

Socialist Organiser

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

WHY THE DEAL WAS MADE

THE Patriotic Front stands for 'a genuine transfer of effective power to the people of Zimbabwe and provides for all its citizens to be secure, but not privileged', declared George Silundika, Patriotic Front secretary for foreign relations, at a mass rally in London in September. But the Front's actions quickly belied his words. On Monday 24th September the leaders of the London delegation compromised with racism by accepting a proposed constitution for a new Zimbabwe which will give the whites who are 1 in 24 of the population a guaranteed block of one in five parliamentary seats.

These 'not privileged' representatives will be elected by a separate white electoral roll. The Patriotic Front had previously denounced such a scheme as racist. Rightly so.

The Patriotic Front were under two pressures. From their 'front line state' allies who don't want to foot the bill for a continuing war. And from Muzorewa's willingness to make concessions to Britain which threatened to leave the Patriotic Front out in the cold.

Muzorewa is content to compromise on the constitution given that he has backing — puppets are always 'backed' by their masters — of Lieutenant General Walls, supreme commander of the Rhodesian armed forces. Walls has said that the war can only be ended politically, not militarily, and Muzorewa fears elections involving the Patriotic Front, in which he can no longer hope for victory. So he is pushing as hard as he can for quick recognition which excludes the Patriotic Front.

But the British government wants a settlement which includes the Front. It believes that their present demands can be incorporated into a neo-colonial Zimbabwe and that any government which excludes them will probably gain only limited recognition and cause difficulties for Britain in other parts of Africa.

Most of all, the British government wants to make sure that we will not see a radicalised Patriotic Front marching on Salisbury — which would not only threaten imperialism's interests in Zimbabwe but would be a rousing example to the oppressed blacks in the whole of southern Africa.

THIS YEAR's Labour Party conference is the most crucial conference, probably, since the early nineteen twenties. The hysterical Tory press attacks against Tony Benn — portraying him as a 'totalitarian Marxist' — have shown just how much importance is attached to this conference by the ruling class.

What do the members and delegates think about it?

Time and time again, we have worked in our wards and GMCs, collected money for the party, canvassed on doorsteps, and after all that succeeded in putting our representatives in Parliament to represent our interests as workers. Yet every time we have gained a majority for our party in parliament, the real power has remained in the hands of the same old ruling class who governed us before.

We have been subjected to attacks on union rights, we have suffered wage restraint and the slashing of social services, rising unemployment and all the rest of it even when our movement was supposed to be in power.

In 1974, the working class took on the Tory government of Edward Heath, and using industrial action defeated it and drove it out of office. Instead of Heath we got Wilson and Callaghan who presided in government over a massive rise in unemployment, and cuts in working class living standards.

The Labour Party was helpless to control either its MPs or 'its' leader. The left policies of the Labour Party counted for next to nothing.

The paradox of a 'left' NEC and a viciously right wing Labour government existed throughout the life of the 1974-9 Government because the left was docile, passive and eager to avoid a fight with the government.

In office, Callaghan — entrenched behind the right wing majority of the PLP — could ignore Labour Party conference and NEC decisions by relating directly to the bourgeois state, using its powers and agencies to pursue different and antagonistic policies.

The proposals to make both Party leader and MPs directly answerable to the party and trade union rank and file, and put them under its control, are rightly seen as a threat to such a procedure by any future Labour government.

The proposed changes would make it difficult, if not impossible, for a Labour Government to be a stable bourgeois government capable of ignoring the will of the labour movement indefinitely without tearing the party apart. The proposals

are therefore a major challenge to the sort of class collaborationism that has been the politics of the Labour Party throughout its history. In 1974, when a tremendous level of industrial class struggle forced the Tory government to an election and out of office, the value to

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LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE 1979 MEMBERS, DELEGATES:

We must control our party

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SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Conference
Meeting:

FIGHTING
THE CUTS

Tuesday Oct. 2nd
at 5.15pm,
The Devon Room
Hotel Metropole
Kings Rd, Brighton

Speaker:

STEPHEN
CORBISHLEY
CPSA NEC,
personal capacity

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

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Tories' targets - working mums

LABOUR's Employment Protection Act is under attack — and women are to be the first victims.

The 'Party of the Family' has struck again. Hard on the heels of the Tory-supported Corrie anti-abortion Bill comes the statement from James Prior that women who work in 'small firms' will be denied the right to come back to their jobs if they take maternity leave.

Women are already at the bottom of the jobs heap. Low paid and easily pushed around or sacked, one third are forced into part time jobs where they aren't covered by protective legislation or full benefits. Maternity leave — terribly

limited though it is — was one of the gains won under the last Labour government, as part of the Employment Protection Act. Now perhaps a million or more women will lose this right.

Logically also, if a woman cannot return to work, she cannot be in receipt of full maternity benefit. The Tories, as well as helping the smaller exploiters to boost their profits at women's expense, may also be out to cut women's entitlement to cash benefits they have earned.

The Tories know their economic policies will lead to a steep rise in the jobless figures. But vast numbers of women who lose their jobs

don't show up on the figures. A Woman's Own survey showed that up to a million unemployed women are among the 'hidden jobless'.

These calculations are behind such statements as these by Social Services Secretary Patrick Jenkin: 'State help for working mothers should be restricted to particularly needy cases. ... If (nursery) facilities are made available at public expense too readily it can all too easily be seen as the expression of a philosophy which preaches that parents may do what they like, and it is up to the state to care for children'.

Women of Margaret Thatcher's class can always make out, with an au pair or private

nursery, or a couple of years off work on a 'private income'.

For working class mothers it's a different story: desperately low paid 'home work', part-time cleaning or evening shifts in a non-union sweatshop have to be fitted in to a long day of household chores: that, or a big cut in living standards.

What fightback can we mount — to defend Labour's gains and extend them. Those affected at any one time in a workplace will be isolated individuals — though of course every woman is involved and most are potentially affected. (The Dept. of Employment idiotically replied to my question about the numbers involv-

ed: 'We don't know how many women are going to get pregnant! But this means that women in these jobs will have to choose between having a job or having children. Any young woman will have to make that choice at some time)

The fight will start on a political level to gear up the labour movement to take this attack seriously. Socialist Organiser plans to open up a campaign to defend working women's rights. If you want to know more or to work with us in launching this campaign, contact: Mary Corbishley, c/o SCLV, 5 Stamford Hill, N16

Susan Carlyle
Tower Hamlets LP

WHERE NEXT FOR SOCIALIST ORGANISER?

by JOHN BLOXAM

THE SCLV and its paper *Socialist Organiser* have now been active for over a year. The campaign was launched at a 200-strong conference in July 1978 to organise for a Labour vote on the basis of socialist policies and the interests of the working class, and against the anti-working class policies of the Callaghan government.

