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THE Special Fund is seriously depleting the regular monthly fund. £10 from Alan Prout in Cambridge is the only cash this week.

The standing order contributions this month total £272.75, and the overall total is £517.

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The regular work of collecting weekly or monthly donations from readers and sympathisers is what's lacking. And without that the special efforts will fail.

Send money to: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No. 78 APRIL 1, 1982 (Claimants and strikers, 10p) 25p

Turkey
junta
steps up
terror

THE terrorists who took power in Turkey two years ago are spreading the net of repression even wider than before. Having arrested members of revolutionary organisations and banned leaders of all the pre-coup parties from again participating in political life, they are now threatening to jail members of the mass centre party, the Republican People's Party.

At the same time 52 members of the left-wing trade union federation, DISK, face trial on charges that could lead to the death penalty.

In this country, the tour of speakers representing Turkish trade unions has already held meetings in many towns up and down the country.

At an opening meeting, in the House of Commons, Dursun Akcam, publisher of "Democrat", the sixth largest paper in Turkey before the coup, summed up the present situation under the Evren Junta.

"Today in Turkey there are no trade union organisations - except one. And while trade unions across Europe are campaigning against the Junta, this one, TURK-İS, is actively collaborating with the Junta. That is why it cannot be considered a genuine trade union organisation."

Genuine

If it was a genuine trade union organisation, it would strongly defend the interests of Turkish workers. But in Turkey it is impossible to truly defend the interests of Turkish workers without firmly condemning a Junta which has sentenced 100,000 people to prison; summoned 47,000 before martial law courts; demanded the death penalty for 3,954 trade union activists, socialists and members of national minorities; murdered 488 people in manhunt; tortured 101 to death; and hung 13 by the neck until the last breath expired from them.

The real trade union confederation which represents workers interests in Turkey is DISK. But DISK has refused to collaborate with the Junta, and so it has been branded a terrorist organisation. Now 52 of its leaders are on trial for their very lives.

But the junta's terror has not stopped there. It has even imprisoned old people, authors, artists and intellectuals. Two days ago in

Cont'd back page

Tebbit

Union
leaders
must

BREAK

LINKS WITH TORIES NOW!



PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

CALL 1-DAY STRIKE!

Lobby the TUC-April 5!



No lead from Liaison Committee



PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

The platform glares down on Oxford Trades Council delegate Pat Lally as he calls for a debate on real action against Tebbit

Alan Thornett reports on the Liaison Committee conference last Saturday, 27th.

HOWEVER predictable the decision of last Saturday's Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) Conference to effectively duck out of any serious opposition to Tebbit, its effects are no less damaging to the labour movement.

In a conference which lasted for only 2½ hours, and with an audience who were overwhelmingly Communist Party members and their supporters, the organisers were able to bulldoze through a resolution which avoids any serious call for action to stop Tebbit before the Bill becomes law.

Its only positive call was for support for the lobby of the Conference of Executives called by the TUC on Monday April 5. Instead it amounts to acceptance of the TUC 8-point formula and limits its call for action before the Tebbit Bill is enacted to a call for locally based two-hour stoppages and a lobby of Parliament.

Formula

Of the 8-point formula, it says the following:

"The TUC meeting of Executives called for Monday 5 April, will have before it an 8-point recommendation. Most of these recommendations are good, although they can be interpreted as accepting the payment of damages. Experience at the time of the Industrial Relations Act was that non-payment of damages and the subsequent industrial action ended the fining of trade unions and buried that Tory Act."

The conference appeared to be held more as a token

to show that the LCDTU still existed in a period of anti-trade union legislation than as a serious conference to mobilise. The LCDTU, after all, rests on its (largely false) reputation from its role in 1969 and 1971.

The organisers were determined from the outset that the CP would be in the majority and that no alternative resolutions or recommendations would be allowed.

Delegates to the conference were strictly controlled and a new Standing Orders produced which allowed delegates from shop stewards committees and work-place based trade union branches only.

The conference was deliberately held in one of the smallest halls available.

In the organisers' words they set out to be "extremely selective" and they certainly were. This "selectivity" extended to an exclusion of all AUEW branches

from the conference, including a Reading branch which had submitted a resolution based on strike action to stop Tebbit.

A letter from Kevin Halpin, (reproduced), gives restricted seating as a reason for this.

The new standing orders were also used to rule out of order a resolution from the BL Cowley Assembly TGWU 5/293 Branch calling on the conference to support a policy of breaking all links with the Tories now and for a one-day strike on the day of the Bill's Third Reading.

Attempts by myself as the delegate to raise a point of order on its exclusion were ignored by Kevin Halpin in the chair, as were calls by other speakers such as Pat Lally from Oxford Trades Council, who called for a decision to be taken on the policies in the resolution.

A Scottish delegate who pushed from the floor for the resolution to be put, was

quickly told to "sit down" by Halpin.

The four platform speakers who included Derek Fulwick, President of ASLEF, and George Willoughby of SOGAT, were very weak. Peter Cavanagh, national officer of the TGWU Building Trades group, livened it up a bit by calling for general strike action but did not say how or when.

A notable absence of some of the traditional CP speakers at such events was matched by the near total absence of the revolutionary left with the exception of Socialist Organiser supporters.

Roger Cox, a leading member of the SWP for many years, spoke on behalf of a small group of Socialist Workers Party members.

He made a depressing contribution far to the right of the line currently put by Socialist Worker on the Tebbit campaign.

DEFEND AND ADVANCE

LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF TRADE UNIONS

19 March 1982

Dear Brother Huxford,
Our Conference.

We welcome your enquiry about the Liaison Committee has this time called a very selective Conference. The hall has limited seating and will not allow delegates from the broader sections of the Trade Union Movement. We are concentrating on Factory Shop Stewards Committees and pits and building sites, as well as key Executives and regional TU bodies.

In the case of the AUEW, we are restricting admittance to District Committees who can give the widest possible coverage to their Branches.

Your postal order is returned herewith, and we will be sending you a report of the Conference.

Yours fraternally,

K Halpin
Kevin Halpin, Chairman



PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

Chairperson Kevin Halpin: 'a selective conference'

What to do:

- *Move resolutions in your Union branch and Labour Party clearly demanding that the TUC call action now to defeat the Tebbit Bill.
- *Spell out demands for: an end to all joint committees, tribunals and talks with the employers and the Tories; Labour MPs to mobilise against the Tebbit Bill in the constituencies and in Parliament; the TUC to call a one-day strike or series of strikes against the Bill as part of a campaign for all-out action to defeat the Tory anti-union offensive.
- *Join the Socialist Organiser contingent lobbying the TUC conference of Executives on April 5 demanding strike action against Tebbit.
- *Support the conference on trade union democracy called by Socialist Organiser and London Labour Briefing on April 3.

TUC's do-nothing programme

The "8-point plan" to be put to a conference of union Executives at Wembley Conference Centre on April 5 contains no call for action of any description. The TUC's proposals are:

1) "Affiliated unions should affirm their commitment to conduct a campaign among their own members to highlight the dangers in the Employment Bill."

-In other words a few circular letters to branches and perhaps a few leaflets: even badges, posters and stickers, but no action.

2) "Affiliated unions shall not hold or participate in secret ballots on union membership agreements under conditions laid down in the Employment Bill."

-But will affiliated unions press a determined unionisation drive and fight to establish closed shops in the traditional way in defiance of the Tebbit plan? The TUC formula amounts in fact to an abandonment of the fight to establish 100% trade union membership - just what Tebbit wants to achieve. And no proposals are spelled out for the defence of existing closed shops against Tebbit's plan for imposing regular ballots.

3) "Affiliated unions shall observe Congress policy and not seek or accept public funds for union ballots under the 1980 Employment Act ballot funds scheme."

-The TUC is deliberately vague about what would happen to a right wing union which did accept funds - as appears to be the case now with the actors' union Equity. Will they be expelled from the TUC? But, possibly more important, the TUC leaders raise not a voice in defiance of the traditional methods of workers' democracy - shows of hands at mass meetings - in opposition to the Tory strategy of balloting individual members by post - in the isolation of their own homes.

4) A call for "closer working between Unions" in disputes. "The further aim, wherever possible, should be to co-ordinate and concert negotiations and industrial action."

-This poses as a challenge to the moves by Tebbit and Prior to render 'secondary' strikes, picketing and blacking illegal: but all of the evidence of recent "close working between Unions" has been of General Secretaries ganging up against the rank and file workforce to sell-out struggles on pay, jobs and conditions.

Socialists of course support inter-union solidarity and the spreading of strikes: but the fundamental problem in achieving this is to win the solidarity of union officials for the struggles conducted by their members on the shop floor. There is no reason to believe this would be greater after Tebbit's Bill becomes law than it is now.

5) Empowering the General Council, on receipt of a request from a union faced by legal action, to:

i) coordinate action by other affiliated unions in support of the union in difficulties, including, if necessary, calling for industrial action against the employer concerned, or more widely.

ii) to provide financial assistance to a union which experiences severe financial problems as a result of damaging actions.

-But this whole, militant-sounding proposal relates to unions under attack after Tebbit's Bill becomes law! This is not so much a fight against Tebbit but dishing out aspirins for the wounded after the fight has been lost.

6) Financial assistance for unions faced with legal action for pursuing existing TUC Disputes Principles and Procedures.

-Once again conceding that Tebbit's Bill will be

put on the statute books, and that the beneficiaries of the TUC's 'action' programme will be legal profession pocketing fat fees.

7) "No trade union member of an industrial tribunal or the Employment Appeal Tribunal shall serve on cases arising from the application of a membership agreement or arrangement."

-In plain English this means that union bureaucrats will continue to sit on Industrial Tribunals a whole panoply of collaborationist bodies, management and government representatives up to the NEDC level - while the bosses sharpen their knife for use against the shop floor.

8) A financial levy of 10p per member on affiliated unions to set up a 'Campaign Fund'.

-This is to pay the armies of lawyers who take over negotiations and to finance a stream of ineffectual leaflets and posters justifying the inaction.

Yet this bankrupt package of surrender is vaunted by 'left' bureaucrats as a recipe for success against Thatcher!

By Harry Slo



Lobby the TUC-April 5!

WHAT TEBBIT'S BILL MEANS TO YOUR UNION

DESPITE the blather of TUC leaders, occasional local conferences and a handful of smart TUC leaflets, little is being done to rouse the labour movement to action against the new Tory anti-union laws.

Yet Norman Tebbit's laughably misnamed "Employment Bill" is a comprehensive attack on the most fundamental trade union rights.

Included in its provisions are:

- *Restrictions on the right to strike.
- *Punitive fines against unions that step out of line.
- *New attacks on the closed shop.
- *Moves to prevent councils restricting contracts to union labour-only firms.
- *Scope for the selective sacking of strikers.

At the centre of Tebbit's proposals is the curtailment of the legal immunities which alone have given British workers the illusion of the "right to strike".

In fact it is almost impossible to strike without committing civil wrongs (or 'torts') against the employers concerned and their customers and suppliers.

This has until now been regulated by the provision of immunity from civil

action for trade unionists who take industrial action "in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute".

The definition of a "trade dispute" has been accepted as a dispute "connected" with one or more of the following:

- "terms and conditions of employment; physical conditions of work; engagement or non-engagement; sacking; suspensions; work duties; distribution of work; discipline; trade union membership and facilities for trade union officials; negotiation and consultation machinery; and procedural rights".

(Labour Research pamphlet, p.3)

Curb

Now Tebbit has set out to curb these limited rights. His Bill tightens up the definition of an immune action to one which "should relate wholly or mainly" to a trade dispute rather than being merely "connected" with it.

This shift of wording is designed to make it easier for judges to rule an action unlawful. Such a ruling would enable a court to order those organising an

Harry Sloan looks at the Bill

action to end it — and to threaten them with fines or imprisonment for contempt of court if they refuse.

Indeed the new proposals would offer employers the possibility of imposing a de facto "cooling off period" by enabling them to begin court proceedings and seek an interim court order to prevent industrial action until the final verdict is reached — possibly weeks later.

Tebbit's attack on immunities also now excludes disputes which are defined as "between workers and workers". This is likely to be interpreted as rendering demarcation and grading disputes unlawful as well as strikes against the use of non-union labour.

In a further move to restrict workers' scope for class action, the new Bill would strip away any immunity for action "relating solely to matters occurring outside Great Britain".

This would immediately make it unlawful to take any form of solidarity action with any section of workers overseas. Blacking action against repressive and dictatorial regimes like the Turkish or Chilean juntas or the South African apartheid state would be unlawful: so too would strikes,

blacking or other action in solidarity with workers in foreign-owned subsidiaries of British firms, or workers employed by multinationals also operating in Britain.

Indeed since Northern Ireland is excluded from "Great Britain", the Bill would bar any solidarity with the struggles of Irish workers.

But it is not only on an international level that Tebbit's Bill aims to crush workers' solidarity: a further provision restricts the definition of a "trade dispute" to those "between an employer and his own employees".

Restricted

Prior's 1980 Employment Act severely restricted the right to take "secondary" industrial action, and to picket other than the strikers' own place of work.

Now Tebbit appears set to force through legislation making all solidarity action unlawful — even the action routinely expected of trade unionists in supply firms and customers.

The idea at the centre of this Tory proposal is to restrict industrial action to the particular section of workers in dispute — thus providing a major obstacle to unionisation, and to pay and conditions struggles in a whole range of industries where only blacking action can give workers sufficient strength to win.

Hand in hand with the stripping away of immunities runs Tebbit's proposals to spell out the ways in which unions become liable for damages in the courts — and the minimum

amounts of money involved.

The Bill lays down that unions will become liable to be sued for all actions which are not deemed by a judge to be "in contemplation and furtherance of a trade dispute" (as redefined above).

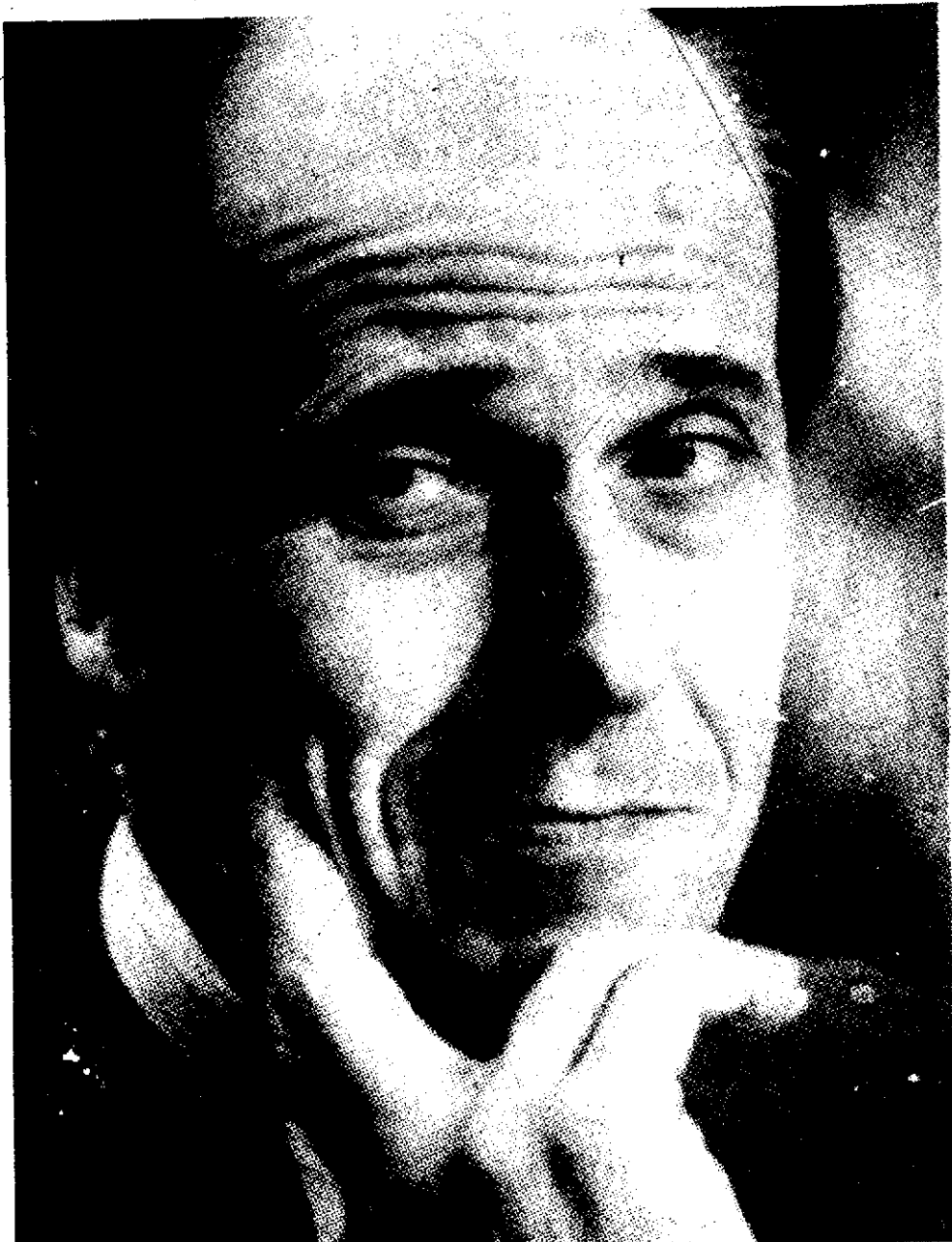
In particular unions are made liable for damages if they carry out secondary picketing, "indiscriminate" secondary action, or industrial action "to compel union membership".

