all political campaigns the key issue is how best to control the power of capital, and who is best able to represent the interests of workers in debates about their future. In this context it is clear that if the Tories cannot be trusted in the UK then we have a

duty to oppose them in Europe also.

There is no shortage of arguments to show that joining the EEC was a political and economic blunder. Far from promoting internationalism, the Community fosters a belief that there are only nine countries in Europe that matter. It remains at present closed to weaker European states such as Greece and Portugal; and its relations with developing countries are characterised by the dumping of surpluses

without regard to need and the exclusion of imports from traditional food suppliers.

Far from resisting capitalism, its competition rules protect the interests of the multinationals against any attempt at planning or state control.

The Community Agricultural Policy (CAP) forces workers to pay inflated food prices in order that rich farmers might get richer. The free movement of capital accelerates the process of de-industrialisation. The budgetary system sucks resources away from the depressed sectors of the economy where they are most needed and forces the poorest nations to pay the highest contribution.

Instead of generating genuine European solidarity and understanding, the Community concentrates on the detailed regulation of ice-cream labelling and exchange fluctuations.

In short, it is a costly diversion which divides rather than unites European workers, which strengthens the interests of monopoly capital and which weakens the

ability of socialists to challenge this power.

All these and other socialist objections to the EEC must be constantly restated if they are to be widely appreciated. The socialist alternative must be constantly advocated if it is to have a chance of success. Direct elections provide an opportunity for this; and we will not deserve to be forgiven if we fail to take it.

This does not mean that success in the elections will of itself radically alter our relationship with the Community. Members of the Assembly do not have that power and must not be permitted to acquire it. As always, the real battles will remain to be fought out in the UK by forcing a Labour government to implement the wishes of those who elected it.

Yet while no-one would pretend that sending socialists to Strasbourg is the best way of resisting the Community, sending Tories is undeniably the worst way.

If we don't become actively involved in these elections, that is precisely what will happen.

Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

Bright blue Toryism...

WITH the end of this Labour Government clearly in sight, stock market prices have zoomed upwards, and the Tories are becoming more and more strident.

At a rally on the weekend of 24th March, the Tory leaders announced their campaigning slogans. A new Tory government would bring in tighter laws against picketing and restrict social security payments for strikers' families.

The Tory government would press for secret ballots inside the unions, in place of the collective democracy of mass meetings. This would be voluntary... 'unless the unions refuse to cooperate'.

The Tories also promise to cut public spending, except on the police and armed forces. There is no way this could be done without drastically cutting the already ravaged health, education and other social services.

A few days earlier the Tory election campaign had been given a send-off by the Institute of Directors' convention. Sir James Goldsmith told the convention that the Representation of the People Act should be extended to make secret ballots legally binding on trade unions.

Representation of the people has its limits for Sir James, however: he also called for a stronger House of Lords 'to correct Britain's sham democracy'.

No doubt only shortage of time stopped him from going on to propose public flogging of militant shop stewards. He was followed by Tory leader Norman St John Stevas who, blithely unaware of any contradiction, promised that the next Tory government would increase liberty and cut back on legislation.

This sort of double-think will no doubt run right through the Tories' electioneering. Increased state interference is 'socialist bureaucracy' when it restricts the bosses; it is 'law and order' when it is aimed against pickets, strikers, and demonstrators. Increased state spending is 'socialist extravagance' when it goes to hospitals, but in the 'national interest' when it goes to tanks and nuclear bombs.

At the Directors' convention, their chairman Denys

Randolph 'waved his organisation's new, bright blue manifesto and urged members to influence the result of the next general election. He did not openly espouse the Tory cause (!) but bitterly attacked Mr. Anthony Wedgwood Benn, and the audience applauded loudly'.

The bright blue manifesto contains the Tories' ideas in more punchy form than the official party statements. There are two key ideas:

■ **Bash the unions.** 'The number of pickets should be limited to not more than one per cent of the employees at the plant. No other union than that involved in the dispute may join in the picket line.'

The bosses demand secret ballots before any strike action, and cap it all with the

capitalist class and a working class. We are all workers and we are all customers'. And these very special 'workers' reckon that 'experience has shown us that the customer will be best served in a competitive economy'.

If profiteering and exploitation benefits the bosses, that is of course purely incidental: the basic aim is always just to benefit the customer! Grunwick boss George Ward really wanted nothing except to provide a better service for your holiday snaps.

This idea that production for profit is only what the customers want — because you can only make a profit by selling what people want to buy — is a cornerstone of Tory ideology.

The Tories even have economists who will 'prove'

and pale pink Labour

JAMES CALLAGHAN will have one big consolation if there is an early election. It will give him a good excuse to cut short the Labour Party discussions on the manifesto and insist that a Cabinet-approved document is rushed out.

The gist of a Callaghan manifesto can be gathered from the slogans on the posters Transport House has put out so far. While living standards have been cut, social services are crumbling and unemployment is one and a half million, the posters blandly say: *Keep Britain Labour and it'll keep getting better.*

While civil service workers are suspended for refusing to strike-break, the posters smugly advise us that 'working together' is better than

which have cracked the Government's pay limits, real wages have gone up — but not enough to get us back to 1974 levels.