In doing this the Campaign was sponsored 3 CLPs, Coventry Trades Council, two MPs and three PPCs, as well as a large number of trade union and Labour Party activists. We produced thousands of leaflets on six different topics, which were used by a number of CLPs in their election campaign, and issued special issues of *Socialist Organiser* and an election

broadsheet.

But the campaign always realised that fighting for working class interests meant more than fighting for a socialist vote for Labour — it means organising for socialist policies in the labour movement all the time.

Socialist Organiser has been doing that.

■ We organised a labour movement anti-cuts conference in London in June that attracted 136 delegates from CLPs, union branches and local parties, shop stewards' committees and Young Socialists.

■ We mobilised a labour movement contingent on the August 12th Troops Out demonstration. Several hundred people marched behind our banner, including seven CLPs, three trades councils and a number of union and LPYS branches.

■ We played a leading part in helping to defend Brick Lane against fascist attacks.

■ We organised support for the low pay strikes of last winter through labour movement support committees.

The job that the SCLV/*Socialist Organiser* set itself a year ago — to organise for socialist policies — still remains vital. We do not want a repeat of what happened in 1971-74, where militant anti-Toryism left the right wing domination of the labour movement basically untouched.

To discuss how this job should be done, and at the same time look at the record over the last year, the SCLV Steering Committee and *Socialist Organiser* Editorial Board are calling a delegate conference on November 24th for SCLV/

Socialist Organiser supporters and supporting bodies.

■ ■ We urge all Labour Party bodies, Young Socialist branches, trade union branches, trades councils and shop stewards committees to discuss sponsoring* the SCLV/*Socialist Organiser*, and to send delegates to the conference. (Organisations wishing to send observers will also be welcome.)

■ ■ We urge all individual Labour Party members who agree with our policies to become *Socialist Organiser* supporters.

(*Sponsorship is invited from all bodies who generally agree with the policies of the SCLV/*Socialist Organiser*.)

□ □ For further details of the Conference, write to: John Bloxam, P.O. Box 135, London N1 0DD

LETTER

We can't just get swept along with the current

MIKE Davis is less than even-handed in his account (September SO) of the meeting of the Extended Editorial Board (EEB) of the paper held in July. This meeting decided by a large majority to stand by the policies agreed by the first national conference of the SCLV (July '78) and to continue to oppose rent and rate rises.

Mike manages to state the reasoning of the minority at the EEB; the majority's answer to that reasoning is left out, and only the decision is reported.

Thus the assertion by the minority that the June rent and rates conference sponsored by the SCLV together with a number of London Labour councillors was more representative than the EEB is left unanswered in the report.

Were the 225 people who attended the London rent and rates conference more representative than the 200 who were at the SCLV's founding conference in July '78? Were they more representative than the delegates from SO groups throughout the country who made up the July '79 EEB? Representative of what?

The rent and rates conference was a very broad conference. Many participants were not supporters of SCLV or SO, either formally or even in a general sense.

The fact that it attracted a wider gathering made for its success as a broad conference. But it would be a travesty of democracy if such a gathering (exclusively a London one at that) could determine the line of SO.

The politics of the paper can only be decided by the activists and delegates from sponsoring labour movement bodies who write for SO, finance it and sell it in the labour movement up and down the country. Anything less would be undemocratic, because it would be unrepresentative of the people who make up the tendency around SO and sustain it.

We may choose a relatively loose and non-exclusive organisational and political definition of the tendency — but the definitions exist and the tendency exists.

Any attempt by people who find themselves in a minority within the SCLV to gain a special status for their views by claiming to speak for passive semi-supporters or for occasional participants in events like the rent and rates conference would also be undemocratic. And in practice it would mean claiming control over the activity and political line (through SO) of the milit-

ants who do the work of the SCLV and carry the burden of its production.

And why stop at the rent and rates conference? Suppose that SO, together with certain prominent figures, called a broad labour movement conference to discuss economic strategy in face of British capitalism's crisis. A broad conference, truly representative of the labour movement as it is now, would be more likely to adopt the Tribune 'alternative economic strategy' than the policies of SO.

According to the reasoning of Mike Davis on the rent and rates conference, SO would then allow itself to be swept along with the views of this 'more representative' conference, abandoning its previous stance.

Of course, on that issue neither Mike nor the others who at the July EEB differed with the SO majority on rent and rates, would propose anything of the sort. They recognise the 'alternative economic strategy' as a nationalist, reformist blind alley, and wouldn't dream of giving up the possibility of changing people's opinion in favour of our policies just because a broad conference agreed with Tribune.

Nobody who takes political ideas seriously or who believes in his own ideas would disarm and abdicate from the political struggle in the labour movement for such a reason.

On an issue like that, Mike Davis and his co-thinkers on the rates question would undoubtedly agree that the SCLV/SO is a distinct — if broad — political tendency with policies and ideas to fight for. A tendency which relates to those who disagree by having full and open discussion, in the pages of SO and elsewhere — but which must be clear on our own policies.

It was for this reason that the EEB reiterated the SCLV position on rate rises.

For Mike or anyone else to propose a special status for the rent and rates conference because they agree with its majority in favouring rate rises is extremely shortsighted. This is no way to build a tendency. If the political influence of SO is to grow in the labour movement, then it is the activists who will make it grow, and without them it cannot grow. And it is surely common ground in the SCLV that to build and organise widespread support for our policies is a matter of great urgency for the labour movement.

Fraternally,
JOHN O'MAHONY

BRIGHTON DIARY

SUNDAY
 Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. 1.45-5pm Clarence Room, Hotel Metropole, Kings Road. ■ Joan Maynard, Dennis Skinner.

MONDAY
 Labour Parliamentary Association. 5.15pm, Hotel Metropole. ■ Tony Benn.
 Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform. 7pm Queens Hotel, 1-3 Kings Rd. ■ Arthur Scargill

TUESDAY
 Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. 5.15pm Devon Room, Metropole. ■ Stephen Corbishley (CPSA) on Fighting the Cuts.
 Labour Campaign for Gay Rights. 5.15pm Brighton Resources Centre, North Road
 National Register of Tribune Groups. 6.30pm William IV Room, Royal Pavilion
 ■ Dennis Skinner, Jo Richardson, Tony Benn, Neil Kinnock
 Labour Coordinating Committee. 7.15pm Brighton Trades & Labour Club, 16 Lewes Road ■ Implementing Conference Decisions.

WEDNESDAY
 Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. 5.30pm, Sussex Sports Centre, 11 Queens Sq. ■ Jo Richardson
 Socialist Environment and Resources Association. 7pm at Community Resources Centre, North Road. ■ Richard Caborn MEP

Out now — first issue of KURDISTAN NEWS AND COMMENT

News of the Kurds' struggle in Iraq, Iran and Turkey. 20p plus 10p p&p from Kurdistan Solidarity Committee [UK], c/o Students' Union, Brunel University, Kingston Lane, Uxbridge.