This covers a whole spate of industrial disputes in which the central issue is government policy (spending cuts, wage controls, privatisation).

Taken together with a House of Lords ruling (May 1981) that a third party in a dispute can sue the organiser of a strike for damages, the new law opens up the prospect of union funds being seized wholesale even as a result of a single dispute.

In an effort to use these proposals to enlist the union leaders as a strike-breaking task-force, the Tebbit Bill emphasises that the unions themselves would be liable for damages under conditions where the national executive had officially supported an action or where an official acted in accordance with the union's rules or under instruction.

Plainly Tebbit hopes that this will make it even harder than at present to win official backing for strikes — and that the blackmailing proposals in the Bill will send union executives and full-timers scurrying to mass meetings in order to strong-arm their members back to work.



Tebbit: 'a comprehensive attack on the most fundamental trade union rights'

compensation for such "unfair dismissal" cases, and introduces minimum figures which guarantee a handsome pay-off to each and every blackleg.

A worker on average earnings could pick up at least £20,000 if it was not practicable to reinstate, or at least £24,000 if the employer refused to reinstate.

And the whole of this bill could be landed on the union involved, together with costs, backed up by the threat of further fines for contempt of court.

On the other front, every effort is being made to destroy existing closed shops by the imposition of periodic secret ballots in which 80% of the workforce or 85% of those voting will be required to say 'yes'.

If this is not achieved, or if the ballots are not held, then any employee sacked for non-membership would be automatically deemed unfairly dismissed and eligible for damages.

While scabs and blacklegs receive added protection and financial feather-bedding, union militants face a renewed wave of victimisations under Tebbit's law. It proposes to abolish the existing provisions, which prevent an employer from selectively sacking strikers while continuing to employ workers who have been on strike but returned to work.

This will give carte blanche to employers throughout the country to throw down ultimatums to strikers announcing that anyone who has not returned by a certain date will be sacked. Edwardes-style confrontation will be made readily and cheaply accessible to every manager — with a vast pool of unemployed lined up by Tory policies as a potential army of strikebreakers.

Additional clauses aim at strengthening the hand of 'lump' labour subcontractors by making it illegal for Labour councils to insist that contracting firms only use union labour.

And by extending on the provisions of Prior's Employment Act, the Tebbit Bill offers public funds to finance postal ballots on wage offers. While this still remains voluntary, it is plainly part of a long-term plan to impose such ballots on the unions.

Indeed there is no evidence that Tebbit's bill is the final stage in the Tory assault on trade union rights.

Rather the kind of retreat being laid by the TUC before this legislation is the most cast-iron guarantee that the Tories will be back again with further restrictions and penalties in the future.

In place of Heath's Industrial Relations Act with its structure of special courts and its head-on confrontation with the unions, Thatcher is creating a legal framework to use the established courts and judiciary, together with the docile and reactionary union bureaucracy, to shackle the strength of the workers' movement.

Talk in these conditions of action only after the Bill becomes law and after the Bill becomes law and after some trade unionist falls foul of the law is simply talk of surrender and betrayal.

The fight must begin now to prepare mass action to defeat both Tebbit's Bill and the savage Thatcher government.

There is evidence in the last three years that this could indeed prove to be the case.

Once again the objective of the Tory plan is to isolate the sections involved in action, cutting them off from the support even of their own union, while encouraging employers to herd in scabs to do their work and to sack the militants involved.

The Bill goes on to spell out the kind of penalties involved for breaking its provisions. Damages are calculated on a sliding scale up to a maximum of £250,000 for unions of over 100,000 members — but the fines that could be levied for contempt of court are of course unlimited, and legal costs would be astronomical.

Meanwhile there are provisions to make unions liable for compensation payments to blacklegs sacked for refusing to join a union.

These compensation payments are lavish. Tebbit's Bill scraps the maximum



Prior: his Bill curbed picketing

Our policy for rank and file action



**Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL**

LAST Saturday's conference of the Communist Party's "Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions" was a mini-preview of the April 5 TUC conference of union executives on the Tebbit Bill.

The audience (including representatives from several union executives) watched a display of huffing, puffing and arm-waving from the platform, followed by the presentation of a "declaration" to which no amendments or alternatives were allowed.

"If anybody is put behind bars we must have an effective national strike throughout the country", said SOGAT Stalinist George Willoughby.

"If one shop steward or worker is fined or jailed, the movement will be mobilised to such an extent that if necessary we will move toward the first general strike since 1926", said TGWU official Peter Kavanagh.

So the LCDTU declaration called on unions to boycott court proceedings under the Bill and to refuse to pay fines or damages.

Essence

But the essence of Tebbit's Bill is to impose shackles on the unions without the need for messy jailings and fines. It relies upon the cowardice and collaboration of the trade union bureaucracy - their consistent habit of collapsing as soon as they are threatened by legal confrontation.

The most pernicious effects of the Bill will be achieved therefore without opposition from either TUC or LCDTU!

The predictable vote taken, LCDTU delegates walked off, free of any commitment to do anything to stop Tebbit's Bill reaching the statute book.

The same performance on a larger and more lavish scale will be repeated at the TUC Conference on April 5. Union executives who have made no effort to consult union members - will raise their arms for a meaningless 8-point resolution which concedes that Tebbit's Bill will become law.

On the face of it, therefore, the whole affair is sewn up: the official trade union movement, and the most influential 'left' opposition in the unions are united in the view that any resistance to the Bill should be postponed until trade unionists are victimised by it.

So where do socialists go from here? Do we meekly accept the defeat being inflicted upon our movement by the bureaucrats, and their Stalinist accomplices in the LCDTU?

Do we concede that the April 5 gathering represents the feelings of the British working class, and that the most vital hard-won trade union rights are to be surrendered without a fight?

Sit back

Do we sit back and wait for the first section of workers to fall foul of Tebbit's legislation before we begin the fight for mobilisation and mass action?

To draw such conclusions would be in effect to join in the historic betrayal being carried through by the TUC leadership.

What is the alternative? While the body of the trade union bureaucracy, fearful of confrontation with the Tory government and anxious only to preserve its own control over the rank and file, sets course for capitulation, it is necessary to turn to the active forces in the labour movement who are prepared to wage a real fight.

The best sections of shop stewards, convenors, militants and labour activists must form the spearhead of a fighting force that will build a broad campaign to stop the retreat and press for action now against Tebbit.

Socialist Organiser has campaigned for the TUC

to call one-day strike action on the Bill's day of the Third Reading in order to prepare for all-out action against the law.

But there are other forms of action that can begin at once. Trade union "representatives" sit side-by-side with management and government figures on a whole host of reactionary joint committees and tribunals up to national level.

This organised collaboration should be ended at once. The Tories have shown beyond doubt that they intend to smash the strength of the unions - it is criminal to assist them to do so.

Disrupt and delay

Labour MPs should be organised to disrupt and delay every aspect of Parliamentary work. They must use every avenue to harass and to mobilise against the Thatcher government, whose goal is to destroy the strength of the labour movement.

So far there is no sign of any such resolve on the part of our leaders. Tony Benn and a few left MPs have correctly called for a policy of 'disengagement' from joint bodies with the Thatcher government - but the fight for this has yet to be pressed at rank and file level.

Now is the time to fight. Special discussions should be held on Tebbit's Bill in trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, trades councils and Labour Parties.

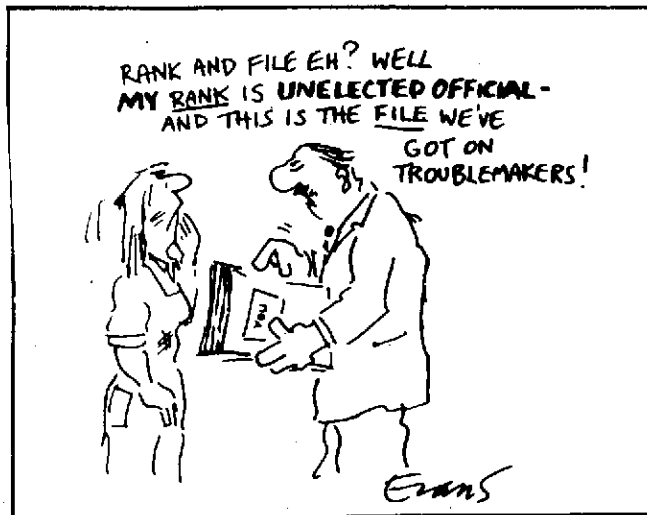
Once the implications of the law are known, the demand must be raised upon all union officials and representatives and every Labour MP to break all links with Thatcher and take up the fight at every level for action to stop Tebbit.

The demand must go out for the TUC to break from the Tories and to call strike action against Tebbit.

On this basis, Socialist Organiser supporters are ready to fight to the full alongside any and every militant prepared to struggle for action.

Yet the fight on this issue like so many struggles of the working class - highlights the central importance of the fight for accountability and democracy within the labour movement.

Union bureaucrats, remote from the battles and exploitation on the shop floor, reluctantly acquiesce



to the Tory legislation - but fight vigorously to silence militants who call for action.

Labour leaders sit limply in all-party committees with Tories in Parliament - only to witch-hunt workers who demand a real fight.

Saturday's conference called in Birmingham by SO and London Labour Briefing will fight to develop the campaign on Tebbit as a key component of the struggle to democratise the labour movement as a whole, and construct a fighting, new leadership.

On this basis the rank and file can really begin to organise. It is time to stand and fight.

WHEN THE



In June 1969 a TUC Special Congress voted to endorse a document undertaking to police the unions and stamp out unofficial disputes, using disciplinary measures against militants.

This "Programme of Action" was a public betrayal of the fight against the Wilson government's White Paper "In Place of Strife", drawn up by Barbara Castle.

But this public betrayal was nothing compared to the TUC's scandalous activities behind the scenes.

While the battle was being waged by socialists to mobilise the working class against the measures, the TUC was conducting a breathtaking series of cynical deals in secret meetings with the government.

None of these stitch-ups were known at the time, to those of us involved in the struggles.

The publication of Barbara Castle's diary in the Sunday Times in January of this year has given us a glimpse of these manoeuvres and the relationship between the personalities involved.

White Paper

She reveals that she had decided very early on to fully involve the TUC leaders in her plans.

As soon as she had completed drafting her White Paper in mid December 1968 she made her move. She saw that the key to the situation was George Woodcock, General Secretary of the TUC. This assessment was to stand her in good stead.

"In the afternoon I see George Woodcock alone. [Woodcock of course was still General Secretary of the TUC at that time but was in the process of handing over to Vic Feather].

"On impulse I have decided to take him completely into my confidence about what I am proposing to do over Donovan. He listened to my full resume in silence and then, to my surprise, said that he didn't think there was anything there that need alarm the trade union movement.

"I could hardly believe my ears! But he urged me to take the TUC Finance and General Purposes Committee equally fully into my confidence."

She goes on: "This shook me rather as I know that whatever I tell them will leak".

But Woodcock pressed the point, Castle conceded the point and explained:

"He knew I would be taking a risk... but he was sure it would reap dividends... Just before he left I remarked casually that, after Christmas, I should want to talk to him about the chairmanship of the CIR [Commission on Industrial Relations]. He tried to keep his face dead pan at this but his eyelids flickered and I could almost feel his hopes rising".

This eagerness of Woodcock to feather his own nest is particularly astounding when you consider that the CIR was not even set up at that time.

It was a part of Castle's package of proposals - and therefore would only be set up if the proposals went through.

The bait had drawn the fish. Obviously if Woodcock was already considering becoming chairman of the CIR there was no chance of him opposing her measures.

Following this private conversation with Woodcock, Barbara Castle met the TUC F&GP in December.

The purpose of the meeting was to outline to them her proposals - her all-out attack on the basic rights of the working class.

She opened the meeting by asking these leaders of the working class for an assurance of confidentiality. This was not very difficult as the Diary explains:

"Then George said they all accepted a pledge of confidentiality. So I went ahead... The atmosphere as I talked was quiet and serious. Even the questions were muted and there were certainly no attacks. Frank Cousins frowned a good deal while George played it dead pan. Nonetheless I was under no illusions as to what would happen when the press closed in on them."

In fact some of it did leak to

the press and Castle was embarrassed.

But she was quite clear this was a meeting of mental importance and the commitment of these union leaders to her plan far more important embarrassment or protocol.

Cryptic

The Parliamentary were no more of a problem-rang Tony Benn who gave her "cheerfully" with the words "I'm your friend".

This cryptic comment soon to blossom into a hearted support for Castle her anti-union plans.

Still sticking closely Woodcock, on January 2 she jointly met the TUC and CBI about her proposals.

Naturally the CBI said though the proposals were good but should go further. Then she explains:

"After the meeting people smuggled George Woodcock into my room and formally offered him the chairmanship of the CIR. Although he carefully controlled his emotions I could see his eyes up. He repeated that he thought the White Paper was excellent. And he went on almost gratefully to say that I had given the trade union movement an opportunity he had wanted... and clearly inferring that my penal clauses would be an incentive for the unions to do the job themselves".

When she presented the White Paper to the cabinet there was a curious line-up.

The main opposition came from Callaghan - the penal clauses were "harmful".

Supported

Benn and Healey on the other hand strongly supported Castle and Jenkins' measures should be brought much quicker than planned.

The Cabinet was led by For-Wilson, Gardiner, Shaw, Black, Peart, Jenkins, Benn, etc.

TUC VOLUNTEERED TO POLICE THE UNIONS



Militants lobby the TUC calling for action

and Thomas; Against—Mason, Crossman, Ross, Shore, Marsh and Callaghan.

Later, on the NEC of the Labour Party, Benn voted "unhesitatingly" with Castle on a motion supporting the White Paper—which was defeated 15-6.

On January 7 the General Council of the TUC—the official public one this time—came out against the White Paper.

They agreed a unanimous resolution sharply condemning it, moved by TGWU leader Frank Cousins and seconded by Danny McGarvey.

Castle explains that even at that meeting there was manoeuvring behind the scenes. Vic Feather, she says, rang the government secretly to assure them that everything would be OK despite the resolution and advising her to play it cool. He told them that Woodcock had lectured the General Council that day saying that they would never improve industrial relations unless there were sanctions to give backing to any proposals which were made.

Castle responded saying: "That's all fine and dandy, but I get a little tired of hearing trade union leaders talk sense in private whilst attacking us in public for doing the very things they know must be done".

By late January Feather had taken over from Woodcock—both in public and in the now developing back stairs collaboration.

Dined

On the very day he became General Secretary he dined privately with Castle in an exclusive hotel and pledged himself to help get the legislation

through in any way he could.

Castle urged him to "keep contact like this".

"I think he may turn out to be a great General Secretary", she wrote!

Feather however was not as agile as Woodcock in maintaining a double face.

Shortly after his meeting with Castle, he wrote two scathing articles attacking In Place of Strife—one in an employers magazine and the other in a Soviet trade union magazine.

Panicked

Castle panicked and arranged another private chat. She explains that:

"He seemed quite surprised that I should take his articles seriously".

After all, this was merely what he was saying in public. Surely a politician of her experience didn't believe he meant what he said in public? Didn't she know that this was simply for the consumption of his membership? To allay her fears, he assured Castle that he would

"Make a constructive speech on the White Paper at the Executive meeting on February 27". "It'll be alright, luv," he patronisingly reassured her.

Meanwhile a battle had been taking place in cabinet circles on the advisability of bringing in a short Bill quickly, which would simply contain penal clauses.

This was the Jenkins line. Wilson had argued that this would force the pace with the TUC who were still opposing the White Paper in public despite their secret deals.

Eventually Castle conceded to this and began the drafting of a short Bill.

Then a complication arose which meant that it never got off the ground. A quarter of a million workers struck on May 1—despite the efforts of the TUC to defuse the issue.

Urgent consultations were held. It was decided that, given this demonstration of hostility to the White Paper, the Government should not escalate the situation by drafting the short Bill, but should place reliance on the TUC, work with them as closely as possible and await the outcome of the June 5 Special Congress.

The TUC leaders, of course, were only too ready to comply. As soon as Feather had completed the draft of his sell-out document—brazenly entitled "A Programme for Action"—ready for Croydon on June 5, he sent Castle a copy.

She quickly arranged a secret meeting with them to discuss it. The document called on individual unions to accept responsibility for and to discipline their members involved in strikes.

Empower

It also called for changes to the TUC rules to empower the TUC to ensure that they met the commitment.

In order to push the TUC as far as he could, Wilson argued that their document was not strong enough in a number of respects.

Castle records: "Under pressure Vic admitted that the TUC document had 'soft edges', but maintained that if he had taken his proposals any further he wouldn't have got away with it.

But he added, encouragingly, "I don't mind how diamond hard you go, so long as it comes from you".

In other words, Feather was saying screw the working class, but don't reveal that I have been collaborating with you to do it!