Meanwhile profits have kept well ahead of inflation. Gross trading profits increased 29% in 1976, 45% in 1977 and 21% in the first nine months of 1978. And tax on profits is now almost zero for all the big companies.

Cuts

★ In January 1976 unemployment topped one and a half million. It has been around that level ever since. Cuts in the public services, and sackings by nationalised firms like British Leyland, British Steel and British Shipbuilders have put tens of thousands on the dole. When

the statute book; and nearly 4,000 people have been picked up under it. They can be held in jail, interrogated, or deported, just on the say-so of the police and the Home Secretary.

★ Britain's military occupation of Northern Ireland continues. In the infamous H Block at Long Kesh prison camp, 300 prisoners are deprived of 'privileges' like clothing, exercise, cell furniture, use of proper lavatories, books and visits, because they demand political status and refuse to wear prison uniform.

Northern Ireland's police doctors have confirmed that torture is used to extract confessions in the interrogation centres, and on the basis of these confessions alone people can be convicted and given long prison sentences.

★ The 1971 Immigration Act, condemned by Labour when the Tories introduced it, is still enforced.

★ Three years after the Sex Discrimination Act, 58% of working women are concentrated in three sectors of service industry. Among teachers, 75% of the lower-paid primary school staff are women, but their chance of becoming a head teacher or deputy head is only one fifth of men's.

Three years after the Equal Pay Act came into force, women in manual jobs get only 72% of the men's average hourly rate, and women in non-manual jobs get 61% of male rates. And the inequality is increasing!

Iran

★ The Labour Government's international policy has just been an echo of Jimmy Carter's — even when that meant supporting the Shah of Iran.

That's the record. And it won't be surprising if many workers vote Tory or abstain when Labour promises 'more of the same'. The only way to get those workers' votes back and to prepare the fightback against the Tory government which is now, sadly, probable, is for local Labour Parties to campaign on the basis of class struggle policies.

That is what the SCLV is organising for.

Manifestos 1979

by Nik Barstow

proposal that: 'A time limit should be set (say one month) after which the picket must end. It will by then be considered either to have made its point or to have failed'. In other words: if the bosses can hold out against a strike for one month, then the law should step in and declare them the winners!

■ **Cut taxes** — especially taxes on capital, on profits and on high incomes. Reduce public spending: for this, the bosses' main proposal (apart from the old cure-all of 'reducing waste') is to hive off social services to private enterprise.

No doubt about who would gain from these proposals: the '30,000 company directors and leading businessmen' whom the Institute of Directors represents. But the bosses would have us believe that selfish interests are the last thing to cross their minds.

'We are not divided into a

it mathematically, on the assumption of a 'perfect' free enterprise economy. But the theory has nothing to do with capitalist reality. All it means is that when the Tories talk about 'reward for effort', it is a code-word for 'reward for exploitation'; when they talk about the 'public interest', it is a code-word for the bosses' interests.

We are in for a big union-bashing campaign from the Tories. We need a campaign to defend the right to picket, to insist that no government can lay down the law on how trade unions run their own affairs, and to assert socialist ideals against the Tories' creed of 'reward for effort, enterprise and risk'.

Labour's leaders will not organise that campaign. They will simply claim to be more moderate and sensible opponents of working class militancy than the Tories. That is why we need the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

fighting.

Labour is 'good for us all', so the poster says.

Callaghan wants Labour to appear as the party of class collaboration, while the Tories are the party of class struggle — class struggle by the bosses against the workers. As for the third alternative — class struggle by workers against bosses — Callaghan is as much against that as the Tories are.

Prices

But class collaboration is only another way of keeping the bosses on top. While the workers' struggle is stifled in the name of social peace, the bosses continue their struggle through price rises, through job cuts, and through speed-up. That's the history of the last five years.

★ Average take-home pay dropped 14 per cent between December 1974 and February 1977, in real terms. Since then, thanks to strikes

the Post Office engineers went out for a 35-hour week, the Government faced them down.

★ In March 1976 the Government, obeying orders from the international bankers of the IMF, cut £3,000-million from public spending. And there have been more social service cuts since.

★ Police were allowed to lay into pickets at Grunwick and during the bakers' strike. Troops have been used as strikebreakers against firemen and ambulance crews. The Government has encouraged hospital managements to recruit volunteer scabs.

In March 1978 all demonstrations in London were banned for two months, and then 2,000 police broke up Leeds Trades Council's May Day march.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act, introduced as an 'emergency' measure in November 1974, is still on

OUR ANSWER

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

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

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

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

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

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

★ **Freeze rents and rates.**

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

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

◆ ◆

★ **The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as the bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc.), public accountability, etc.**

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

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

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

◆ ◆

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

◆ ◆

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

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

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

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

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

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

mocratically to decide their election addresses and leaflets.

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

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

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

Socialist Organiser is published by the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16. Printed by Anvil Press [TU]. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the point of view of the SCLV.