Chartist

Bimonthly journal of the Socialist Charter. Latest issue includes articles on local government and cuts, the new Toryism, immigration controls, Conference of Socialist Economists, plus reviews and letters. 32 pages for 40p, plus 15p p&p, from 60 Loughborough Rd, London SW9.

12 pages. 15p.

Workers' Action
 Revolutionary socialist weekly. Now includes magazine section. Single copies 23p inc. postage, or sub. rates on request, from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

What's On

SAT 29th Sept: Demonstration against racist killings, against new Immigration curbs, and against the Southall trials. Speakers Corner, Details c/o 247 Mare Street, London E8

SAT. 29th: march against closure of St. John's Hospital. Ladywell Station 11.30am

MON. 1st Oct: Socialist Organiser Group founding meeting at 'Golden Cup', Far Gosford Street, COVENTRY. 7.30pm speaker James Ryan from Islington North CLP

WED. 3rd: Nursery Nurses in NUPE, national meeting at YWCA, Shakespeare Street, NOTTINGHAM. 7.30pm

FRI 5th: Workers' Action public meeting 'Stop the Cuts Now' 8pm Metropolitan, corner Farringdon Rd/Clerkenwell Road, London EC1. Speakers John Bloxam (Haringer NATFHE) Bill Bowring (Lambeth Council & Norwood CLP) & Ken Livingstone (Camden Council).

SAT. 6th Oct: Islington Conference against the Cuts. Sponsored by local Labour Parties, trade union branches, stewards committees, tenants associations, Islington Trades Council and 14 councillors. £1 for delegates, 50p for visitors, from Rose Dale, 38 Elton Place, King Henry Street, Mayville Est., N.16. At Essex Road Library, N1

SAT. 6th: Organising conference on Women and Ireland. 10am-6pm St Matthews Church Hall, Lancaster Road, London W10. Info c/o 48 William IV Street, London WC2

WED. 10th: Camden Conference against the Cuts. 7pm Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, NW1. Details: Alan Walter, 42 Aborfield, Peckwater Street, London NW5

SAT. 27th 10am to 1.30pm at GLASGOW Trades Union Centre, 81 Carlton Place, and SUN 28th: 12.30-4pm at Trade Union Centre, 14 Picardy Pl. EDINBURGH (sponsored by Edinburgh Trades Council): Day Schools for trade unionists org. by Scottish Homosexual Rights Group. Speakers: Marilyn Costello (Nalgo), Ellen Galford. TU delegates invited. Info from Ian Dunn 031-225-2424 or Bob Deacon, Livingstone 38394

SUN 28 OCT: TUC Demonstration against the Corrie Anti-Abortion Bill. 11.30am from Speakers Corner.

WED. 7th NOV: March on Parliament against the Cuts. Organised by Lambeth Council

SUN. 11th Nov: No Sellout in Zimbabwe, demonstration from Hyde Park

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BE A CARD-CARRYING SUPPORTER

A proposal to launch a campaign for a labour movement conference on Ireland was passed unanimously at the second *Socialist Organiser* Extended Editorial Board meeting held on Sept. 7th.

Delegates from 10 local SO groups and the SCLV Steering Committee decided that an initial appeal for the campaign should be put out at the Labour Party conference. The Labour Party and trade union bodies which backed SOs labour movement contingent on the August 12th 'Troops Out' demonstration will be approached to build the campaign, as will groups like the United Troops Out Movement.

The meeting planned other activities for the Labour Party conference. We will be producing a daily SO Briefing for delegates, and will hold a fringe meeting on Fighting the Cuts, with activists involved in major cuts

fighting around the country speaking on the experience so far and the way to beat the Tories.

The Editorial Board decided on a drive to sell *Socialist Organiser* Supporters' cards (£1 to the end of 1980). This will be a way both to raise money for the paper and help in the build-up to *Socialist Organiser's* own conference late in November, which will be open to supporters' groups and sponsoring organisations.

The next meeting of the *Socialist Organiser* EEB will take place on October 7th. A major item for discussion will be the Labour Rank & File Conference on November 3rd-4th sponsored by the Labour Coordinating Cttee, the Institute for Workers' Control, NUPE and the T&G.

Details of the EEB for delegates from local SO groups: SCLV, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16

WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR

- ★ No more wage curbs! No more strike-breaking by Labour!
- ★ Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. The same should go for state benefits, grants and pensions.
- ★ Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector.
- ★ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs — share the work with no loss of pay. Start now with a 35-hour week and an end to overtime.
- ★ All firms threatening closure should be nationalised under workers' control.
- ★ Make the bosses pay, not the working class! Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.
- ★ Freeze rents and rates.
- ★ Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets.
- ★ Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence.
- ★ The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as the bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, M15, etc.), public accountability, etc.

- ★ Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.
- ★ The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.
- ★ The black working people of South Africa and Zimbabwe should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles, and armed combat against the white supremacist regimes. South African goods and services should be blacked.
- ★ It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic re-selection of MPs during each parliament, and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.
- ★ The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control.
- ★ The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist system in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for the crumbs from the table of the bankers and bosses.

'Scandal of the century' at Barnet police court

'The violence was so vindictive. They took someone's spectacles and twisted them up. They snapped people's bank cards in halves. A bicycle was bent double, lavatories were ripped out'.

But the invading vandals didn't end up in a juvenile court. For they were part of the force sent in by McNeer to do a job on Southall last April — and it is their victims who are now up before the courts.

With only 30 minutes and not a lot of film footage, Southall Campaign Committee did a good job of bringing the reality of that operation and its legal aftermath to the television screen in its Open Door programme shown on 22nd and 27th September, relying largely on accounts of people's own experiences.

A Sikh respectfully proud of his grandfather's World War One medals and his 15 years as a Southall ratepayer recounted his determination to march to keep the National Front out of Southall on April 23rd, and his outrage and shock at the treatment of an old man tripped up and pushed into the gutter by the police.

A middle aged woman told how she had wept when trying to describe the violence to her aged mother. She had challenged the police to arrest her too, but they refused. 'They wanted only young people. They didn't want people to know that the whole community was together against them. If they had just youngsters they could say they are all hooligans'.

Clarence Baker nearly suffered Blair Peach's fate. He tells how he was pushed downstairs in the Peoples Unite building at 6 Parkview: 'There were police on both sides lining the stairs, so there was nothing to hold onto. I went hurtling into a police officer and the next thing I knew was waking up on the pavement outside with concussion'. He spent a week in hospital and still has a dangerous cerebral blood clot — as well as facing some of the most serious charges brought against the prisoners the police took in that battle.

Blair Peach's widow Celia, still distraught and almost speechless five months

later, painfully forces out words like 'lead-filled cosh'. 'Why have they refused an independent inquiry? What are they covering up? These sort of weapons must be in common use — the SPG is just beyond the law'.