Wilson's pressure failed to produce changes and he proposed that there should be a further meeting before Croydon.

It should, he said, be: "Strictly private discussions with a few key TUC people of which not even the General Council would know".

Not even fellow trade union bureaucrats should know—let alone the working class, who they all purport to represent!

Castle said she was about to go on holiday but would return for the talks when they were arranged.

It turned out that she had certainly planned a sumptuous holiday—on Charles Forte's yacht in the Adriatic.

Here was a Labour Minister

engaged in anti-union legislation and defending herself by saying she was strongly pro-trade union and that her legislation was designed to strengthen the unions, taking a holiday with a viciously anti-union millionaire employer on his luxury yacht off the Italian coast.

Corrupted

This was the real face of Castle and the real face of the government compromised and corrupted in the most crude way by capitalism.

Forte gave Castle, her husband Ted and fellow minister Richard Crossman who accompanied them, the most lavish treatment. He even flew out the head waiter of the Cafe Royal to wait on them—something which he did extremely well according to Castle.

Nothing is too good for services rendered!

On June 1 Castle was indeed called from her luxury playground to a secret meeting with the TUC.

The meeting was at Chequers. Jack Jones (who had now fully taken over as TGWU General Secretary from Frank Cousins) was there and so was Scanlon. Feather had pressed Castle to try to persuade Wilson that the TUC could go no further than the terms of the "Programme for Action".

The atmosphere, she says, was positively "jovial".

"You would never have guessed that Hughie Scanlon had just come from a speech declaring all out war on us!"

She went on: "The roast duck having been despatched with relish Harold got down to business. 'How do you see things now, Vic'".

She explains that at first there was argument—but then "over the brandy" things began to "crystallise out". "Hughie" was very frank:

"Let's face reality", he said, "The question isn't whether our scheme works or your scheme works. It is the fact that our people won't accept government intervention".

"He reminded us that he was personally in a very difficult position having led his people in all out opposition to the White Paper.

"Moreover, he faced an election for the Presidency and he could be accused of a 'volte face'".

"But he was prepared to back the TUC whatever the cost".

Feather again argued that Wilson should accept the TUC "Programme for Action" in its existing form. If the government was not prepared to accept this, the TUC would not accept the Bill.

Feather even had the cheek, having consistently opposed it, to threaten Wilson with "more action like May 1" if the government went ahead!

Although Wilson made no reply, he clearly knew that the deal had been struck and the document as it stood would be adopted at Croydon.

The vote went in favour of Feather's "Programme for Action"—and within two weeks, after some ritual haggling, Castle's In Place of Strife was withdrawn by the government—in favour of "A Programme for Action".

The Croydon deal and the period of In Place of Strife, in which trade union and Labour leaders each struggled to help capitalism through a period of deep economic crisis, have had far reaching consequences for the working class in Britain.

Edward Heath came to power in June 1970 and began the preparation of the Industrial Relations Act, a piece of legislation more far-reaching than In Place of Strife but built firmly on the foundations laid by Barbara Castle.

The secret ballot principle was taken up by the Tories.

But probably the most lasting effect of In Place of Strife on the working class was in cementing the long term political collaboration between the trade union leaders and the Parliamentary leaders of the Labour Party in government.

Both of these wings of reformism accepted the employers' argument that in a time of crisis the answer is not socialism but for someone to discipline and attack the working class—whether this be the government and the employers or the union leaders themselves.

This did not show up so clearly during the life of that particular Labour government, which only lasted a year after Croydon.

But it was to dominate the relationship between Wilson and the TUC when the Labour government was reelected in February 1974 following the oil crisis, the three-day week and even deeper levels of economic crisis.

Jack Jones, having cut his teeth on the sell-out of 1969 emerged as the lynch pin of four stages of harsh wage controls under the "Social Contract", backed by Scanlon who had swung sharply to the right after his involuntary confrontation with Heath's Industrial Court.

Nor did the union leaders forget or renege on the pledge offered to Wilson and the British capitalists by Vic Feather at the 1969 Croydon conference:

"Where workers defy these [TUC] committees individual unions would have to commit themselves to taking action under their own rules".

Within months of the return of Wilson to office in 1974 Jack Jones had set a cracking pace in establishing close collaboration with major employers such as British Leyland—and in attempting a "clean up" of the union through the witch-hunting of militants.

In April 1974 my victimisation as deputy convenor at Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant signalled the start of a nationally-coordinated drive by Jones and the union bureaucracy to "reorganise" the union in the BL plant with the most principled leadership in the corporation, and thus create best conditions for management to increase exploitation throughout BL.

Barbara Castle may never have seen In Place of Strife on the statute books: but with the aid of reformist union leaders—whose first concern is for the viability of British capitalism—she has helped to shackle and impede the working class in today's struggles in defence of jobs and wages.



Cousins and Woodcock—scheming for a sell-out



Women in struggle



350 WOMEN packed into Kingsway Princeton college in London for the Women's Fightback 'Women in Trade Unions' conference on the 27th.

Chairing the conference, Anne Marie Sweeney pointed to the betrayals that women fighting for their rights have met time and again from leaders in the unions who were, in practically every case, well-heeled bureaucrats.

Rachel Lever, speaking for Fightback, explained, "We've called this conference because we want to accelerate and help to develop the women's movement that is growing in the trade unions."

"A recession, mass unemployment, and a hostile Tory government is a classic situation when women's rights get jettisoned and women are driven into the home and with it into political and industrial invisibility. We don't have all the time in the world. If we don't organise ourselves now, the opportunity may be lost."

"The bureaucrats will have found a safe way of accommodating women".

So the conference opened with an impressive and inspiring group of women militants.

Siobhan Lanigan from Foyles, sacked for organising workers into USDAW, then kicked in the teeth by that union leadership. Rita Maxim from St Mary's Hospital. Louise O'Connor from Barking teachers, on strike for several weeks.

Winnie Murphy, a NUTGW shop steward, spoke on behalf of the Rule-can women. In the afternoon, Teresa Gunn from Edinburgh Unemployed Association spoke for the Plesseys occupation sold out only days before, and NUPE shop steward Anna Lunts outlined the fight hospital workers in Man-

chester were waging, pointing out that nurses were 'not angels' — but breadwinners.

There were over 30 workshops, and it is impossible to report on them all here, though in future issues of Socialist Organiser we will be covering the decisions and resolutions drafted by these workshops.

An important and illuminating contribution to the conference was made by women from Sisters Against Disablement.

A blind sister asked women who wore glasses or have back trouble or difficulty hearing to put their hands up. Most women did.

And she pointed out that disabled or partially disabled women are far more numerous than is normally thought, and there is so little provision made at conferences and meetings to cater for disabilities. It doesn't cost much to provide them. Many women commented afterwards that they just hadn't thought about it before, but would in future.

After the conference, over 100 women stayed on to watch the brilliant film 'Rosie the Riveter' (which Fightback groups should hire and show in their areas). Using old US news-reel propaganda and interviews with women, it graphically shows how women were implored to come into heavy industry (welding, fitting, rivetting, etc) during the war and kicked out of their jobs when the men came back.

Then there was a short discussion with Women in Manual Trades.

A thoroughly enjoyable bop was held after that for those who could stand the pace!

Anne Marie Sweeney reports on some of the main trade union workshops

kind of response to the pressure coming from the soaring increase in women's membership of trade unions in the late 1960s and early 1970s and also from the increasingly articulate women's movement.

Demanding action

But on the other hand the last thing they wanted was this challenging, militant majority, actually fully participating in the union.

After all they were demanding action — not only on questions of equal pay, job losses and working conditions, but also on "social issues" like nursery provision, abortion and gay rights and so on.

Thus the bureaucracy in the TUC and in some individual unions (who couldn't adopt the ignore it and hope it will go away attitude) took the easy road of token gestures.

We have the TUC Charter on Women — all fine sentiments but sweet FA in practice. We even had the odd handbook like the TGWU guidelines on getting women into the unions (having just betrayed the unionisation struggles at Trust Houses Forte, the Randolph Hotel and Garners Steak Houses).

And then, as in NUPE,

we have the reserved women's seats, (don't get too excited, these are for hardened female bureaucrats far better placed than their male counterparts to respond to militant women — "Don't bleat at me about your problems, I'm a woman too, you know. I brought up two kids when times were much worse. If I can cope, so can you")

Then there's the different variations on Women's Advisory Committees — all allowed to churn out reports on this and that so long as they don't actually try to advise women members how to take action, ensuring that certain "troublemaking" women are in an advisory and not a policy-making role.

So the problem that we were faced with in the trade union workshops was how to

best organise ourselves to fight for women's fullest participation in the unions. And for women to remove the present leadership that was stopping us. How to choose methods that weren't easily assimilated or hived off or invalidated by the present leadership. In each of the trade union workshops this discussion took a different form.

In NALGO, far and away the biggest workshop with 60 present, discussion shared experiences of the different openings for women in NALGO. On the surface it would seem that NALGO women have been given the machinery, NALGO has plenty of good literature, a women's subcommittee in Haringey has had hundreds of pounds in grants from the local branch, NALGO nationally has done impressive research on sexual harassment at work and on

childcare provision. The workshop set up a "Women in NALGO" network.

In the NUPE workshop about 20 women discussed the cosmetic gestures this left-sounding union with its Charter on the Under Fives and on School Meals have made.

They heard of the first and only meeting so far of the National Women's Working Party, which sat for an hour listening to the pearls of wisdom of Alan Fisher, who as we all know did so much for NUPE's women members, selling them out on low pay, cuts, pay beds, nurseries, etc.

The word is going around that yes, NUPE may have a full time women's officer to deal with "women's issues".

Ah, but they could appoint a male, because as they say, they can't have discrimination.

Everyone in the work-

shop was agreed that a dyed-in-the-wool bureaucrat was a dyed-in-the-wool bureaucrat regardless of sex. That did not mean that we did not want positive discrimination for accountable, elected officials on the average wage of NUPE members. Where there are women members in a union they need women to represent them.

It was generally agreed that the most effective way to get women involved in the trade unions was a really open democratic structure with union meetings during working time.

One sister from a Sheffield hospital said that they had resolved the question of inactive stewards or those acting against the membership's will by having regular mass meetings in the hospital and throwing out a lot of stewards who just wanted a safe number.

PHOTO: JOANNE O'BRIEN



SHAKING UP THE UNIONS

WOMEN'S
FIGHTBACK

Join
Fightback

And affiliate your women's group, women's section, or trade union branch. £5 for a year: write to 41 Ellington St, London N7

In the COHSE, NUPE and UCW workshops, there was discussion on the broad left. In the NUPE workshop it was generally agreed that there was a clear need for broad left. Activists had held back from forming one because of the so-called left image of the union.

The women in the workshop felt that it was imperative to begin to form broad left but they were clear that they didn't want one along the lines of the male-dominated broad left of other unions.

Splintering

In the COHSE workshop there was a discussion between a sister from South Wales who thought that sisters there should form a socialist-feminist caucus in the union. But Andrea Campbell, the founder and chairperson of Group 81, the broad left in COHSE, opposed a caucus on these lines, arguing that socialist women had set up and dominated the broad left in COHSE and that a separate caucus would be seen as welcome splintering off of these women by Spanswick and the COHSE leadership.

In the NUT workshop many of the sisters were part of Women in the NUT which was engaged in a very positive fight against bureaucracy. This workshop discussed the situation Barking and Dagenham inter-union committees are the anti-union law's guidelines on picketing.

Tebbit

The morning workshop covered some 30 topics. The biggest covered the fight against Tebbit, unemployment, women, cuts in the NHS and cuts in local authority spending.

The workshop on Tebbit discussed the effects of the Bill on women and agreed to participate in the lobby the TUC Executives on April.

The NHS workshop discussed the strong move for joint shop stewards committees in the health service and passed a motion calling among other things: occupations and supporting strike action, the blacking private medicine, agency work and bonus schemes.

The workshop on unemployed women and benefits passed a model resolution and drew attention to litigious attacks on women claimants in the Ray's Report and agreed to ask a speaker at the national Unemployed Workers Movement Rally.

The entire conference was very stimulating and exciting with a clear orientation to challenging existing leadership and to take action against attacks of the Tories, bosses and local councils.



8-point pledge by left

by Jeremy Corbyn (Haringey councillor and prospective Labour candidate for Islington North)

OVER THE past ten years, firstly Dennis Healey and his IMF-inspired budgets, and then the Tories, have sought to use cuts in local government support as a way of passing on an attack on working class living standards.

This might be a self-evident statement, but the national leadership of the Labour Party and the TUC seem to have barely grasped the enormity of the attack, or the way that the Labour-

controlled inner city areas have been passing on Tory policies to their people.

London has been hit harder than most other parts of the country, with most boroughs having lost between £20 and £30 million since May 1979. In reality this represents a fine of over £150 per head of the population by Heseltine.

The response of the majority of Labour councils has been either to raise the rates to offset the loss in central

government support or to make massive cuts in service: it was not until the autumn of 1981, two and a half years after Thatcher came to power, that even a common advertising campaign was mounted by Labour councils.

There has been no national leadership of Labour councils to wage a united fight against Thatcher and Heseltine, but a myopic and blinkered NEC response to say, 'it should be locally det-

ermined'. The Parliamentary Party went a stage further and sent Hattersley round the country supporting every Labour Council: no matter that in Wakefield this meant massive cuts and dog-like obedience to Heseltine, while in other places there were attempts to fight back.

London Labour Briefing was founded after the 1979 election to provide a forum for left activists in London boroughs to talk to each other and to plan for a more united approach by Labour-controlled councils, the aim being to make them an engine in the fighting force against the Tories we need.

It soon became obvious that the existing Labour leaderships in most of the boroughs had no intention of leading this fight, hence Target 82 was founded to prepare and plan for the 1982 borough elections and support the selection of candidates who would fight for an aggressive and different sort of Labour council.

Since its foundation a substantial mailing list of activists has been created. A successful series of conferences have been held, ensuring that not only will there be stronger manifestos, but manifestos that will have an emphasis on a changed method of council operation in terms of housing, ethnic minority groups, planning and environmental issues.

Signatures

The latest issue of London Labour Briefing contains a statement that has already been signed by over 100 council candidates that pledges them to an 8-point statement to-

- * refuse to cut council services,
- * defy the district audit or where it tries to interfere with programmes,
- * defy threats of legal action against elected councillors,
- * fight for a Labour victory to oppose the Tory government,
- * oppose racial and sexual harassment and make the police accountable,
- * seek to unite the trade union and labour movement to smash the Tory government,
- * support the establishment of an 'Association of Socialist Councils',
- * secure for a future Labour government an alternative democratic base of support.

The prospects of massive Labour victories in London in May are very good indeed, but that support will only be retained if the newly elected councils actually band together to implement the manifestos that have been very painstakingly and democratically written by Party members.

There will be no easy road after May 6, but Labour victories followed by action by Labour councils against the Tories will do much to raise the morale of the labour movement and provide us with the basis of a campaign to secure the election of a Labour Government committed to a fight against capitalism, and not the obsequious reformist role that we have seen in the past.

Comrades in London who would like to take part in the London Labour Briefing/Target 82 mailing list should send £5 to the address below (£1 unwaged).

* Jeremy Corbyn, 28 Lausanne Road, London N8.

May Election Special

5p if sold separately

A CHANCE TO

HIT BACK

AT TORIES

by Martin Thomas



The anger and will to fight is there: the job is to organise it round an effective campaigning left wing

lifblood of this process has often been new recruits recently brought into the Labour Party.

Yet the problems are still not resolved. The left-wing manifestos generally collapse into muttering or silence on the issue of how their plans for better services, expanded direct works, or low rents will be carried out in the teeth of Tory financial limits and legal attacks.

In these pages we try to give some elements of the answer.

Labour councils must see themselves as part of the working class fightback against the Tories. Well-intentioned local administration, however skilful, can achieve nothing serious against this government.

The Labour councillors must be prepared to act as leaders in this fightback.

GLC Left

The GLC Left eventually voted for the budget with the London Transport fares rise, then called for Londoners in general to fight back by refusing to pay rises. Lambeth Labour group piled on the rate rises, arguing that nothing else could be done until the 'big battalions' of the unions moved. Lothian eventually folded up saying that the union officials had let them down.

In every case, it was really a failure to lead. If we

are to break the pattern, councillors must be prepared to use their positions against the Tories, to put themselves in the front line.

It means a risk of surcharge? Yes. Workers striking against the cuts risk loss of wages and jobs, tenants on rent strike risk eviction. And councillors are much better placed to rouse mass resistance and defeat Tory penalties.

If they're not prepared to give a lead, they should not take leading positions.

Also, a Left which organises only in the Labour Party and does not also take on the conservative bureaucrats in the unions will find itself stranded in the void when it comes to the crunch - when the power of industrial action is crucial.

The reason why even the best of the GLC Left collapsed on the final fares vote was not that they are shysters or cowards.

They were isolated and saw no alternative. They had no organisation that could enable them to link up with militant groups in the LT unions. And it was similar in

Lothian.

Likewise, the fight cannot be confined to local level. Even when it was allegedly left-wing, Labour's NEC had a shoddy record on the cuts. It just told councils to decide their own tactics - so long as they didn't break the law!