342 people were hauled off by the police. Some on their way from work, others dragged out of the Peoples Unite premises which was then systematically wrecked, others hunted down in 'mopping up' operations. When they got to the police station they found that the charge sheets had been typed out beforehand, ready to be matched up with suitable defendants.

a state of shock. *The magistrate convicted him. ... If the trials go on like that, it will be the judicial scandal of the century.*

Another solicitor went to Southall the same night to see what she could do, and stayed two weeks. 'I felt so helpless without medical training. I saw so many people terribly injured. I saw every sort of head wound — heads cut open, fractured skulls. It's astounding that more people weren't killed'.

Others had damaged kidneys, broken ribs, or savage bites from the Alsatian police dogs. One young boy had to have his testicles removed,



Police tactics, endorsed by Barnet Magistrates

The hearings are 20 miles away in Barnet. Why there, if as the police told the press, those they arrested were all outside troublemakers? The magistrates have so far convicted in 82% of cases, compared with an average national rate of 52%.

A solicitor recounts: 'A 14-year old boy came before the court. One policeman said he saw him running down the street with a stick in his hand. Nine witnesses, including a solicitor, a doctor and an ex-ambulance man, testified that at that time the boy was inside a house having his hand bandaged. His injuries made him unable to grasp a stick, he had lost a lot of blood and was in

he had been so badly beaten. Interspersed with the recollections, brief powerful images — massed ranks behind riot shields, gleeful, grinning coppers laying into black youngsters. Reminders of the SPG at Grunwick and their activities at Brixton and Lewisham. The Front members, relaxed and triumphant and seeing the massive turnout of their friends in blue. Flashbacks to Hitler salutes in Brick Lane ... and at Nuremberg.

EMERGENCY: Southall Defence Fund is running out of money. Rush funds for legal costs c/o Southall Rights, 54 High Street, Southall, Middlesex



Blair Peach: SPG's victim

Almost six months after his murder at the hands of the Special Patrol Group in Southall, the inquest into the death of Blair Peach re-opens on 11th October at Hammersmith Coroner's Court.

The call for a public in-

Blair Peach: we will refresh their memories

quiry by the Friends of Blair Peach Committee and supported by Labour and trade union organisations throughout the country has been ignored. Three months went by before the police arranged an identity parade — time for memories to grow dim, they calculated. It was not the police, but Blair's widow, who proved he had been killed with a lead-filled cosh.

And even now they 'can't find' the murderer. A massive cover-up is under way. The police are relying on the passage of

time to ensure that the incident is largely forgotten. But we must disappoint them. The Friends of Blair Peach are organising a mass picket outside the Coroner's Court at 9am on the 11th: we must be there to show them they can't get away with it. And elsewhere in the country the Committee is arranging pickets of local police stations on the 10th: make sure your trade union and Labour Party turn out in support. Details can be obtained from the Anti Nazi League at 01-985-2872.

Defeat the Corrie Bill: Fight for FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND

An extra, unplanned child is a major catastrophe for hundreds of thousands of families who already can barely make ends meet or are living in desperate difficulties. Among these are:

■ 300,000 full time workers, supporting nearly one million dependants, earning less than the supplementary benefit level; and many of the 1½ million unemployed trying to support families on the dole.

■ Nearly 750,000 single (or separated, divorced or widowed) mothers, many having to live on state benefits.

■ The thousands of women and children whose home is a nightmare of violence and battering.

In any year, at least 100,000 women decide to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Before 1967, they had to face the terrors of a dangerous backstreet abortion, unless they had money and connections. Hundreds died each year. Others suffered terrible injuries, or painful complications for months or even years afterwards. Some became sterile.

Right to Choose

Since 1967 abortion has been legal, but restricted. Women have had to plead their case with two doctors, and in some areas of the country it has been difficult to get an NHS abortion. The NHS has been slow to introduce easy day-care abortion clinics, and many facilities have been cut. Abortion on request, without red tape — which would mean much earlier and safer abortions and would respect a woman's right to choose — is still an unrealised aim.

Now John Corrie's Abortion (Amendment) Bill, supported by the Tory government and due for its third reading in February, threatens to deal a massive blow to legal abortion rights. According to its supporters, this Bill will cut down abortions by two thirds: in the last year, about 75,000 women would have been affected, among them up to 2,000 schoolgirls under sixteen.

The Bill would also force the closure of the abortion charities, which provide facilities for about one-third of all abortions and pioneer new and safer methods. Many women will have to continue their pregnancies even if doctors believe the baby will be born handicapped.

As well as saying that to allow an abortion there must be grave risk to the mother's life or substantial risk of serious injury to her health or that of her family, the legal time limit for an abortion will be cut from 28 weeks to 20 weeks.

Only one in a hundred abortions are now done after 20 weeks, and only two out of every thousand are after 24 weeks: these are often the most desperately needed abortions. Sensational newspaper stories about 'crying foetuses' have all been investigated by the NHS and found to be distorted, exaggerated or downright untrue. And where are the sensational stories about terrified young girls facing a backstreet abortion?

No woman chooses abortion instead of contraception. Contraception is not an alternative to abortion: it is a first line of defence, and where it fails, the last line of defence, abortion, becomes necessary. All forms of contraception can fail (for instance the pill can be made ineffective if a commonly prescribed antibiotic is taken), and the choices in contraception are severely limited for many women for health reasons. And if any woman can't cope with contraception because she is careless or ignorant, can she cope with an unplanned child?

The anti-abortion lobby has a punitive, censorious attitude. But why should a woman be punished when men are equally responsible? What kind of barbaric society condemns a woman to die in a squalid back room because of a momentary slip? And what justice is there in punishments that affect the poor but not the rich?

Equal Rights

The Tories for their part believe a woman's real place is in the home and that if an accidental pregnancy puts an end to a woman's education, training, career or independence, then that's no bad thing.

The labour and trade union movement stands for equal rights for women: the right to decide whether to have a baby at any time is essential for this. The TUC has called for a massive demonstration against the Corrie Bill on Sunday October 28th (11.30am at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park). But it will be up to individuals up and down the country to make sure that their branch, workplace, local Labour Party or neighbourhood organisation is there on that demonstration, with banners and a really big contingent.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER will be distributing this leaflet at the Labour Party Conference, and throughout the country through SO Supporters' Groups, which are working for a massive turnout on October 28th

Are they sitting too safely?

ON TUESDAY 11th September, Coventry's Labour Council ratified cuts in public spending to the tune of £1½ million. Under the pressure of bad publicity in the press and resistance from the Trades Council and rank-and-file trade unionists, they have back-tracked from their original target of £3½ million, but already enormous damage has been done.

In education, some £464,000 has been cut, and this is how:
 • £204,000 in employee costs, mainly through 'natural wastage' — job losses through non-replacement.

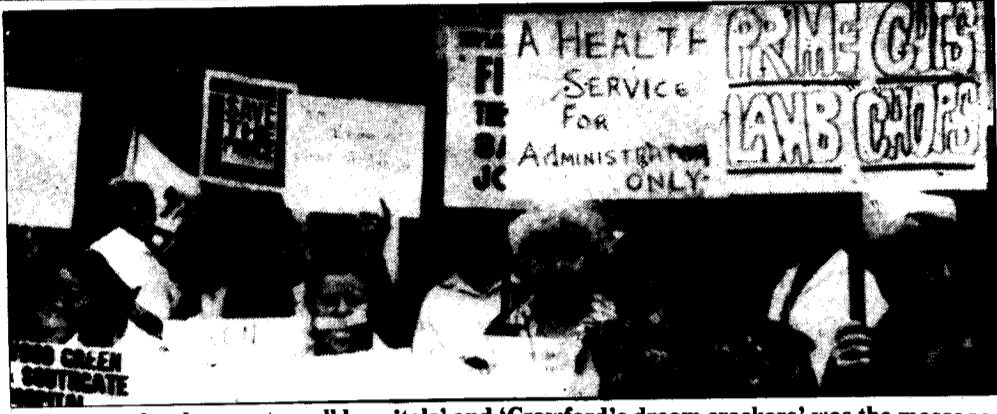
• £10,000 from 'changing the school meals pattern' — less meat on the table?
 • £22,000 through a 10% increase in all sales — food etc. — in further education colleges.
 • £56,000 'saving' in real terms by abolishing the retaining fee paid to refectory staff — which means employment only in term time, with consequent loss of holiday pay, sickness benefit, etc.
 • £15,000 in cleaning materials. Schools will be cleaned only 3 days a week, causing loss of earnings to the cleaners and creating health hazards for the kids

and teachers.
 There is a lot more. School meals kitchens will be closed, and though the authority has said that no jobs will be lost, there will be a loss of facilities. The saving on this is unknown at present, but could run into thousands of pounds. Further cutbacks are planned in equipment for rising-5 classes and in the nursery and pre-school service; schools will be heated only one night a week, saving £34,000, while F.E. colleges will only be open 3 nights a week from now on.
 And what about the other £2 million the council is

after? In the original target there was the figure of £1,157,000 set against the teachers. In real terms, meeting this target would have meant making a quarter of the teachers redundant by January 1980.
 That's just the picture in education. Elsewhere, target figures were £191,000 off the city engineers, £164,000 off housing, £183,000 off recreation and £432,000 off social services, and so on. This last figure has now been reduced to a 'generous' £238,000. And in every section of the authority there has been a cutback in the cash avail-

able for health and safety.
 It's high time for a change. Are we electing the right socialist members to represent the working people, or have they been in the job a bit too long? If they think they're sitting safely in their seats, they'd better think again. How dare Labour councillors carry out Tory policies! It's time to kick out the councillors who've lost touch, and nominate from the Party members who live and work with the ordinary people of this town.

JOE LITTLE
 Branch secretary, NUPE
 Coventry



'Lamb for the chops not small hospitals' and 'Crawford's dream crackers' was the message Haringey hospital workers for axe-wielding managers Lamb and Crawford

Camden Trades Council: NO CUTS NO RATE RISES NO CHARITY!

By Wendy Mustill

CAMDEN'S Labour Council has announced that it does not intend to make any cuts in its services. But the north London local press has delighted in publicising the other side of the coin: 40% rate rises in April 1980, which will mean an extra £1.50-£2 a week for every domestic ratepayer in the borough.

The council has also undertaken to examine areas of 'waste' and to exercise prudence in its spending. And certain cuts are being made.

JOBS: the council is freezing 150 white-collar vacancies. This deliberate understaffing will affect some important public services, for instance the Economic Development Unit, set up to maintain and promote employment in the borough.

HOUSING: Camden's application to the government for housing capital expenditure (money for new homes, for council mortgages, for buying and renovating derelict property, for housing associations, etc) was £56 million for 1979-80. The Tories have cut it down to £50 million.

On top of this, 90% of Camden's housing projects (which have to be individually approved by the Government) have been disallowed as too expensive.

Camden had a policy of buying up 500 housing units each year from the private sector. The Tory government will only agree to this in 'exceptional circumstances', and then only if the property is to be sold back to the private sector after renovation.

The government veto also cuts out new land purchases and house building on council-owned land.

Camden's Housing Chairman Ken Livingstone has come up with a formula that tries to keep all the options open. The council will make two bids to the government:

1. its preferred option for housing in an ideal situation;
 2. an option tailored to meet the government's requirements. This means in effect an acceptance of the clamp-down on council housing.
- This is simply a provision of

alibis, not a preparation for a fight. It means opting out of any significant political challenge to the government. It is a strange about-turn from the statement Livingstone made in June's Socialist Organiser: 'Labour must immediately start a crash programme to get back to the 6000 (new homes) target by buying up land and taking over existing private development'.

The slow-down in housing will severely affect the council's **DIRECT LABOUR FORCE**. Funds for the modernisation programme have been cut from £16 million to £11 million, and of this a sizeable portion will go to outside contractors. The £5 million cut will mainly affect modernisation of 30 year old estates.

The direct labour force had been promised a one third increase in manpower, but the low wages and apathetic recruitment campaign make this very unlikely. And the council has made no stand against the government's demand to scrutinise the DLF's accounts and 'profitability' from October 1979. Given that, in Ken Livingstone's words 'the Tories have decided to close the direct labour department', its future looks decidedly shaky.

Camden's **VOLUNTARY AGENCIES** will have a budget based on last year's. With an anticipated inflation rate of 20%, that adds up to a 20% cut. Letters have been sent to the largest of the voluntary agencies asking them to reduce expenditure and reduce staffing levels.

Camden Trades Council has started a campaign which seeks to unite all sectors of the community. Trade unions, tenants' associations, old age pensioners, local Labour Parties, have all been invited to send delegates to a conference on Wednesday 10th October. The Campaign is aiming to raise £1000 to cover an ambitious programme of publicity. The paper *Camden Tenant* is giving over its entire next issue to the cuts in Camden.

The Trades Council realises that raising rates is no solution to the current Tory onslaught on public services. Its draft resolution to the Conference says:

'We reject the premise that working people should be forced to pay for the economic crisis, responsibility for which should be firmly placed at the door of those who control and profit from the economy. We therefore oppose any cuts in public services, loss of jobs, increases in rates, rents or other charges, or the introduction of private or charity funding for national or local services.'

'We demand that the government reverse its cuts programme and take immediate steps to inject sufficient finance into the public services to meet the needs of the vast majority of the population who use and rely on them.'

'We call on Camden Council, the Camden and Islington Area Health Authority, the Inner London Education Authority, Greater London Council and other authorities to make a stand against the cuts by maintaining all services and refusing to put the burden of their budget deficits on local people'

The Trades Council's cuts subcommittee is agreed on

- 1 Defending working class living standards
- 2 overturning central government policy.