The TUC was as bad or worse. The only time it moved was then a special delegation hurried to Lothian to insist the council buckled under.

A fight can and must be started locally - but it also needs to be spread nationally.

And that has a double importance. What Labour councils do now foreshadows what a future Labour government will do: whether it will knuckle under or act against capitalism.

If Labour councils try to mark time, waiting for salvation from a future government, then they will guarantee that salvation never comes. Without the will to start confrontation locally, we will never be able to confront capitalism centrally.

THE MAY local elections are a chance to strike a blow at the Tories and the SDP through the ballot box, to boost the fight to save jobs and public services from the Tory axe, and to give new confidence to the labour movement.

The example of Britain's one SDP council, in Islington, shows that the SDP will be no less destructive than the Tories if it gains control locally.

Tories or SDP in the town halls backing up Tories in Westminster are a recipe for devastation. But getting Labour into the town halls is only the beginning of the answer.

Many Labour councils have done just what the Tories wanted since 1979. And even the left-wing coun-

cils which tried to fight finally flunked out - like the Greater London Council, which has recently collapsed in face of the Law Lords on its cheap fares policy.

For many decades, the ranks of Labour councillors have resembled trade union officialdom in being like quick-set cement. They easily absorb many militants ... who soon become rooted to the spot and cease to be so militant.

When struggles burst out from the rank and file, the councillors and officials too often provide a case-hardened obstacle.

Like trade union officialdom, the councils have introduced many activists to the world of perks, privileges, career openings, and self-important committee man-

oeuvring.

Where councillors refuse to conform - as many have - very often they face purges. Manchester, Bristol, Mid-Glamorgan, Southwark ... many other areas reproduce the pattern reported from Sandwell on the back page of this supplement.

The struggle to come to grips with the present leadership, to replace it and to impose accountability, has affected the councils as well as the Labour Party nationally and the unions.

In many areas, Labour will be standing this May with a left wing manifesto and a substantial contingent of left wing candidates on its slate. This reflects a long process of debate, involvement in campaigns, and battles to change leaders. The

The policies Labour councils must fight for: housing, rents, rates, police....
Centre pages

The obstacles they will face: Heseltine's law
back page

Experiences to learn from: Lambeth, Lothian, GLC
Centre pages



RENTS AND RATES SOCIALIST SOLUTIONS

LOOK BACK AT LAMBETH

THE lessons of Lambeth are many in number — the need for continual vigilance by the Labour Party over even left Labour councils; the need to explain how continual rate increases are cuts by the back door, working against many ordinary people's interests; and the need not to cut services after emphasising time and again that Labour councils were elected on uncompromising policies.

Lambeth goes into the 1982 elections with the worst of both worlds, having had a Labour group pledging to maintain services, making strident promises of refusing to cut, then cutting.

The first dent in the borough's armour was the high rate rises — but many constituency parties felt this to be a short-term evil necessary to maintain facilities for working class people.

Then, after marches, speeches and pledges, the cuts started — first in trimming back projected growth, and then by ten per cent reductions in spending which would have done right-wing Labour councils proud.

The problems have spilled over to the 1982 manifesto. Much of the council leadership voted with known members of Labour Solidarity to exclude certain hard left provisions from the document eventually agreed by the Lambeth local government committee — on the grounds of cost, usually.

Other commitments have been clouded by referring to fulfilment of pledges "where possible", with the new Labour council considering certain policies.

The task now is to build on the manifesto through increasing vigilance in the constituency Labour Parties to ensure a new administration starts socialist and stays socialist.

For others who used to look to Lambeth for a lead, look to us instead for a lesson — and ensure the Labour Parties are active and eternally watchful of Labour councils everywhere.

By Graham Norwood

Lessons of Lothian

WHEN the vast majority of Lothian Region's employees came out on one-day strike on 30 June last year, in support of Lothian's stand against the cuts, it was a magnificent demonstration of the determination and strength of the movement.

But it was to be a short-lived thing. There were two main factors in the tragic change from the determination of the 30th to the situation a few weeks later, when union leaders were able to say to the Labour Group:

"We can get no support from our members. You must implement the cuts rather than 'slip into illegality'."

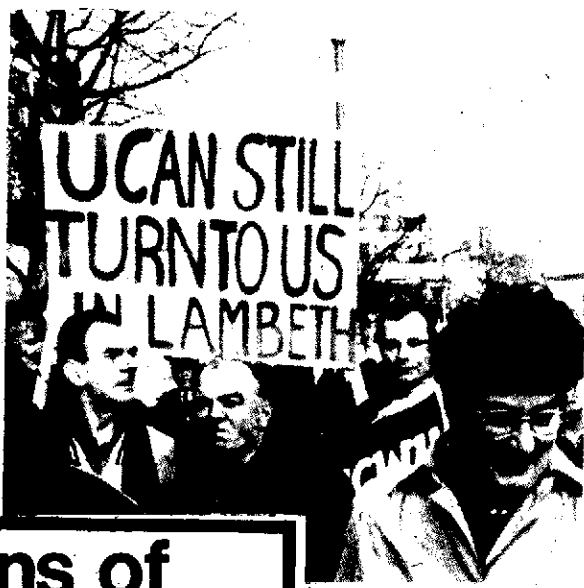
The first was the weakness of the Labour Group's position from the start. They implemented a massive rates rise to compensate for the government's vicious cut in the Rate Support Grant. That immediately took the

campaign out of the hands of the rank and file. The Labour Group's message to the working class in Lothian (despite pious statements to the contrary) was in effect, "We'll juggle the figures, we are the campaign, your job is to express support."

It was no way to build a rank and file-based campaign.

Rates rises hit clearly at the working class as well as city centre business. In Pilton, one of the most deprived housing schemes in Scotland, rates (which are paid by council tenants as part of their rent) are amongst the highest in Edinburgh. Pilton is classed — laughably — as suburban.

It is a sad fact that the media could blame the situation on the Labour Group in isolation precisely because they had "juggled the figures" with a rates rise rather than going to the labour movement to start with.



NORTH versus South, shire versus city, householder versus tenant — how can Labour win the battle for public services and local amenities against the divisive Tory argument which attempts to set worker against worker?

Provision of local authority finance is possible by two methods.

Firstly, central government provides a portion of finance needed by local authorities. The need is estimated on population and ability to raise finance locally. This method is said to permit the local authority itself to raise the remainder of revenue not given by central government.

But who really sets the need of local authorities? It is central government that dictates attributed and the basis of estimation is conservative, even under Labour governments.

Without a socialist Labour government, local Labour councils can never win real major gains because local service provision cannot be detached from provision of finance by central government.

It should therefore be the objective of all Labour parties to ensure that local borough manifestos forward clear socialist demands for services, housing, health and education based on need and not

ability to pay, either through rent or rate rises or cuts to services and staff to "balance the books".

The manifestos should demand an improvement in all local service provision. To do other than this will be to placate the Tories and sell out working class interests for the monetarist needs of the money lenders.

The supposed option of increasing loans by council is also a non-solution, locally or nationally, because this desperate action only delays the day of financial retribution brought onto councils or national government by the uncontrolled banks and



RENTS SUBSIDISE BANK PRO

THE Tories claim that council rents are too low — so Heseltine is demanding that all councils slap £2.50 onto the rent.

Councils are making their decisions this month. And most, Tory and Labour, are obliging. Some are even going one better. Westminster will put their rents up by £4.50.

And the rent is only part of the story. After increased rates and heating charges, many tenants will be paying £5 or £7 more.

In line with the Tories' policy of cutting public services to help private profit, and of driving people into the market for private housing, council houses are being sold off, money is being cut from the Housing Improvement Programmes (HIP), hardly any new building is being done — and the rents are going up.

Over 70% of all the cuts in public spending have been made in housing — council housing. And one of the way the Tories are

doing this is by cutting the subsidy to Housing Rent Accounts.

In the past these subsidies have worked to keep rents down (relatively) in a similar way to tax relief on mortgages for private house-owners.

The common claim that council tenants are subsidised by everyone else is a myth — it's not true. The reality is that both council tenants and working-class owner-occupiers subsidise the money-lenders, the big property and landowners, and the banks.

Frittered away

Most of the money we pay in rent is frittered away into the coffers of big business and the banks, via interest charges. And people paying off mortgages face the same drain.

Pitting council tenants against house-owners by saying that the rates subsidise the council tenants, or that house-buyers get more subsidy than council

tenants, benefits no-one. We need a joint fight to get rid of the money-making profiteers whose aim is solely to squeeze us for profit — not to provide housing for need.

The cuts also fall on repairs, maintenance and modernisation, so that the stock that's left is run down and falling into more disrepair — yet for this Heseltine wants us to pay more!

Last weekend 400 tenants from all over the country demonstrated in Walsall (where hundreds of tenants have been refusing to pay last year's increase for 51 weeks now), calling on council tenants nationally to refuse to pay the increase. Speakers called for a national tenants' campaign to organise action.

Some Labour manifestos for the May elections contain a rent freeze policy, and we must make sure that candidates stick to that commitment. We must also challenge councils like Lambeth, who are

making no increase now — but plan to put the rents up in October, after the May election.

Council tenants earn less than the average wage, and have to pay more for worse housing. The very least Labour councils should be doing is starting rent freezes. And they should be told that if they won't do it, council tenants will do it themselves.

'Distraint'

Rent arrears are soaring as rents rise. Over £56 million is owed in London. Now Southwark Labour council is planning to use 'distraint' — seizing tenants' possessions without taking prior legal action. This must be stopped.

We have a right to decent houses to live in. Labour councils are elected to represent the interests of working people, not to do the Tories' dirty work for them.

Direct Works departments need to be expanded.

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TES: THE UTION

London Labour Party activist Nigel Knowles argues that Labour must go for, not the illusion of local 'socialism on the rates', but a working class struggle against capitalism

ance houses. Comrades could consider a second option for local authority finance provision. It may be worth Labour authorities attempting to raise needed finance by levying extra rate/tax upon profitable local outlets such as multi-national industrial, oil, banking and financial companies.

he struggle would then be concentrated around the levying of local authorities to raise revenue from local enterprises. It would stop the local authority levying a necessary rate/tax on Marks and Spencer or Barclays Bank, and on the profit they make from local people? Certainly without social-

ist central government legislation and continual political support from the working class, the attempts to gain this local rate-tax from big business would be ruled out of court by the judges or the Tory government.

But the political battle would become part of the developing campaign to explain to the workers how local government finance operates and why it is weighted against them but towards big business and the capitalist class.

Rates are the only tax which most big companies pay. Callaghan and Healey admit companies mostly don't pay tax — they cheat the public purse, then refuse to pay more rates to provide public and social services.

A socialist Labour government must change the rules to favour local authorities. But it would be a fatal mistake to extricate the struggle for local authority finance provision from the struggle for workers' control of industry, nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy and the taking of power away from the ruling class

by legislation and mass popular support and struggle.

The Tories and capitalists will always change the rules whether they are in or out of government, through investment strikes, moving capital overseas or by using the military and police against the organised working class to break strikes.

We were five minutes away from a State of Emergency in the winter of 1978-9. Thatcher would have no doubts about using force to maintain the Tories' position of ascendancy over the workers.

We must inflict political defeats on the Tory government. The working class needs victories before a general election or Labour will not win. Labour and trade union leaders must fight or be forced aside. We will not stand idly by and watch Thatcher chop up the organised working class.

The struggle around the rates and public transport is part of the whole struggle of workers against capitalism, not a separate issue to be decided by judges or a transport authority.

There must be no illu-



You can't have any money for social services, we need it for Trident...

sions. Thatcher and the ruling class know exactly what is at stake in mass redundancy and unemployment, the military build up and public expenditure cuts. They are taking us apart and winning the political battle.

The reaction will be anti-Thatcher, but have we done enough politically to be certain that the working class will kick out Toryism, not just from Parliament but by defeating the dominant ideas of capitalism in industry and social life?

There can be only one platform on which to fight local elections. The socialist alternative is — no cuts, no sackings, no rent increases, no rate increases, no council house sales, no school closures, no hospital closures.

These demands should constitute part of a national campaign for socialism to

which should be added common ownership of the means of production, exit from the EEC, withdrawal from NATO, abolition of nuclear weapons, democratic and civil control of the armed forces and police, and abolition of the House of Lords and the Monarchy.

We must refuse to compromise with the Tories and instead, put the socialist alternative before the working class and pursue our common struggle against the ruling class. If we do not, the danger will be made greater that a larger number of the workers will seek a right wing and racist solution to the endemic crisis of international capitalism.

NIGEL KNOWLES
PPC, Hastings
PCC, Noel Park Ward
Wood Green CLP



Show the reality of police powers

By Garth Frankland

JAMES Anderton's attack on the weak powers of the (in part) democratically elected police committees is a forerunner of how the Tories intend to fight elections.

Law and order will make central, Whitelaw is already preparing new 'sus' laws. Last summer saw tens of thousands of working class youth from the poorest inner cities areas of England in a series of violent and lengthy clashes with the police. None of the problems facing these youth — unemployment, racism, bad housing, lack of leisure facilities — have been solved.

The increased use of vans instead of panda cars, the stockpiling of riot weapons, show how the law-and-order Tories and their allies, the Chief Constables, intend to tackle the problem of unemployment.

What policies should the labour movement fight for?

We must first of all destroy the myth of community policing, and show the reality of the militarisation and the computerisation of police power.

We must also support trade union and community based organisations which defend their areas against racist and fascist attacks.

In Leeds, before the summer disturbances, there were a number of racist attacks in Chapeltown. Nobody has been arrested for them. This contrasts with nearly a hundred youth arrested in Chapeltown during the disturbances themselves.

The final demand must be that the existing police committees should dismiss Chief Constables who attack the working class, and challenge directly the power of the Home Office. Anderton must be the first Chief Constable to go.

GLC: the theory and practice of resistance

The GLC left's collapse in the final vote on the budget including the LT fares rise has provoked a big debate in the London Labour Left, reflected in the columns of Socialist Organiser. Tony Gard takes up the discussion, arguing that the Left has been hamstrung by failure to key into the fight for trade union democracy and trade union action

SOCIALIST Organiser's open letter to Chris Knight and Valerie Wise (SO, 4 march), criticising their editorial in the March issue of London Labour Briefing, and Chris Knight's reply the following week, open up some important issues about the role of socialists in local government.

In the same issue of Briefing, Ken Livingstone had an article entitled 'Stay and Fight'. He wrote: "While we can continue

to use our positions to expand and defend services and protect jobs we would never be forgiven or understood if we ran away from the tasks before us."

The record of the Labour GLC is better than most councils, but the working class in London can do without the sort of 'defence' and 'protection' that the transport service has had from the majority of Labour councillors.

It is not just transport

either — the Labour Group has abandoned major manifesto pledges in every case where there has been a legal threat. Livingstone himself voted to continue the Tory policy of transferring GLC housing to the boroughs and for the new ILEA budget with its £7 million cuts.

They have run away from the tasks before them.

In their Briefing editorial Chris Knight and Valerie Wise wrote:

"We are not yielding ground to the Tories any more than we are being literally forced to..."

"By staying in office we can increase, rather than decrease the scope for building that mass movement of resistance which we will need to take us along the road towards real power. Support from the GLC 'legitimises' our struggles in the eyes of Londoners..."

Requirement

It is nonsense to talk of being forced to yield ground when the army was never mobilised in the first place.

A mass movement of resistance is not the last resort, it is the first requirement, and it cannot be built on the basis of retreats when the leaders have not

seriously organised for action from the start.

How has Livingstone 'legitimised' the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' campaign, which will mean passengers and workers taking legal risks, when he himself ultimately voted to implement the fare increases?

Dependence

It is comrades like Chris Knight and Valerie Wise who are in effect 'legitimising' Livingstone's position in the eyes of Labour's rank and file.

This situation has arisen from the dependence of many Briefing comrades on council chamber tactics and their reliance on the GLC lefts.

Over the last few months this has been shown most clearly by Briefing's support for 'disengagement' or majority opposition.

In my view the disengagement tactic has been a serious diversion — and discussion of it in the left press has been quite inadequate. Disengagement has focussed attention on what councillors can do inside the council, instead of preparing labour movement action and demanding that Labour councillors give a lead to such action.

Like Chris Knight I am a member of East Lewisham Labour Party, where there has been a lot of support for disengagement. A motion on these lines was passed at the Borough Local Government Conference in December.

Support for this tactic has been based on lack of confidence in the likelihood of union action. Some comrades saw this as the real lesson of the Lothian defeat.

It was generally agreed, in an abstract way, that union support would be needed for eventual success but a lot of comrades thought it was unrealistic to put this to the fore.

More 'practical'

Disengagement was seen as more 'practical'.

In practice this attitude (which identifies the unions with the bureaucracy) has made it easier for the Labour controlled council to ignore the local parties' demands for a no cuts, no rate rise, no rent rise policy.

The major lesson of this episode is the need for the Labour left to seriously strengthen links between local parties and union branches, build workplace branches of the Labour

Party and campaign for trade union democracy. There are no short cuts through calls for 'Taking to the Streets' (the title of Knight and Wise's editorial).

A further issue is, when is it appropriate for left wingers to resign from leading council positions?

Two ILEA members who voted against the revised budget have resigned as committee vice-chairs.