The first goes without saying. But a clear political perspective is needed to offer strategies to Camden Council and other Labour councils as an alternative to an increase in rates. When people ask where the money will come from, we must be able to answer them by making demands such as nationalisation of the banks, refusal of councils to make interest payments, etc, as well as demanding more central government funding. Camden council leader Roy Shaw has already stated that a large rate increase is his only answer; Ken Livingstone also favours this strategy. The Trades Council hopes to meet Camden's Labour Group before the next council meeting, and to send a delegation to that meeting.

It is up to the conference on 10th October to formulate strategies and alternatives which can be spelled out to the Labour councillors and which can offer a real socialist answer to the cuts. Tory or Labour.

Stand by Lambeth Council

We note the decision of Lambeth Council to confront the Tory Government by its refusal to carry out any cuts to balance its books. We wish to warn all SCLV members and supporters that unless this authority is supported to the hilt, the outcome could be a major setback to the labour movement throughout the country. Lambeth Council is now set on course for what, in the words of the *Evening Standard* (19/9/79), 'could be the bloodiest battle with the Government for years'. Lambeth, unlike virtually every other authority, has listened to the instructions of its CLP's, and committed itself to an all-out battle against the Government from now on.

In the past, *Socialist Organiser* has printed criticism of Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight for even contemplating any form of temporary compromise with the Tories and central government. In our view, Ted Knight under-

estimated his own and his supporters' strength. But when comrades such as those now leading Lambeth Council feel obliged, under pressure, to make concessions to the superior force of the capitalist state, it is not because they want to: it is because, to the extent that we lack the physical power enabling us to overthrow the whole system of big business, the insurance companies and the state—to that extent all of us are continuously forced to make concessions on the level of practical struggle.

What these events mean in reality is that we are involved in a struggle for power. What the Lambeth comrades need now, therefore, is not pious resolutions or recipes for socialism on paper—what they need is the real power which only all of us through our organizations in the mass movement can provide.

We therefore call on all Labour councils to stand by Lambeth in its

fight. Concretely, this means:

- * Fighting to get all cuts decisions taken this year reversed.
- * Where Labour councils refuse to do this, it means fighting for the removal of those councillors who will not stand by Lambeth.
- * We call on our supporters on the GLRC of the Labour Party, in London Labour Groups and GMCs to instruct all Labour Authorities to emulate Lambeth's stand.
- * Fighting for the maximum Labour and trade union support for Lambeth's day of action on November 7th.
- Bring down the Tory Government!
- For a Labour Government to take over the banks and insurance companies!
- For the full power of London's labour movement to be mobilized in support of Lambeth Council!

Chris Knight, Keith Veness, Ken Livingstone, Frank Hansen, Geoff Bender, Patrick Kodikara, Mike Davis.

Lothian mobilise the rank and file

A 700-STRONG demonstration organised by Edinburgh District Labour Party and sponsored by the Scottish TUC heard Bob Gillespie of the STUC declare outright opposition to all cuts and support for Lothian Regional Council's refusal to implement the Tory cuts.

Other speakers spelt out the need to oppose cuts from any government — Labour or Tory. Willie Black, chairman of Edinburgh Trades Council, pointed to solidarity action as the key to a fightback.

John Crichton, of Lothian Labour Group, spoke of the need to 'fight, fight, and fight

again', yet argued that Lothian's concentration of service industries made it a special case. Eric Clarke, in an equally contradictory speech, called the cuts a 'class issue' which had to be fought united, yet attacked the bosses as 'unpatriotic' and the Common Market as 'madness'. Unity, it seems, ends at Dover. He also argued that rank and file control in the Labour Party was necessary to avoid a Labour Government like the last one.

The tone of the rally was militant enough, yet the concentration of MPs and councillors on the platform left out the vital ingredient of rank and

file organisation against the cuts. If the struggle against the cuts in Lothian is to go beyond stirring speeches at rallies like this it is essential that a cuts committee is formed to bring together activists from the trade unions, trades councils, Labour Parties, tenants associations, community groups and all those who will be hit by cuts. Such a committee could then begin to organise and co-ordinate industrial action against cuts. Lothian council too should be organising meetings to mobilise support for its stand.

JOHN WILDE

'We'll keep dockers' hospital open'

ST. OLAVE'S — the 'Dockers' Hospital' in Rotherhithe, South London — is being closed down. For those of us who work there, the news has come as a bombshell. An Action Committee has been set up inside the hospital, and support for keeping the hospital open has been massive throughout the local community — 60,000 signatures have already been put to a petition, and the local Labour Party, with MP Bob Mellish at the head, has formed an action committee to support us in the hospital, linking up with Southwark Trades Council, members of the Community Health Council and the Tenants' Association.

I have been fighting for a 'work-in' and have got some support, although the difficult-

ies are obvious. Amazingly, however, I have also had to argue against people on our own action committee who voted Tory and imagine that it is not the government but just Guy's District Management Team that is responsible for the attempt to close our hospital. They are trying to divert our struggle into the dead end of negotiations with the management team to find 'painless' ways of imposing the same cuts!

I say we've got to link up with our allies throughout the London Labour movement to take on and bring down the Tory government itself on this issue of the attempt to destroy our health service. No cuts, no way!

ANN KNIGHT
 [Naigo steward, St. Olave's]

LONDON SCHOOLS

Furniture, books, classes, teachers, meals and maintenance for the axe

by Ken Livingstone

THE ILEA Labour group has decided to give in to the pressure of the Tory government for a 5% cut in next year's education budget. This will mean a £17 million cut which even Sir Ashley Bramall, the leader of the Labour group, admits will be "painful".

Just how damaging it will be can be seen by a glance at the horrifying list of cuts proposed by the ILEA's Policy Coordinating Committee:

- 618 primary teachers' jobs
- 370 secondary teachers' jobs
- 38 teachers' jobs in special schools
- 150 jobs in in-service training to be lost
- £1 million to be saved by cutting the teacher pupil ratio in Further and Higher Education Colleges and Polytechnics
- £120,000 cut from the youth leader budget
- a saving of £558,000 by a 2½% cut in the number of technicians
- 7½% cut in school resources (capitation and audio-visual resources)
- 10% cut in higher education college resources
- closure of Gorsebrook games centre
- cut school games transport for 2 weeks in the Spring Term
- save £700,000 on transport for school children
- school meals up to 35p in September 1980, thus saving £175,000
- £1,600,000 cut in 'administration'

■ increase adult education fees from £8.30 per class to £11 (up from £3 to £5 for each extra class) whilst reducing the length of each course from 35 to 30 weeks

■ cut all youth centres by 2 weeks

■ reduce discretionary student grant awards by £850,000

■ 50% cut in furniture replacement

■ £100,000 cut in maintenance

These cuts in total will reduce the rate demand next year by £17 million but this will not be noticed by ordinary working class families who will be saved only 10 to 20p per week. The bulk of the £17 million will be saved by the commercial rate-payers of Inner London — £12,750,000. Only £4,250,000 goes to the domestic rate-payers and they will notice when their child's teacher is not replaced.

The Labour Leadership justify these cuts with the argument that if the Labour ILEA does not respond to the government's demands then the Tories may abolish the ILEA. They also argue that as pupil numbers are falling the pupil/teacher ratio will not worsen.

They forget that Labour won the ILEA in 1977 on a promise to improve the pupil/teacher ratio as school rolls fell. We still have a long way to go and these cuts are a setback. They must be rejected by the entire labour movement. All GMCs and trade unions must immediately submit resolutions to the ILEA Labour group demanding that the cuts decision be reversed.

THE TORIES' cuts are not due to blind dogmatism or to philosophical misunderstandings, as so many in the labour movement keep telling us. They are part of a calculated policy to shift resources from the working class to the profiteers, a policy made necessary by the crisis of capitalism and the accompanying fall in the rate of profit.

The cuts will not be fought by general campaigns to persuade people that social expenditure is a good thing, of the sort that many sections of the labour movement are promising.

Working class people need to be persuaded that the choice is between wages and services on the one hand, and profits, top salaries, and spending on the army and police on the other, rather than between taxes and services. The Tories, with their present policies, are doing a good job in impressing that reality on people.

We also need to persuade working class people that the Tories' policies can be defeated. And there is no better way of doing that than by starting a struggle.

We want a united struggle with the full strength of the labour movement thrown against the Tories. Some Labour councillors have expressed reaction and treachery by saying that they are waiting for the big battalions of the working class to smash

EDITORIAL

STEP ONE: DEFIANCE

the Tories. But a lead from public service workers, from Labour Parties, or best of all from Labour Councils, is the best way to draw the miners or the engineers into a class-wide mobilisation against the cuts.

And precisely in Lambeth, where 'Marxist' Council leader Ted Knight said there had to be cuts because workers were not yet ready to resist the Tories, local council workers and Labour activists have shown that they are much more ready to resist the Tories than the councillors are!

The fight has to start now. Even gestures of defiance can have a big impact in building a movement. When Clay Cross defied the Housing Finance Act under the Heath government, it made a little Derbyshire village into a by-word in the labour movement. The Lambeth Southwark Lewisham Area Health Authority's recent refusal to implement cuts

has laid the basis for a big trade union campaign in the area, and was also important in boosting the struggle to get Lambeth Council to reverse its cuts.

Defiance, of course, is only the first step towards victory. The second step is to organise: to bring together trade unionists, Labour Party activists, tenants, and community groups in each area into anti-cuts committees. These anti-cuts committees must agitate, educate and organise, so that they can reply to the Tories with industrial action and with rent and rate strikes.

To build a strong campaign, "no cuts" must go together with "no rate rises". A sizeable part of the rates comes from industrial and commercial property. But rate rises hit working class tenants and householders too, in just the same way as rent rises do. Small shopkeepers and middle-class people can be driven into

the hands of the Right by a policy of rate rises, when a socialist policy could win them to the side of the labour movement.

It is in no way a socialist policy to present people with a choice between higher taxes and worse services. We want lower taxes and better services — at the expense of the top 5% who own 50% of the wealth in this society.

As a first step we focus on the interest payments which drain so much of the councils' income. We demand the nationalisation without compensation of the banks and financial institutions, and the removal of the interest burden.

And as the struggle develops, we must broaden it out into an indictment of and attack on the whole system which puts profit above human needs, which throws building workers on the dole and then says not enough wealth has been created to build new schools and hospitals.

The whole town struck and nearly one quarter of all the people of Corby marched against a plan to axe the steelworks and make 7,500 redundant



Hospital with brand new ward to shut

STEWARDS representing 1400 members of NUPE SW London Hospital Branch have voted to oppose totally the proposed closure of St. Benedict's geriatric hospital in Tooting and not to cooperate with any management moves to reduce the services to patients in any of the hospitals in the South West London district.

The proposed cuts, which were leaked to nurses before even the hospital administrators knew of the Area Health Authority's recommendations, add up to a massive £4 million: 10% off this year's total budget for the SW London district, the largest in the country.

NUPE Branch Secretary Allan Ellis explained to Socialist Organiser what these cuts mean in detail:

IMMEDIATE CLOSURE of St. Benedict's, a geriatric hospital with 200 patients. Many of these old people have been in the hospital for 30 years and have no homes to go to. Some will be sent to nearby Springfield's psychiatric hospital, though none of them have been classed as mentally ill. The pressure on the community services to care for these people will therefore be immense. The crazy aspect of this closure is that one of the hospital's wards has been shut for the last year while £70,000 was spent on refurbishing it. The hydrotherapy pool, which was opened only 2 years ago at massive cost, will also be axed. Management is claiming that the closure is only temporary: this way they can avoid having to consult the Community Health Council, but they are refusing to give a date for reopening.

CLOSURE OF WARDS in

the South London Hospital for women — the only local women's hospital. Over 100 beds are threatened.

CLOSURE OF SERVICES at the 4 main hospitals left in the area. These include the cardio-theracic unit at St. George's Tooting; reduced finance for heart pacemaker machines; and a serious reduction in the medical staff.

Massive redundancies are on the cards for all hospital workers in the district, as there are no places left for staff to be 'slotted in'.

The NUPE Branch Committee have resolved on an action campaign of no cuts; no cooperation with the opening of the new wing at St. George's; no cooperation with any management attempts to remove patients or equipment or reduce patient services.

NUPE and COHSE are striking on 28th September, when there will be a picket of St. Benedict's and a demonstration in Tooting Broadway shopping area. Door-to-door leafletting is also planned. Nurses who are members of the Royal College of Nursing have decided to resign from the RCN if they are instructed to cross the picket lines and not support the day of action. A lobby of the Area Health Authority meeting on 3 October is also planned.

NUPE's London Division is holding a divisional conference on October 22nd for all London shop stewards to get a campaign off the ground over the whole London area. It is hoped to extend the campaign to education, health service and local government workers.

Further details from Allan Ellis, c/o St. George's Hospital, SW1. Tel: 01-235-4343
WENDY MUSTILL

London Labour ducks the issues

By Cllr. Jenny Morris

'LABOUR councils are faced with a situation similar to that of the women who were sentenced to the Canterbury ducking stool' Arthur Latham told a special conference of the London Labour Party on cuts (22nd September). 'If they survived the ducking stool they were proved to be witches; if they drowned they were innocent'. Unfortunately, the Conference offered no way out of the water.

A Statement prepared by the GLRC EC passively accepted that the Tories will last their full term, and offered only proposals for a publicity campaign to justify the need for public services 'during the lifetime of the present government'. The Statement came down in favour of drowning — cuts in public services were unacceptable, and rate increases were 'the biggest cut of all' but 'Labour Councils should not shirk significant rate increases to protect essential services'.