I think they were quite right, but the real question should be whether resignation is a way of taking a fight forward. This when Livingstone says that he will 'Stay and Fight', socialists should insist that he really does give leadership in a fight — even if this means being removed from or having to resign the leadership of the GLC.

Unhappy

I am sure the Briefing comrades want to fight and are unhappy about the present position.

It is certain that many more left wing councillors will be elected in the May elections, and that they will face even greater pressures. It is therefore vital that there is the widest and most thorough discussion possible of these issues.

DFITS

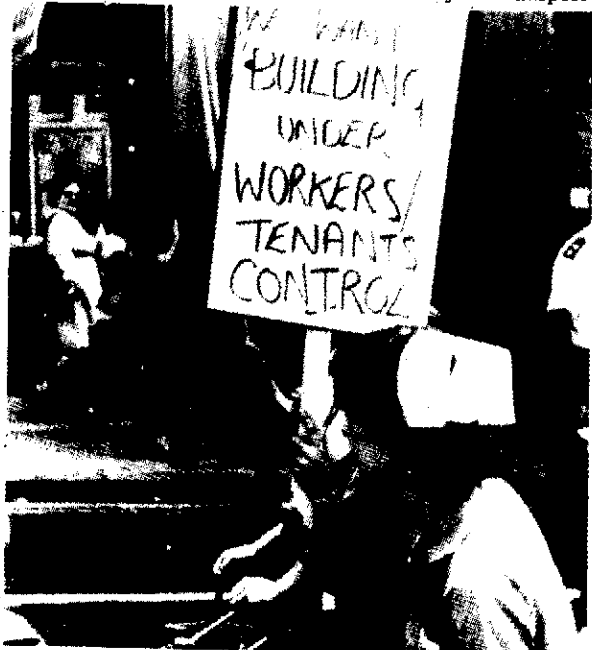
cut to save money. can't make a profit repairs and maintenance. The purpose of direct was never to make a but to service countants: and that's how old be.

council housing should under workers' and s' control. Moves to rationalise administration and maintenance should be supported — for le, having offices on g estates which are run.

Walsall, the council direct works repairs ns which tour the If the caravan is in estate, you can tell workers what repairs ed, and they come them.

council housing should er workers' and ten-control. We know the houses have to t, and what's wrong he ones we've got. ve to live in them!

Jo Thwaites





Sandwell socialists suspended

by Godfrey Webster

NINETEEN Labour councillors in Sandwell, West Midlands, remain suspended after a meeting with the regional executive on March 23. They were originally suspended for voting against the whip on three issues —

the letting of the housing maintenance contract to a private contractor, a rent rise of £3.25 a week, and a budget based on a 5% rate increase and cuts in services. Large lobbies by the direct works, NUT and

NUPE, had led to some full council meetings and committees being abandoned, and others severely disrupted. The 19, all members of Sandwell's Tribune group, claim that their stand was entirely in line with local

and national Labour Party policy, and are appealing to the NEC to reinstate them. The NEC will decide on the basis of a report from the regional executive (whose representatives are not known for their sympathies to the

left of the party). At last weekend's regional conference, the standing orders committee report was referred back to allow discussion of the issue, but the right wing then filibustered on other issues so that the emergency resolution on this question was never reached.

The suspension of the was quickly followed by a victimisation of George Hickman, the convenor of the direct works organisation. One of management's NALGO member, spied on Hickman through binoculars to note down what time he left his house for meetings with the management.

A fraudulent charge of fiddling time sheets was brought. The right wing Labour council are of course aware that the direct works is the strongest union organisation in the borough, but will have to be forced to accept redundancies so that contracts are being given to private firms.

Hickman has organised the Sandwell cuts committee, which has brought together tenants' organisations, trade unions, and left councillors. His victimisation was followed by a week long strike by the 3,000 direct works department but with the aid of a pre-emptive hunt and some unfortunate tactics by the leadership, it collapsed, and Hickman remains sacked. Messages of support, and requests for further information, should be sent to C. John Edwards, 33 Westbourne Rd, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 8LT.

HESELTINE'S HATCHET JOB ON COUNCILS

by Nigel Williamson

IF IT DID not have such tragic consequences for the social fabric of our communities, the inept way in which Heseltine has attempted to cut local government expenditure and impose central control upon local affairs would be high comedy.

What we have seen since June 1979, when Heseltine first called upon local authorities to cut their current expenditure plans by 3% and reduced the Rate Support Grant by an equivalent amount, is a botched and careless patchwork of measures that can surely have no precedent. As the Association of Metropolitan Authorities puts it, "Whitehall's record is amazing: four bills in two years; two bills withdrawn; three major changes in intention; and a grant system that is not merely complex beyond belief but contradictory in purposes."

In addition to this, there have been separate measures for Scotland, and further legislation may be

PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS



on the way to amend Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act.

This is the record: *In June 1979, Heseltine cut the Rate Support Grant (RSG) by 3%.

*Later in 1979, he put the Local Government Planning and Land Bill before Parliament. It had to be with-

drawn because Parliament didn't like it.

*In 1980 Heseltine called upon councils to cut their expenditure to a level 2% below that of 1978/9, and further slashed the RSG.

*In September 1980 Heseltine produced his first 'hit-list' of 14 councils

(thirteen of them Labour) who were threatened with additional RSC cuts as punishment for "high-spending".

*Also in 1980, the Local Government Planning and Land Bill re-appeared as 'Number Two'. This subsequently became law and provided:

—retrospective authorisation of the 'hit-list'.

—a new system of grant-related expenditure assessments (GREAs), allowing Heseltine to tell local authorities how much money they ought to be spending.

—automatic penalties for councils spending above these 'threshold' levels.

—fixed limits on capital spending.

Grant

—a new system which reduced the grant for each extra pound of spending in areas with high rateable values (mostly in London).

*In 1981, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act became law, giving George Younger, the Scottish Secretary, even more draconian powers north of the border. The Act allows him to impose any spending cuts on any council to any level he thinks reasonable. This was the Act that was used against Lothian.

*In England and Wales in 1981, Heseltine set a new spending target 5.6% below 1978-9 expenditure levels. The new GREAs formula was inadequate for this purpose, and in June 1981, he announced a further "hit list", which led to many councils imposing supplementary rates in October 1981.

*By November 1981, Heseltine was facing the problem that he could not penalise some authorities any further as they had no RSC left to be withdrawn. Therefore, he introduced

the Local Government Finance Bill 1981 which arbitrarily assessed what each council would spend, and required authorities with a budget above the Tories' cash limit to raise a supplementary rate from which industrial and commercial ratepayers would receive large-scale protection.

Referendum

This supplementary rate was to be subject to a referendum in which Heseltine set the question. He would then decide himself what cuts to make if the referendum went against the local authority.

In the face of a humiliating rebellion from both Tory councils and his own backbenchers, the Bill was speedily withdrawn.

*The Bill was replaced, as happened in 1980, with Mark Two. This time, Heseltine sought to outlaw supplementary rates completely, and to take even wider discretionary powers to cut councils' grants at any time during the year. It also gives retrospective legality to the £400 million Heseltine had already taken away from councils in 1981 for "high spending".

But even at this bill, he still ran into trouble, and the 'super hold-back' clause, allowing Heseltine to impose grant penalties on individual councils halfway through a financial year was dropped.

*The Tories then introduced amendments in February 1982 to allow the super hold-back to still be applied to categories of authorities and have made the GLC and the ILEA, for instance, separate categories. The 'super hold-back' can also be applied to individual authorities in subsequent years.

*Just so that Scotland did not feel left out, the

Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Bill 1982 provides the Secretary of State with the powers to force councils to adopt a lower rate than the one they propose.

Manipulation

On top of all this, of course, Heseltine has been assisted by the political manipulation of the District Auditor and the Tory courts.

I believe we have a right to demand that our elected representatives and those seeking election on 6 May defy Heseltine and protect the living standards of working people.

But rights also confer duties; the Labour movement has a duty to those who are prepared to fight now and we must demand that the next Labour government retrospectively indemnifies them against all penalties and debarments imposed under Heseltine's legislation and by the Tory courts.

Honouring our manifesto commitments and protecting working people does appear to be criminal under Tory law. The next Labour government cannot allow that law to stand.

We are told by Labour's leaders that retrospective legislation "sets a dangerous precedent". The truth is that the precedent has been set — the Tories have introduced retrospective legislation over Zimbabwe, on closed shop dismissals and local government cuts.

It seems to me that what Labour needs is to set a few more 'dangerous precedents'.

ORGANISING THE LEFT WING COUNCILLORS

GOOD intentions, and even sincere attempts to use the council chamber to serve the interests of workers and of tenants, will fall flat unless they are backed up by organisation.

That's one of the lessons of the failures of left-wing councils like Lambeth, Lothian and the GLC.

Left-wing councillors and rank-and-file Labour and trade union activists need to get organised, to create an active force making sure that the labour movement holds councillors to account, and that the movement mobilises to fight cuts whatever the councillors do.

Many local Labour Left caucuses have started to do this work.

Declaration

As Jeremy Corbyn reports elsewhere in this supplement, Target 82 has been organising in London, and over 100 council candidates have signed a declaration that: "Where threats of legal action — including surcharges — are made we

announce in advance that we will not tolerate these as reasons for abandoning our manifesto commitments; instead we will as necessary defy not only the rulings of the District Auditor but also the whole undemocratic system of rule by elected judges."

Link

In Bradford, for example, there have also been efforts to link the Left. A declaration by Labour councillors and candidates calling for a 'defiant anti-cuts campaign' has brought forward a witch-hunt from the right wing.

The Labour Group leadership is proposing expulsion from the group of the three councillors who backed the declaration, but left wing activists are confident of hundreds of signatures to a petition opposing this before the District Labour Party meeting on April 6.

The statement urged "the Labour Group to adopt a position of 'No cuts, no rate rises, no rate increases and no rate increases', and turn to the trade unions and tenants' associa-

tions for supporting action."

Barry Turner, a signatory to the declaration and a Socialist Organiser supporter, has also put out a mass leaflet in the Bradford Moor ward, where he is the Labour candidate, dissociating from the Labour council's rent and rate increases.

"Vote for a policy of no cuts, no rent rises, no rate rises", he writes. "Vote Bradford Moor Labour Party".



Barry Turner

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Brutality in Irish jails

AS A regular reader and sometimes contributor to your excellent and progressive paper, I was very interested in the article by the PRO, Republican prisoners, Hull Prison (18.3.82).

I know that conditions are even worse in lots of cases, than he describes. I am sure that he is aware of the terrible conditions in some of the Free State prisons, and the methods the Special Branch use in getting confessions.

For sheer brutality and torture, they are much worse than any northern, or British torture squads.

There was the case of the three Tipperary men, who were framed for conspiracy, one of whom tried to commit suicide by jumping from an upstairs window, barely missing, being impaled on iron railings underneath. They were duly convicted, but after a couple of years inside were released without any explanation.

Set free

Then you had the so-called train robbers convicted. But at their appeal, they had four Dutch judges sitting there as observers. Result: on the second day of the appeal, the presiding judge stopped the trial, and the so-called train robbers were set free.

I think the worst case of framing, torture and intimidation was in the Noel and Marie Murray case. The Murray trial opened in April 1976 at the Special Criminal Court. There was no jury, just three judges led by 76-year-old Judge Tringle, who had the job of trying the case, convicting or otherwise and sentencing the defendants.

Ronan Stenson, accused with the Murrays, was so badly beaten at Harcourt Terrace Police Station that when he was transferred to the Curragh Military Detention Centre, both a military and a civilian doctor agreed that his injuries were consistent with allegations of torture.

Collapsed

Several months later Stenson was still suffering so badly from his injuries that he collapsed in the dock several times, and his trial was postponed.

Stenson's evidence was vital for the defence case, and because he was now unfit to stand trial or give evidence for the Murrays an application for an adjournment was made.

When this was rejected, Noel and Marie dismissed

their counsel and refused to have anything more to do with the proceedings.

They were found guilty in their absence and sentenced to death on June 9, 1976. The Irish Times wrote an article criticising the trial and verdict and they were heavily fined for contempt. Hibernia Review was threatened with sequestration for publishing correspondence.

I arrived in Dublin from Coventry on Friday 29 October 1976 for the appeal against the death sentence, which was to start on 1 November. I met my sister, (Noel's mother) and his father, and they took me to Mountjoy Prison to see Marie, who had sought permission for the visit from the Governor, but wasn't allowed to see her.

On November 2 I went to the Ministry of Justice, and was still refused permission. When the Supreme Court opened, Noel's counsel told the presiding judge that if his clients were not allowed in Court, as their lives were on the line, he was to drop the appeal. The judge told him that he had to carry on regardless of the Murrays' wishes.

The real reason the Murrays weren't allowed in court was that the judges and counsel knew that if they were in court, they would again dismiss their counsel, stating that as they never had a trial, they could not be guilty of any crime and they would tell them to do their worst. The Murrays got life.

WILLIE MOLONEY
Coventry

Calling all scientists

AN informal group of Socialist Organiser supporters who are scientists met last week to discuss establishing a SO Science Group (SOSG).

The impetus for the group comes from our regular science column. The backbone of the column has been Les Hearn's articles, and although one or two others have contributed recently, we feel that there are many more comrades who have useful things to say about recent advances in science, or in exposing the use of science to exploit and oppress.

Additionally we felt that SOSG could address itself to other questions. We could contribute specialist knowledge to political

A FEW words in self-defence: Comrades Regan and O'Shea (letters, Socialist Organiser no.78) confuse solidarity with the Catholic community and the Republican movement against our own government and its forces, with 'political [emphasis added] solidarity with those forces conducting the struggle'.

The distinction is fundamental.

I am not in political solidarity with the Provos and the IRSP. Though in the last decade I have written dozens of articles to explain and justify to the British labour movement the Catholic revolt and the Republican military campaign that grew out of it, I have never been in political solidarity with the Republicans.

Supported

I have supported the Northern Ireland Catholics and the war of the Republicans against the imperialist government of the country I live in from a standpoint radically different from theirs, that of international socialism — of which the socialist republicanism of Connolly and Mellows is a part.

According to my basic political standpoint, much that the Republicans did (and didn't do) was inadequate, misguided, wrong, counterproductive, and sometimes monstrous (for example, various bombings — in Belfast in 1972, in Birmingham in 1974 — I said so in print at the time).

Politically

The problem, as I argued in Socialist Organiser, is that the Republicans are politically incapable of breaking out of the impasse

in Northern Ireland: they are a major part of the political problem in Ireland, not the solution.

Central and dominant in the view of the Republicans is military action. That, as James Connolly noted long ago, is what defines them whatever 'final' social goals and programmes they talk about.

Pointed out

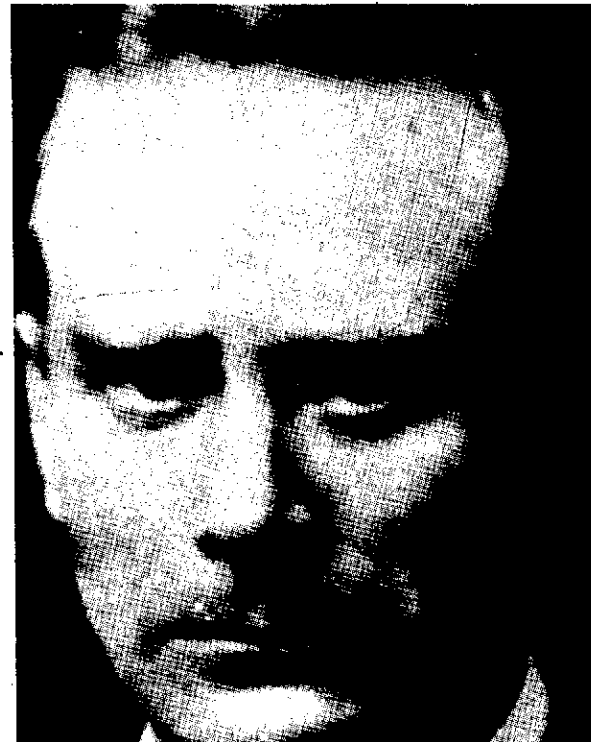
Socially and politically they are not revolutionaries — despite what the rank and file, especially those in the North, want. This is never more clear than when they venture into Southern politics, as they did without benefit of the hunger strike in the recent elections.

The only way we can do anything to begin to change this is to point it out, explain it, criticise the Republican leadership, and draw out the logic of what they do (and fail to do). In this way, by criticism, we can try to help Republican militants go forward politically out of the blind alley they are now in.

Partition

The main responsibility for the Northern Ireland situation is that of the British government, which pursues a policy of trying to beat the Catholics into accepting the undemocratic partition of Ireland. For this reason, we must support the Republicans against that government.

But the notion of O'Shea and Regan that we owe them political solidarity is something else again. It would mean boycotting our own politics and mimicking and playing the chameleon to those of the Republic-



Liam Mellows: saw the Irish liberation fight as part of international socialism

ans' — except for strictly 'constructive' and 'comradely' criticism.

Can one criticise populist Republican fundamentals (as shown in action during the election) without being 'negative' and 'unconstructive'? I don't think so.

Inappropriate

'Comradely' criticism of the IRSP's call for support in most areas for Fianna Fail would be very inappropriate politically. Sectarianism has nothing to do with it: it is the criticism of a revolutionary petty bourgeois nationalist movement from a radically different political and class standpoint.

The approach of political

self-boycott that the comrades demand of me would, if generalised, cripple us politically in face of any force, anywhere, which is leading a political/military struggle against imperialism — no matter how inadequate, alien, blind or bankrupt. You won't find support for that approach in Marx, Lenin or Connolly!

Following Marx, Lenin coined the slogan for how to relate to revolutionary nationalists: 'strike together, march separately'. That was James Connolly's approach to the revolutionary nationalists in 1916, too. Politically we march separately, even though we have a common enemy — the British government in Northern Ireland.

And I wrote about the Republicans in Southern Irish politics. Did I write a

false or true account of their politics there?

Perhaps they think criticisms like mine will undermine sympathy for the Republicans?

But we can't base a campaign in support of the Republicans against our own government on political lies about them, and we shouldn't base it on political support for them.

Problems

The quotations the comrades cite say: 'don't use criticism as a cop-out from support for the Republicans against our own government' (as Militant does and as the SWP and SLL then did). I haven't done that. Socialist Organiser doesn't do that.

In fact the quoted pamphlet contained highly critical comments on the Republicans (space rules out quoting them), and the assessment that their political limitations were one of the great problems that the Irish working class had to solve.

That said, it is nevertheless true that there has been a certain shift in my attitude. The articles I have written on the Irish struggle in the last decade were written from a standpoint independent of Republicanism, and many of them carried criticism of the Republican movement, overlaid with justification of their fight against British imperialism.

I now wish that I had also spelled out the criticisms and the socialist-republican alternative more clearly and insistently. That might have helped some Republicans to understand why the whole Northern Ireland Catholic movement is in an impasse, and thus helped them to prepare to carve a road out of it.

It is still our responsibility to explain the justice of the Catholic and Republican cause to the British labour movement, and to argue for solidarity with them against the British government and the Orange reactionaries. We must continue to discharge this responsibility — and Socialist Organiser does discharge it.

We also have a duty to the few people we reach in Ireland, and to the many Irish workers we can reach in Britain, to argue for Connolly's politics against the right and left populist Republicans who now dominate Irish revolutionary politics. We must discharge that responsibility too.

JOHN O'MAHONY,
London.

FARES LET-DOWN

WHILE welcoming the sharp analysis offered by Socialist Organiser of the sell-out in the recent Leyland Vehicles strike, it seems to me that such sharpness has been gravely lacking in your coverage of the London fares 'fight'.

Socialist Organiser has yet to point out the fact that it was always impossible that the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' tactic could succeed.

For it to have any real impact on the fares increase, that campaign would have needed to mobilise commuters in their hundreds of thousands — numbers far greater than in any industrial dispute.

And since in most cases the only factor the commuters have in common is that they ride a bus or tube to work, the problems in welding such a mass into an organised fighting force are almost insuperable.

Given the belated start and pathetic limitations of the campaign there was never a snowball's chance in hell of it succeeding. Instead it became an individual protest stunt — a conscience saver — for a handful of councillors, and a fling for a few hundred others.

Off the book

Meanwhile, the forces that could and should have mobilised against the increase — the TGWU, NUR and other transport unions — were let completely off the hook.

A solid one-day strike

showed the power of these unions: but their officials and stewards offered no perspective for all-out action to defend London Transport. And instead of calling on them to do so, the Can't Pay, Won't Pay campaign focussed simply on pressing for support from individual conductors who agree to collect part of the fare from individual protestors!

The result has been not only a fares increase — but one imposed with no political lessons learned by the trade unionists directly involved.

Socialist Organiser should have made this clear from the outset. 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' was always Can't Fight, Won't Fight.

CYRIL NEWGATE
East Finchley

we've had to put many features — including a response to Tony Benn's Marx lecture — off to the next issue because of the heavy stress in this issue on the April 3 conference, the campaign against Tebbit, and the May elections. That next issue will be dated April 15, since we'll be missing an issue at Easter.



Labour Committee on Ireland: Box BM
5355, London WC1.

Party members

I FEEL that correction is due on three recent factual mistakes in Socialist Organiser. Firstly, in the report of the London Labour Party Conference (SO 77) in listing the gains made for the left on the Regional Executive, Paul Franklin of Brent East CLP was omitted.

Asset

Paul's local efforts have certainly strengthened the left, and having him on the London Party Executive is certainly an asset.

Further, recent articles have put some people in the wrong political party. Andrew Hornung's report on the London Assembly strongly implied that Jack Dromey is a member of the Communist Party, and Steve Good's article on the ASLEF strike stated that Andy Moynihan is a member of the CP.

In fact, while they have Stalinist politics on many issues, both are officers of Brent East Labour party.

PETE FIRMIN
Brent East CLP

World News

Polish Solidarity Conference

Fighting to break links with police state "unions"

John O'Mahony and Tony Richardson report on the Polish Solidarity Campaign conference last Sunday, March 28

WHAT PROBLEMS do we face in organising solidarity with Solidarnosc in Britain?

In the first place, the practice of the broad labour movement is to accommodate to the police state pseudo-unions in the Stalinist states. This is an enormous barrier.

The TUC leaders junket with the top cops who are their nominal opposite numbers in Eastern Europe. Even during the Polish strikes of August 1980, the TUC refused to call off a scheduled visit to the official 'trade union' movement - some of whose leaders were calling on the state to shoot down their own striking members. (The Poles finally cancelled the visit).

The abominable treatment of real trade union militants like Vladimir Klebanov by the police state in the USSR is widely known. Yet links are maintained with the state 'unions' there.

Not only the Stalinoid 'left' bureaucrats have this attitude. Many on the right do too. A stone-age right-winger like Bill Sirs went on radio during the strikes of 1980 to talk with sympathy of the problems of his Polish 'colleagues'.

These people recognised Solidarnosc when it had struggled to life in defiance of their Polish 'colleagues'.



PSC marches in Birmingham

But they won't fight for it. They have done criminally little to help Solidarnosc or to protest at the attempt of the Polish and Russian Stalinists to murder it.

Secondly, there is of course the vast residue of Stalinist attitudes in the movement. It ranges from Alan Sapper through Arthur Scargill to otherwise 'admir-

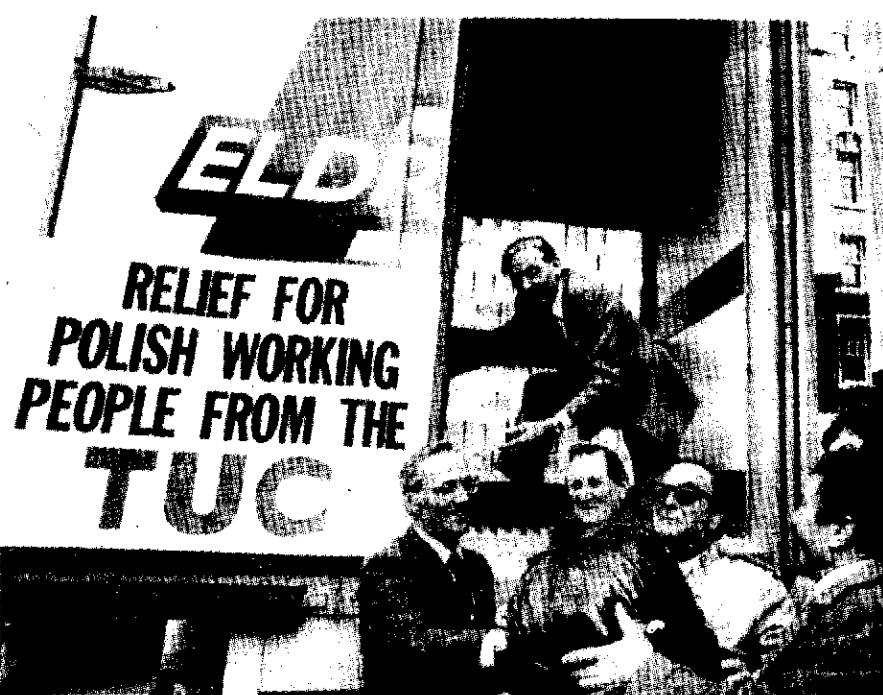
able people like Joan Maynard.

Thirdly, many so-called Trotskyists are inhibited and ambivalent in face of organising labour movement action (as distinct from routine denunciation) against the deformed and degenerated workers' states. A big part of the international current to which the IMG

belongs is vehemently opposed to any working class action in the capitalist states to comply with Solidarnosc's call for blacking of Polish goods. Back in 1980 the IMG itself refused to call on the TUC not to go on the official visit to Poland.

Finally, Thatcher's and Reagan's embrace is for Solidarnosc the kiss of

PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS



The TUC sends food - but all donated by employers!

Judas. In the labour movement their sympathy serves only to denounce it, to make militants suspicious of it, and thus to blur the class reflex of solidarity with a trade union movement.

Activists ask: what kind of trade union is it that Thatcher, the enemy of free trade unionism in Britain, is championing in Poland? What kind of liberty can the friends and sponsors of the butchers in El Salvador stand for?

And the loud noises of Reagan and Thatcher do not mean very much.

In 1956, during the savage repression by the USSR army of the Hungarian revolution, the US made it publicly plain that it considered Hungary within the USSR's 'sphere'.

At the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the US government made it plain that Czechoslovakia was in their eyes Russia's.

We must oppose imperialist government sanctions, but in fact the talk about such sanctions is rather empty.

Afghanistan was not the USSR's by agreement as Eastern Europe is. The invasion of Afghanistan reflected a certain change in the balance of military strength between the USSR and the USA. Thus the outcry. President Carter imposed sanctions. Tough-talking Reagan removed them.

They know very well that serious sanctions would be a preliminary act of war. They do not consider that a possibility.

Imperialist propaganda about Poland is a different matter. It is tremendously useful to them. Right now the outcry about Poland is being used in the USA as part of the government's drive to overcome mass resistance to the arms drive and to the reintroduction of conscription.

So the official imperialist noise is of small comfort to the Polish workers. It is little help to them (it may to an extent be a restraining influence on Jaruzelski and Brezhnev). And it alienates

many who are the class sisters and brothers of the Polish trade unionists, and their natural allies and supporters.

These problems are reflected in the Polish Solidarity Campaign, and dominated its conference last Sunday, 28th.

140 were in attendance. Much of the time was occupied by skirmishing between a small group of IMGers and a grouping at the centre of PSC (Adam Westoby, Robin and Karen Blick, and their friends).

Westoby and Blick are ex Marxists who see capitalism as a progressive and supportable alternative to Stalinist totalitarianism. Trained and formed in the SLL/WRP, they are a counter-sect of Leninophobes. Thus Adam Westoby talked as if a Polish nationalist attitude to the Russia-Poland war of 1920 should be a condition of membership of the PSC!

Edgy

The dominant mood was one of edgy and self-conscious hostility to double standards on the left. There was a strong strain of Stalinophobia.

A motion explicitly condemning the agitation of Reagan and Thatcher, and linking the development of Polish solidarity work with an explicit solidarity with the Left in El Salvador was massively voted down. But conference then voted with only 6 or 7 against to send greetings to the El Salvador demonstration on the same day.

A very confused motion was carried which seemed to envisage solidarity stretching all across the parties and to all good liberals everywhere. There was a lot of expressed opposition to a 'narrow' focus on a labour movement campaign.

At the end the witch-hunting of Westoby backfired. By a small majority, Socialist Organiser supporter Tony Richardson was elected to the National Committee, despite a loud outcry

that he would have supported Russia in 1920, etc etc.

It is difficult to assess the conference. Given the general political confusion, it is inevitable that many of those who rally to Solidarnosc will tend to mirror and invert the Stalinoid currents in the labour movement. Stalinism constantly creates and recreates illusions in liberal capitalism.

But the double standard of the Left in Britain where Stalinist repression is concerned is disgusting.

Broad

The way forward for Polish solidarity work is to build a broad working-class/labour movement oriented campaign which formally dissociates itself from the cold warriors, and at the same time accepts no restraints or inhibitions against striking with everything the labour movement can muster against those who are trying to destroy the Polish labour movement.

There are some grounds for thinking that the PSC may yet be able to play such a role, despite the Westoby/Blick sectlet. That will probably be determined by the way we manage to build and politically shape Polish solidarity work at local level in the period ahead.



40p plus postage from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

West Bank revolt against Zionist state

THE changeover from military government to a civilian government on the West Bank of the Jordan has been rightly seen by the Arab population there as the first step towards the annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by Israel.

It is as if Israel, having agreed to withdraw from Sinai as part of the Camp David agreement, is now intent on following up its annexation of the Golan Heights with a larger annexation of the other territories occupied since 1967.

The settlement strategy of the Zionist state aims at setting up on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip

numerous Jewish settlements so that, in the long run, the Zionist state will be able to define these territories simply as an organic part of Israel.

The new civilian government of the West Bank, Prof. Menachem Milson, has himself described the situation with dramatic sharpness, as "Israel's most important struggle with Arab enemies since our struggle for independence in 1948."

The reference is sinister: the 1948 struggle ended in Israel expelling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their land.

The present protests by the Arab population have

been answered by brutal repression by the Israeli army and vigilante groups of Jewish settlers.

The protests started with the dismissal of the Arab Mayor of El Bireh and his Council. The savagery of the repression has led to the unprecedented resignation of 30 Arab policemen.

Petering

Although the five day general strike is reported to be petering out with shopkeepers beaten and arrested for not opening shops, the protests are still very militant - especially now that the Mayors of Nablus and Ramallah have been dismissed. (Other towns like

Halhoul and Hebron have only acting mayors because the elected mayors have been deported).

The Mayors of Nablus and Ramallah are accused of being PLO members and supporters of terrorism.

Both were, in fact, the victims last year of terrorist assassination attempts by Zionists.

The repression on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, which has already claimed the lives of eight people, is matched by increased repression against leftist organisations within Israel.

ANDREW HORNUNG



West Bank - protests continue

AT A TIME when the Zionist state of Israel has again received international condemnation following the annexation of the Golan Heights, the Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity is organising a national day school in Bradford to expose the nature of the Israeli state, and to build support for the Palestinian cause within the labour movement.

The school will take as its theme the present reality of Israeli expansionism, tracing this back to its roots in the doctrine of Zionism. It will discuss the conditions suffer-

ed by the Palestinians as they struggle to create unions and genuine political representation.

Events in the West Bank now make the day school doubly relevant.

Dayschool

ZIONISM: IDEOLOGY OF EXPANSIONISM

Saturday April 24, 10.30 to 5, Queen's Hall, Bradford. Credentials £1 waged, 50p unwaged, from 7 Westfield Cres, Undercliffe Old Road, Bradford BD2 4RH.

GUATEMALA COUP—NO REFORMS IN SIGHT

by Bas Hardy



The change in the front-men will make no difference to the army's brutality against the people

THE RECENTLY overthrown dictatorship of General Lucas Garcia in Guatemala had a human rights record so bad that even Ronald Reagan could not bring himself to support it.

For years the Guatemalan military waged a war against the largely Indian peasantry which amounted to genocide. Overwhelming evidence of this forced the US government to stop arms supplies to Guatemala. The regime turned instead to Israel for weapons.

Today the Guatemalan ruling elite needs to be bolstered up by US arms if it is to combat the rising popular movement in Central America. Cosmetic alterations are needed before the Guatemalan military goes out as defender of the 'free world' against the red menace.

Whether the recent coup was made in the USA or not, it certainly came with Washington's blessing.

The US government had a long history of military involvement/intervention in Guatemala, as in the rest of Central America. In 1954 it organised the overthrow of

the mildly reformist government of Col. Jacobo Arbenz. Arbenz tried to give some uncultivated land belonging to the US-owned United Fruit Company back to the landless Indian peasants. This created pandemonium in US government and business circles.

Like most Central American societies, Guatemala is extremely unequal. In 1978, the top 5% of the population received the 59% of the national income, while the bottom 70% received 7%.

The top group in Guatemala is predominantly Spanish in origin. Originally owning the coffee and fruit estates, this elite has evolved into a symbiotic relationship with US business interests.

The encroachments of the estate owners on communal Indian land led to the growth of the guerilla movement after 1954. There has been military government and guerilla warfare in Guatemala continuously since then, although the guerillas did suffer big defeats in the US-backed 1966-70 counter insurgency campaign.

A key figure in the brutal suppression of the guerillas

at that time was General Rios Montt - described in Washington as a liberal and a born-again Christian. Now his first actions as Guatemala's new president have been to dissolve Congress and suspend the constitution.

There are obvious parallels with the 1979 coup in El Salvador, where the right wing dictatorship was replaced by a would-be reform-



Lucas Garcia

ing military group under president Duarte. The reformers were quickly forced out of that government, and it resumed its genocidal war against the people.

'In Guatemala the officers may be young', said one journalist, 'but they aren't reformist'.



Affiliate to the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 29 Islington Park Street, London N1

Coming to grips with major world struggles

Harry Sloan reviews a new pamphlet from the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee



A NEW bulletin containing resolutions on a range of international questions offers militants a chance to assess the politics of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee.

The TILC, formed in 1979, comprises sections in Britain (WSL), Italy (LOR), Denmark (FAF), and Australia (SF), together with a group of Turkish militants.

A US section, the RWL, is prevented from affiliation by reactionary US legislation. All of these sections have expanded and strengthened quite substantially in the last 18 months.

TILC's strength and contribution to the class struggle

lies not in its numerical strength - its sections remain only small in comparison to the tasks they face - but its fight is to develop a coherent programme and perspective for those forces fighting the betrayals of reformist and Stalinist leaderships on a world scale.

The founding document of the TILC - 'The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle' - is an attempt to take forward the principled and method of Trotsky's 1938 Transitional Programme in the light of the experiences and struggles of the post-war period.

The resolutions in the new 'TILC Bulletin' mark

a further development along these lines, with analysis of the Polish martial law; the current stage of the struggle in Central America; the crisis of Italian capitalist rule; the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid-capitalist state in South Africa; and the new situation following the election of Mitterrand in France.

Far from acting as a tiny sect, preoccupied only with a few pet notions or feuds with rival Trotskyist groupings, the TILC demonstrates in these resolutions that it sees the primary question as the

material struggle for new leadership in the daily battles of the working class and oppressed masses internationally.

There is no attempt simply to counterpose wooden, facile formulae of 'orthodox Trotskyism' to the unfolding struggle of the working class: but neither do the TILC resolutions rest content with reflecting and registering the struggles already underway.

In Poland, for example, an analysis of the forces driving towards martial law is coupled with insistence that:

'The weakening of the power of the ruling bureaucracy, by a programme of radical reforms, can only be the prelude to the decisive confrontation. In that conflict the proletariat must either be prepared to challenge for power, smash the state machine and replace it with its own organs of class rule - which alone can properly defend the nationalised property relations and develop a planned economy - or face defeat at the hands of the existing armed forces and repressive apparatus. In this sense Poland is the Chile of Eastern Europe.'

It is, from the failure of Solidarnosc's leadership to grasp these tasks, and not on any abstract basis, that they criticised.

The resolution also points out that in the

developing currents inside Solidarnosc that were calling for workers' management there were the seeds of a more advanced leadership, which could have been developed in the direction of Trotskyist politics.

Again a concern to relate to the movement can be seen in the way that, while championing the demand widespread within the Polish workers' movement for national self-determination, the resolution makes clear that the TILC itself argues for 'an independent socialist Poland.'

On Central America, the resolution outlines the strategy of imperialism for crushing the struggles of the masses - and the different tactics offered up by the social democrats of the Second International.

It examines the level of mobilisation of the masses in the region before mapping out a political orientation towards the guerrilla and political 'fronts' that have emerged.

This orientation consists in spelling out the obligation of Marxists to fight alongside these formations insofar as they strike blows against imperialism, while preserving political independence from their bourgeois and petty bourgeois leaderships, whose objectives fall far short of completing the necessary socialist revolution.

'The reality is that the bourgeois forces will

remain in the fronts only insofar as it is their programme and perspective which predominate - and that therefore they remain in the fronts only to strangle the struggle for socialist revolution.'

The resolution concludes by stressing the impossibility of resolving the problems of the masses within the confines of the existing balkanised Central American states.

Distinctive also is the resolution on solidarity with the South African working class, which focusses upon the developing strength and independent organisation of the black proletariat.

It is this working class - and not the isolated guerrilla units of the ANC - which holds the key to the overturn of the capitalist class and its apartheid system.

And it is the international working class which has in its grasp the means to bring real solidarity in the form of blacking action, and supporting strikes.

In its assessment of the situation in France, the TILC insists that the essence of Mitterrand's government is that - for all its dressing of economic reforms - it is a bourgeois government, even more committed to NATO and to Cold War politics than was Giscard.

The resolution goes on to map out a line of political

independence for the French working class in its fight to improve wages and conditions.

Such positions form the bedrock of the politics of the TILC, from which it argues its criticisms of the other, larger, groupings which regard themselves as Trotskyist, and issues an appeal for an Open Conference to discuss the present disarray and political problems of the world Trotskyist movement.

The resolutions are, I understand, shortly to be reprinted in the Workers Socialist League's magazine Workers Socialist Review.

For militants concerned with the fight for an international revolutionary leadership, they make important reading.

A limited number of copies of the Bulletin are available from the WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Advertisement

Trotskyist International Liaison Committee bulletin, 40p; TILC document 'Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle', 60p. Add 20p per item for postage: from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1





Industrial News

Crucial week for NHS pay claims

EVENTS this week will be crucial to the battle for action over health service pay. The ancillary and clerical staff sides have rejected the offer of 4%

and are waiting for either an increased offer or management refusal to negotiate any further.

But the nursing side have probably received the final offer which the Tories are prepared to make.

dedication than other staff working in the NHS.

Last year the RCN voted to accept the 6% pay offer and tipped the balance on the staff side so that all nurses got 6% even though COHSE and NUPE had rejected the offer. This disgraceful action makes the RCN's pay campaign, launched this year, a total hypocrisy.

And yet the leadership of the TUC-affiliated unions continue to work side by side with RCN negotiators and even justify their acceptance of derisory pay offers with the excuse that 'they (the RCN) have different pressures on them'.

Pressures

The pressures are the same for all NHS workers. Low pay rises year after year; action in defence of pay, conditions and services continually sold out by the leadership; rising prices; unpaid bills. The time for industrial action by ALL health service workers has never been better.

But there is no time to lose in convincing nurses in the RCN and other non-affiliated bodies to reject the offer of 6% and to stand with the rest of the workers in fighting the Tories.

Mass meetings should be called in all hospitals in work time with nurses, ancillary workers and all other grades standing together and putting forward the reasons for nurses to vote no when the ballots arrive — it should be stressed that they will be rejecting an offer which in real terms represents a settlement at half the rate of inflation.

Escalate

Workers in Manchester have begun the fight for pay by taking strike action as a united body. We should escalate that action to every hospital in the country.

The call will not come from the leadership. It has to start in the branches. The only way to beat the Tories is through strike action, which must start now.

by Jane Goss

Teachers' arbitration means pay cut

by Peter Flack

THE DECISION of the Burnham committee to refer the teachers' 1982 pay claim to arbitration represents an important victory — not for the teachers but for the management panel and the Tory hawks of the DES.

In a situation where the nurses had already turned down 6%, and important sections of the NUT, notably the Yorkshire executive, had reaffirmed their commitment to fight for the full 12%, there was clearly a possibility developing of a united public sector assault on the government pay norms.

Of course, such a thing would be anathema to the clay-footed pragmatists leading the NUT and the NAS-UWT.

Thus, arbitration clearly represented a both timely and convenient way out of such an awkward situation for Fred Jarvis and Terry Casey.

Pay out

Now any settlement — and estimates of this generally range from 5% to 7% — can be sold as binding on the unions, enabling the leaders of both NUT and NAS-UWT to go once more to their members to reluctantly impose another pay cut.

Only one executive member of the NUT, Bernard Reagan, opposed the move to go to arbitration. Yet, as the NUT has yet to explain it to their members, the use of the arbitration card was not even a NUT policy. In fact, it was the line of NAS-UWT, and was rejected by the NUT two years ago.

The reason for the NUT capitulation on this was the fact that they had no policy at all for winning the pay claim. They had made no preparations for strike action and had no other gimmicks, like comparability, to offer to members this year in place of action to win the claim.

Inevitably, therefore, they were left to fall in behind the NAS-UWT coat-tails by default.

Compromise

By announcing in advance to the DES their abandonment of the full claim, they in fact created conditions for a compromise along the lines sought initially by the local authorities.

Such an approach to teachers' wages speaks reams about the cynicism with which the teachers' salary claim was treated in the higher echelons of the union.

In fact the claim — based correctly on what is needed to defend teachers' wages against inflation — was no more than an opening ploy in an annual charade enacted with the collaboration of the management about the size of the teachers' pay cut.

This of course is understandable when we bear in

mind that people like Fred Jarvis can earn up to £30,000 a year as a full time union bureaucrat, and have never taught in the classroom. For such negotiators, the annual wage round must be an annoying interruption in their peaceful daily routine.

But for teachers the question of defending their living standards is a matter of basic survival.

The left in the NUT will

have to begin now to prepare the base for a fight within union, and prepare for next year's pay round. Central to this will be the fight for internal union democracy, based on election of all union officials and the sovereignty of conference policy.

At the same time, the left should seriously address itself to the day to day problems of the rank and file in the teachers' unions, building support for effective

ive strike action on jobs and in defence of wages.

Finally, and most importantly, with NUT conference only two weeks away, a campaign should be launched to demand that if the arbitration award falls below an acceptable level, approaching the full claim, then the union should move for an interim award in November to make up teachers' wages to the level of inflation.

Left slate sweeps the board

by Bill Peters

IN a remarkable victory for the left, four of the five stewards on the left slate were elected as TGWU deputy senior stewards in the BL Cowley Assembly Plant.

The votes received for the 14 candidates standing for the five positions were as follows (in a secret ballot):

Ivor Braggins [left slate] 468
Alan Thorne [left] 443
Andy Brown [left] 409
Cy Blake [left] 408
Tom White [WRP] 352
Frank Corti [right slate] 335
Bob Cullen [left] 333
Jim Barson [right] 315
Albert Paintin [right] 224
Peter Boyles [right] 143
Roy Brough [right] 116
Tony Wally 103
Mick Harris 71
M. Afzal 52.

Slightly under 1,000 members voted out of the 2,400 TGWU members in the plant. The percentage poll, slightly below the recent convenors' election, was reduced by the strict administration, requiring attendance at a polling station and the production of the current union card.

The failure of the right wing slate to gain a single position removes from office the last of the right wing brought to power by the victimisation of Alan Thorne and the media witch hunts of 1974. The vote for Tom White (who has previously been on both slates) slumped to drop him from first position to no.5. The Newsline, which conducted a campaign for White, has not commented on the result.

Sit-in go-ahead

by Dave Milliken

FACTORY occupations in Scotland are now legal. This is the surprising legacy of the Plessey sit-in which ended on march 22.

Plessey management had used the courts to try to end the occupation. An interim interdict to remove the strikers was granted and subsequently withdrawn. Now three Court of Session judges at a full hearing have ruled that any actions by workers in furtherance of a trade dispute are immune from civil actions as a result of section 13 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974.

Since the law of trespass in Scotland only applies if criminal damage occurs, the process of law can no longer be used against workers if they decide to occupy.

This decision has been hailed as a great victory by Jimmy Milne, General Secretary of the STUC but union officials in Scot-

land must be worried that they will be put under increasing pressure from militant workforces anxious to protect their jobs and living standards. Officials will no longer be able to instruct these workers that they could face large fines.

Already the effect of this, plus the ripple on effect of the Plessey occupation has been felt in Newbridge, near Bathgate. Cox Denholm, an engineering factory employing under 100 workers was occupied for 3 days last week.

This was because an EETPU shop steward was suspended without pay for refusing to carry out work blacked by industrial action, following on from the annual pay review. The sit-in is suspended, pending further negotiations.

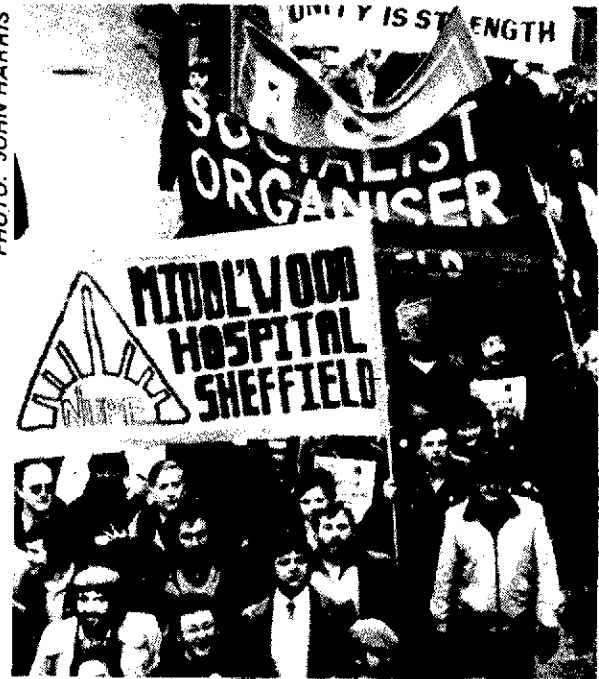
Early this week the staff side negotiators are meeting the Secretary of State to plead for more money. It is highly unlikely that an increased offer will be forthcoming, if there is no better offer, then the present one of just over 6% for some grades and a straight 4% for other grades will go to ballot.

The mood of nurses is angry and even though the leadership have made no attempt to build for strike action, COHSE and NUPE nurses will probably reject the divisive 6%.

The problem is that the nurses staff side is heavily weighted in favour of non-TUC affiliated organisations such as the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and the Royal College of Midwives (RCM). These bodies see themselves as representing the 'professional' side of nursing.

Recruit

They recruit nurses in their first months of training by false promises of protection and better benefits. The RCN has a firm policy of no strike action and continually fosters the image of nurses as angels who deserve more for their



Hospital workers need unity against the Tories

WHAT'S ON

Ads for Socialist Organiser events and many campaigns are carried free. Paid ads: 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to: Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

TGWU region 6 southern coordinating committee: meeting to discuss the Tebbitt Bill. Sunday April 4, 10am at Stella Maris, across from Transport House, Salford. Speaker: Wally Wainwright. All TGWU members welcome

TURKEY

Turkey Solidarity Campaign Democratic Platform Speakers' Tour

Thursday April 1. 7pm. Public meeting. TUC, Congress House, Gt Russell St, London WC1.
7.30. Public meeting, Wesley Hall, Cambridge.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS AND FORUMS

Socialist Organiser delegate meeting: Sunday May 9, 11am to 5pm, at County Hall, London SE1. All local groups asked to send delegates.

NORTH-WEST LONDON. Monday April 12: Fund-raising social to commemorate the Easter Rising. Details from SO sellers.

SHEFFIELD: Every other Wednesday, at the Brown Cow, The Wicker. Business 7.30, discussion 8.30.

Mar.31: Women and the labour movement.

POLAND

Contact: Solidarnosc Trade Union, Working Group, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5. 01-373 3492.

Glasgow Polish Solidarity Campaign. Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd, Glasgow G43. 041-632 1839.
Edinburgh PSC. C/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place.
Oxford Labour Committee on Poland. 468 Banbury Rd, Oxford. 0865 58238.
Coventry PSC. John Fisher c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd, Coventry.
Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Cooperative Bank, 110 Leman St, London E1.

OXFORD UNEMPLOYED WORKERS AND CLAIMANTS UNION women's group, meets every Thursday, 10.30am to 12.30 at East Oxford Community Centre, block B. Tel: 723750.

BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND! SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE

Demonstration, May 8 (first anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands MP). Called by Labour Committee on Ireland, Indian Workers' Association, Troops Out Movement, and Veterans Against the War. The organisers are campaigning for sponsorships from the labour movement: send, with donation, to May 8 Organising Committee, c/o Robert Jones, Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

MARXISM

London Workers Socialist League classes on basic Marxism. Next one: State and Revolution. Friday April 2nd, 7.30pm. For venue write to PO Box 135, London, N1.

'THE POLITICS of the Socialist Workers Party' — pamphlet produced by Glasgow Socialist Organiser. Sections on: history of the SWP, SWP and trade union work, SWP intervention in industrial disputes, SWP and women, SWP and internationalism. Prices 43p for one copy, £1.81 for five. Cheques

payable to Ian McLeish. From: McLeish, 2 Quarry Ave, Halfway, Cambuslang, Glasgow.

'THE SOVIETS': conference organised by Iranian Students' Association — Left Platform. Speakers include Branka Magas, Hillel Ticktin, Ahmad Ghotbi, Duncan Hallas, Peta Goodwin, Michael Cox. Saturday April 3, noon to 9pm at ULU, Malet St, London WC1. Fee £2, advance booking to ISALP, 72 Gordon Rd, London W5.

NO TO NUCLEAR weapons — youth demonstration in Nottingham, Saturday April 3, 12.30 Old Market Square.

Send your May Day greetings through Socialist Organiser... Organisation

Secretary or officer responsible

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New BR crunch approaching

BRITISH Rail is threatening to impose flexible rostering on train drivers this summer, agreement or no agreement.

The Railway Staffs Tribunal chaired by Lord McCarthy may well report in favour of the train drivers' union ASLEF and the eight hour day.

At least, BR seem dissatisfied. The Observer on Sunday 28 March reported that "British Rail chiefs will meet Lord McCarthy tomorrow to try to dissuade him

from visiting rail depots to talk to train drivers about the issue. They fear these visits could be used as propaganda by ASLEF and harden the militant stand of drivers

McCarthy, however, has shown himself sufficiently a 'wet' to think that an investigation into drivers' conditions might just include talking to drivers. And the press on Sunday reported that the enraged Tory government was backing (or in

reality pushing?) the BR bosses to impose flexible rostering unilaterally, whatever McCarthy says.

Blocked

Any such move can and must be blocked by all-out strike action. But at the same time ASLEF members must look out for more subtle attacks on their conditions which may be smuggled through under cover of sound and fury about imposition of flexible rostering.

Whitelaw's new laws

TORY Home Secretary William Whitelaw is planning to give legal authorisation for 'Operation Swamp' to be repeated throughout the country.

New laws will be introduced to authorise the police to search people on the streets and to search homes on suspicion and without a warrant.

Inevitably — as for example in countries where police can stop people at will to demand identity cards — these powers will be routinely used to harass and pick up black people, especially young blacks. They will be an effective replacement

for the notorious 'sus' laws.

And if that isn't enough the government are also planning to introduce a provision empowering magistrates to impose a curfew on young people aged between 10 and 20 convicted of an imprisonable offence.

The Home Office lawyers are drafting an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill which would enable the courts to impose a curfew between 6pm and 6am on weekdays and 12 noon and 6am on weekends, for a maximum of 42 days.

A campaign should be started now to stop these proposals becoming law.

Rulecan support

RUNCORN and Widnes Trades Council is organising a public meeting for Monday evening, 5th, which will discuss the possibility of sympathy strikes in the town to support the women workers in the seventh week of their strike against wage cuts and for union recognition.

The women are still determined to win. But their fight is being sabotaged by the leaders of their union, the NUTGW. The union head office has been contacting USDAW to make sure that sympathetic blacking of the products of Rulecan and the linked company Kingsland by USDAW members in catalogue warehouses is called off.

The USDAW members are willing to support the Rulecan women. But the mere threat of a writ under the Prior law has been sufficient to send the NUTGW leaders into a panic. They instructed the local official

to write requesting withdrawal of blacking, and when the Rulecan stewards appealed directly for continuation of blacking they intervened again via the USDAW official hierarchy.

The NUTGW leaders' attitude makes it almost impossible to keep up the blacking. But mass pickets are continuing at the Rulecan factory.

Phone NUTGW, 051 227 5665, for details and send messages of support and donations c/o NUTGW, Room 46, 62 Dale St., Liverpool 2.

Foyles betrayal

THE fight for union recognition and reinstatement at Foyles Bookshop, London, is effectively over. The shopworkers' union USDAW has withdrawn the pickets.

Shop steward Siobhan Langan, and subsequently 15 other workers, were

sacked for trade union activity. They organised a daily picket line outside the shop and won a lot of sympathy from customers and delivery drivers.

They needed USDAW to make it an official strike and to campaign to impose

increase of £6.43 a week per tenancy.

Last Saturday, tenants from the whole of Leicester, including a large contingent of women from Rowlands Hill, demonstrated against the increases, shouting 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay', and 'Tories out'.

A lot of anger was expressed by tenants towards the leader of the Labour city council, when he put all the blame for the rises on the Tories, said that the council had to get the money in, and would not guarantee that the bailiffs would not be called in.

An angry tenant from Rowlands Hill stressed that he was a Labour supporter,

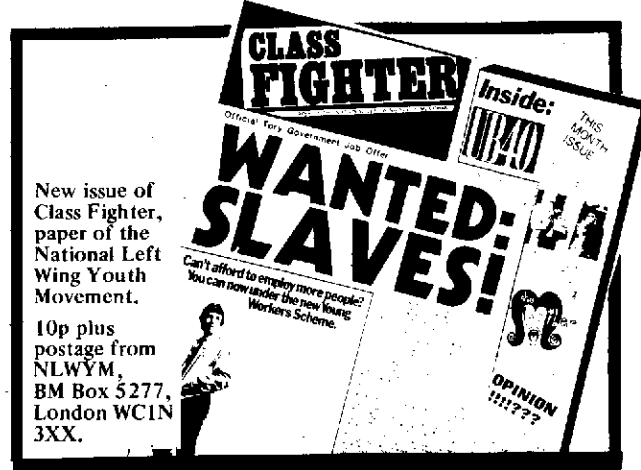
but he expected the Labour council to be acting on behalf of working people and giving a lead for the freeze.

The same Labour council put bus fares up the same week as the rent increases were notified.

Support for the rent freeze is growing. Rowlands Hill association are planning to publicise it with letters and a poster campaign, and have called an open-air rally on the estate.

It is important that the freeze is extended to include a refusal to pay the rates increase, and a fight against the cuts. It is also important that Rowlands Hill sends speakers to other parts of the city, and continues to fight for support from the Labour Party and trade unions.

The local Labour Party ward is already supporting the struggle, and has leafleted the estate. And a resolution through a Leicester South ward has called for no evictions by the city council.



DON'T MISS THE BOAT!

EASTER weekend and LPYS conference are rapidly approaching. So those of you who haven't paid your £8.50 for accommodation — DO IT NOW!

You also need to make sure transport is finalised — you can't afford to leave it to the last minute — it's Easter weekend.

YS conference is an occasion not to be missed see you there!

PS — Remember to put the emergency resolution on Reagan's visit (printed in last week's Socialist Organiser) to your YS and send it in to the LPYS at Labour Party Headquarters, Walworth Rd. JO THWAITES

Defend the Bradford 12!

THE TRIAL of the Bradford 12 opens at Leeds Crown Court on 26 April. 12 Asian youths, charged with conspiracy, face life imprisonment for fighting racism. They are charged with making an explosive substance with intent to endanger life or property and conspiracy to make explosive substances. These charges carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

These 12 young Asian men, aged 17-25, were arrested last July in a series of dawn raids across Bradford. They were picked up

and charged during the countrywide wave of repression which followed last summer's 'riots'. They face the most serious charges brought as a result of the July uprisings. Yet in Bradford, there were only minor disturbances: no petrol bombs were used at any time, nor were any ever found in the possession of the 12. All 12 will plead not guilty to the charges.

Framed

Many of the 12 have been framed because they are members of the United Black Youth League — an independent organisation committed to fight racism. They are known to the police for their successful record in defending black people against deportation, fascist violence and police harassment.

They were centrally involved in the successful campaigns to reunite Anwar Iqbal with her children, and to secure the acquittal of black worker Gary Pemberton on charges trumped up by the Bradford police.

Reality

Physical attacks, fire-bombings and deportations are a daily reality for black people in Britain. The arrest and trial of the Bradford 12 are part and parcel of this violence, and stand together with the repressive paramilitary attacks launched by the police last summer in black communities from Brixton and Southall, to Toxteth, Moss Side and Chapeltown.

Join the National Demonstration: Saturday 3 April, Leeds. Assemble 1pm, Savile Mount Park (opposite Trades Club) off Chapel-town Road, Leeds 7.

Protest outside Leeds Crown Court, Monday 26 April, 10am.

Write for leaflets, petitions, model resolutions, collection sheets, etc. from Bradford 12 Campaign, Box JK, LAP, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2. Price: £1 per 100.

CONFERENCE

Democratise the labour movement! Fight for action to stop Tebbit!

SPONSORS INCLUDE: Socialist Organiser, London Labour Briefing, Oxford Trades Council, Trafford Trades Council, Basingstoke Trades Council, Oxford CATC, Laurence Scotts strike committee, Kings Cross ASLEF, CPSA British Library branch, TGWU 5/822, TGWU 5/287, TGWU 5/104, TGWU 5/293, NUPE ILEA district committee, NUPE Leicester Hospitals branch, NUJ Oxford branch, NUJ Book branch, ACTSS-APEX joint committee GEC Coventry, USDAW D96, Bradford District Labour Party, Bradford North CLP, Rochdale CLP, Carlton CLP, Upper Stoke branch Coventry LP, Peckham LPYS, Basingstoke LPYS, Coventry Labour Left, Birmingham Labour Left, Nottingham Labour Briefing, and in a personal capacity Reg Race MP, Les Huckfield MP and Mike Cooley

WHEN AND WHERE: Saturday April 3, 10.30 to 4.30, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham. For details of transport to Birmingham, phone John Bloxam on 01-609 3071.

SPEAKERS: Val Dunn (victimised Bakers' Union militant), Rita Maxim (St Mary's Hospital), Ray Davies (ISTC), Steve Longshaw (Laurence Scotts), Peter Tatchell (Bermondsey CLP), Alan Thornett (TGWU, BL Cowley), Ian Williams (NUR), Bobby Owens (TGWU unemployed branch, 6/612), plus report from Women's Fightback conference

DELEGATES. and observers invited from all labour movement organisations. Credentials £2. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.

CRECHE: will be available.

WORKSHOPS on: Women and the unions; black workers; Labour Party democracy and the trade unions; organising the unemployed; organising the rank and file — Broad Lefts etc; debate on officials — 'accountability' and direct election. Video 'Question of Leadership'. And in the lunchbreak — trade union caucus meetings and video on Laurence Scotts.

WRITE TO: Democracy Conference, c/o Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Saturday APRIL 3



Right wing hails 'Democracy'

in El Salvador



PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

THE grotesque parody of democracy carried through with last weekend's "election" in El Salvador has been eagerly greeted by reactionaries around the world.

American Secretary of State General Haig ludicrously claimed that:

"The Salvadorean people's stunning personal commitment to the power of a democratic vision is an unanswerable repudiation of the advocates of force and violence."

Haig of course knows that none of the gang of right wing and more extreme right wing parties offered the people of Salvador even the most remote prospect of a "democratic vision".

He knows that the left wing opposition parties whom he brands as "the advocates of force and violence" are banned in El Salvador, and that their leaders' names are on published death lists of the military and right wing paramilitary groups.

And he knows that a large proportion of the alleged 60% of El Salvador's (unknown) total electorate which turned out to vote last Sunday did so not through any "personal commitment" but under direct military threat from the ruling junta. Workers or peasants without a voters' stamp on their identity cards risk a beating or death at the hands of the soldiers.

But Haig's cynicism is typical of right wing reaction. Thatcher's observers — the only ones to watch the elections from any European country — voiced their delight at the proceedings.

"We have been thoroughly enjoying ourselves," they told reporters. The elections, they claimed, had "an almost festive character".

As Financial Times reporter Hugh O'Shaughnessy pointed out, "Perhaps the delegates were not able to talk to orphans or refugees or to visit El Payon" (the dumping ground for the death squads).

In San Salvador, US ambassador Dean Hinton described the poll as "super fantastic". And Reagan himself was said to be "pleased".

But it is hard to believe that the enthusiasm also applies to the results, which saw the Christian Democratic Party of junta head Napoleon Duarte take only 41% of the vote as against 59% to the more extreme right wing parties.

Death squad leader Major Roberto D'Aubuisson drew 29% of the votes — on a platform which included calling for the trial and execution of Duarte for treason!

There have been already major quakms in the US Congress over the huge level of American military aid to Duarte: were he to be ousted

from the right, it is doubtful if Reagan could sustain this support.

It is this possibility of diminishing aid which is Duarte's biggest asset in his struggle for survival in the aftermath of the elections.

In the meantime the struggle of the FMLN guerrillas poses sharply the need for solidarity action from the international working class.

Last weekend thousands of demonstrators marched through London to register their opposition to Reagan's war in El Salvador.

The campaign must be developed into the labour movement both in Britain and the USA to isolate the Salvadorean junta and support those struggling for its revolutionary overthrow.

TURKEY —from front page

Diyarbakir four people were shot for trying to relay messages from inside the prisons.

Indeed, the Junta's repression seems to know no depths. The Turkish Peace Organisation's leaders have been thrown into jail and, believe it or not, Orhan Apaydin, the President of the Istanbul Bar Association.

The bloody face of the fascist junta is now being finally exposed, and all humanists must make a principled stand against the curse it has placed upon my country."

Yusuf Ziyah Bahadinli, a former Turkish Workers' Party MP, was critical of the failure of British Labour MPs to pay attention to what is happening in Turkey.

"Perhaps you believe that if we wait long enough, and bear the terror with patience and fortitude, there will be an inevitable return to democracy," he said.

The meeting learned, however, that the Labour Party's representative on a recent fact-finding tour of Turkey, Tom Urwin, had stated publicly that he thought Evren did intend to guide Turkey back to democracy.

The Turkish working class are hardly going to be satisfied with the explanation supplied at the meeting by Sid Bidwell MP: "Nobody takes any notice of Urwin". They need solidarity now.

Contact: Turkey Solidarity Campaign, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

GO AHEAD FOR WOMEN'S MARCH

AFTER nearly a year's preparation and pressure on the labour movement to call a national demonstration, the Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work took the decision on Monday 29 to call a march in conjunction with the Labour Party's women's festival in June.

The following day, a joint statement was agreed with Joyce Gould, the Labour Party's National Women's Officer, who is organising the Festival. The statement was drawn up to make clear the division of responsibility between the Party (organising a Festival)

and the Committee (calling a "supporting march as part of the day's events").

The statement ends: "The march will be timed to complement the Labour Party Women's Festival, and is envisaged as part of the whole day's demonstration for women's rights. We hope as many people as possible will support these events, and make June 5 an effective and memorable day of protest."

We've got two months to make the march a success. Some areas are already mobilising — in Coventry eight coaches have been booked for June 5.

general election majority was only 2,000, this was probably more to do with the incumbent, Tam Galbraith, than any collapse of basic Tory support.

While the opinion polls had Jenkins trailing for much of the campaign, you

THE TERRIBLE trio of Labour moderation — Healey, Hattersley, and Shore — didn't wait long to put the boot in after the Hillhead by-election left Labour in third place.

Hillhead has always been a Tory seat. Though their

would have to look far in Scotland to find a constituency more suitable for an SDP victory.

The Tory vote did not collapse, neither did Labour's. The SDP, as could be expected, won votes from both, though more from the Tories than from Labour.

Labour's campaign was hardly extreme left. David Wiseman specifically denied the Bennite label, and attacked Militant in the wake of Pat Wall's speech on the State. The Labour Party Scottish Council was carefully (and for the most part successfully) stage-managed to avoid any debate that could be construed as a threat to unity.

They have to make sure no reselection produces Left candidates. The witch hunt has already been used to do that.

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by John
Wilde

Witch-hunters cash in on Hillhead

Defend

They have to make sure that left policies agreed at conference don't get near the general election campaign — and they do that by witch hunting those who defend those policies most vocally.

But for sure mimicking the SDP is not the way to beat them. The middle of the road electorate, people looking for an escape from the turmoil of class struggle, will go for the real thing — the Alliance — rather than a Labour party apologising for its left wing.

Blood

Interviewed at the count, Wiseman talked of a general election based on the unity created by Bishops Stortford. Barely hours later the right wing were baying for blood.

To fall for false unity now will sabotage both the fight of the Left inside the Labour Party, and Labour's chances of beating the SDP.

Biggest

The campaign never really went all out on Labour Conference policies. The high point was Benn's visit, which attracted the biggest crowds (explain that, Dennis).

So why is the Left getting the blame?

Healey's facile insistence that Labour could have romped home is an excuse for stepping up the witch hunt. Healey argues that the way to beat the SDP is to appear as similar to them as possible — to have the same policies in practice as the SDP, then try to score points off them by cheap abuse about having no policies.

Heathrow action

THE Heathrow strike is spreading. As we go to press, TGWU members in Catering Centre South, Load Control Terminal 1, stores, flight gangs and other sections have come out in support of the ramp workers and other groups are holding mass meetings.

The 2,000 ramp workers were locked out seven weeks ago by British Airways when they refused to accept drastic speed-up and cuts in conditions. On Tuesday 30th a mass meeting voted to try to spread the action to all 30,000 TGWU members at the airport.

Where members have struck, the action is official. However, there is no instruction for action. Explaining this, TGWU national organiser Ron Todd coined a novel principle: "We are urging our members to withdraw their labour. We cannot order them to strike." (??)

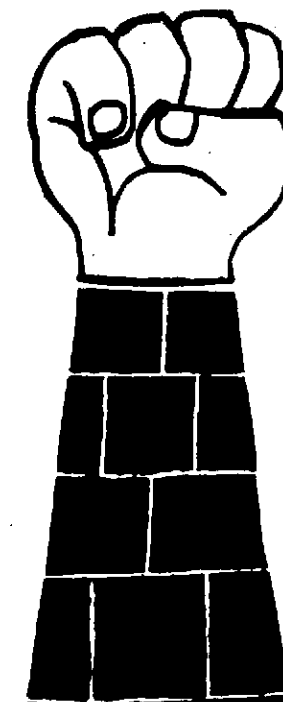
Such a weak call is hardly adequate to deal with the problems of scabbing that the ramp workers have had to face. Nevertheless full support is necessary for the strikes that develop and for the picket lines.

Heathrow can be shut down, and BA's union-busting drive defeated.



BRIEFING AGAINST THE WITCH HUNT.
5p per copy, plus 11½p postage, or 20 copies for £1 post free, from Ann Matthews, c/o Bermondsey Labour Party, 133 Lower Rd., London SE16.

£6000 fund



THE Special Fund total stands at £600. New amounts received this week are: £50 from a Leicester hospital porter, £10 from Tony Richardson, £25 from Bryan Edmonds, £10 from Judith Bonner and £10 from Martin Jennings.

We're aiming for £6,000 by July, to cover our backlog of debts and to enable us to fit out new offices, and we need £3,500 of that by the end of April. The red patch below represents our progress so far.

We need £2,900 this month! To get that we need large donations and that means monthly paid comrades digging deep now, before their pay cheques are eaten away.

Send money to: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.