The confusion of the Executive's statement could not be resolved at the Conference as no amendments or resolutions

were allowed, neither could delegates vote on the separate parts of the 4-page document. A move by Streatham CLP to refer the statement back and to take an emergency resolution from Greenwich CLP was lost on a card vote by 786-417.

Of the 51 delegates who took the rostrum, few faced up to the dilemma which will confront Labour councillors at next month's rate-making when the only legal action open to them will be either huge cuts or massive rate increases — or, worse still, a combination of both. For example Jack Dromey, a fraternal delegate from the South East Region TUC, talked of 'buying time', and of the importance of Labour councils explaining to people the effect of Tory policies.

Among those delegates who did face up to the issues three different positions emerged.

Ashley Bramall, leader of one of the largest Labour-controlled authorities, recognised the 'desperate dilemma' that the Inner London Education Authority, and other Labour authorities, are in. But, he said, if you refused to put rates up or to make cuts, the money will merely run out half way through the year, employees won't be paid and the trade

unions won't stand for it.

He claimed that if ILEA made cutbacks, Labour could defend education against the Tories' desire to change the whole education system. If Labour authorities made cuts themselves, at least they could determine the priorities, he said.

Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight, speaking later, used the same arguments as Bramall for refusing to follow the example of Poplar in 1921. The Town Hall unions won't stand for empty wage packets, he told the Conference. His answer was rate increases rather than cuts — having responded to pressure from the Lambeth Labour Parties to go back on the cuts he had announced — and he is now in the position of leading a council which refuses to make any spending cuts.

A number of delegates rejected both options put forward by Knight and Bramall, and spoke against rate rises as an alternative to cuts in services. The point was put most forcefully by Robert Lee, a delegate from Hammersmith North. Both cuts and rate rises were ways to make the working class pay for the crisis, he explained. If Labour is to regain office we must show that

we have a clear socialist alternative to the Tories' trap.

Councillors should have confidence in the wider labour movement, he said. If Commissioners were put in as a result of a refusal by a Labour Council to make cuts or raise the rates, then mass trade union action could be mobilised to ensure non-implementation of Tory cuts.

The delegation from the TGWU Region No.1 urged that the labour movement should not repeat the mistakes made when Clay Cross was isolated and stood alone. The GLRC must lead a campaign which unites the Labour Councils and public sector unions in London.

By the end of the day, the political argument had slightly progressed and delegates had begun to confront the confusion over the crisis facing Labour authorities. But the formal conclusions of the Conference had been determined before it started and, while the debate will no doubt continue, by adopting the GLRC Executive's statement, the London Labour Party is now formally committed to a policy of drowning in the floods of rate increases in order to prove itself innocent of the witchcraft of public expenditure cuts.

Organise the left!

Continued from front page

the ruling class of right wing control of the political wing of the labour movement was shown more clearly than for a generation.

The ruling class agents inside the Labour Party will fight tooth and nail to preserve it in a condition to play the same sort of role for the ruling class in the future. The signs of serious trade union opposition to the Tory government probably convince them that defeating the left challenge at this year's conference is of fundamental importance for the future of class collaboration in the coming period of struggles.

What if we win on democracy at Brighton?

It will inevitably be the beginning of a major fight between right and left. The democratic changes to be voted on at Brighton would be a great step forward — but in themselves they are not enough. We need to follow up any victory at Brighton by organising the left to fight for the class struggle politics which can carry the day for socialism in the newly democratised labour movement. This is the central message *Socialist Organiser* want to spell out to the labour movement.

Either the left will go on from a victory on democracy at Brighton to consolidate

the Labour Party as a genuinely socialist party seeking to overthrow capitalism on the basis of the class struggle of the working class, and build up a mass membership around such policies.

Or there will be a serious prospect that the right wing will be able to go on the offensive and purge the left with which it can no longer live in comfort. If in the next period the working class were to suffer a big defeat, the right could become strong enough to turn the party into something more resembling the tight and intolerant Social Democracies like those in West Germany or Sweden.

If the right wing leadership is no longer allowed to ignore a left wing party, it will take steps to bring the party into line with its thinking, rather than bring itself into line with the party that seeks to tie its hands.

If the party leadership and PLP are made accountable to the members then the option of muddling along and avoiding sharp, binding decisions and choices is diminished. The party will have to choose between the hard class struggle left and the hard class collaborationist right.

Already, Shirley Williams, James Callaghan, and David Owen have said it will be impossible for them to accept the Brighton vote if it goes against them. Some of them may just hive off — but

they will not do so without a fight.

The Right has positions of great reserve strength and support within bourgeois society. The have backing from the bourgeois press. They could count on support from passive Labour voters if they could organise them — and there are powerful forces in British capitalist society which would be eager to help them organise.

They have powerful support also within the bureaucracy of the trade unions.

The left must organise. For the first time in over half a century the political structures built by the British labour movement and still massively supported by it (despite Labour's record in office) are fluid and are likely to be recast in a new mould, to serve the right or the left, the bourgeoisie or the working class.

The class struggle of millions of workers organised in the labour movement who need political answers to the crisis and decay of British society and who know that Callaghan's style of reformism has no answers — this struggle objectively favours victory for the left, and makes a compromise settlement unlikely.

But only if the left organises itself.

CHRIS KNIGHT
JOHN O'MAHONY

Mike Davis & John O'Mahony talked to Bernard Dix and Michael Meacher about the Labour Coordinating Committee and the SCLV

A LOT of people have heard about the Labour Coordinating Committee, but not many have a precise idea of what exactly it is. Even to its leaders its political physiognomy is still in the gestation stage. 'It's early days yet, we are just emerging. All that's visible is the top of the head — we don't even know whether we are a boy or a girl yet', says LCC launch committee member Bernard Dix.

In fact, though, the LCC, whatever it is, must seem to a lot of people in the labour movement to be just what they have been looking for. Almost 50 CLPs have affiliated and applications are coming in at the rate of one per week. There are 500 individual members.

Leader

Though Tony Benn is not a member of the LCC, in the public eye the LCC is 'the Bennites' organising themselves. And for years now the mood on the reformist left has resembled the atmosphere preceding the emergence of a charismatic leader — an open yearning for a Nye Bevan figure and for Benn to 'take up the mantle' and come out into the open to lead a left wing bid for leadership of the Labour Party.

Now that Benn is out in the open, the prospects for the LCC to grow into a serious force should be good.

We met LCC Chairman Michael Meacher, who has been MP for Oldham West since 1970, and the 'lean and

It's early days still emerging

angry' (*Economist*) Bernard Dix (Assistant Gen. Sec. of NUPE) to compare the positions and prospects of the LCC and SCLV/SO, to seek areas of collaboration between the two campaigns ... and to interview them for *Socialist Organiser*.

How does the LCC differ from *Tribune*? It does not, politically. It considers the failure of the Tribunites to organise a grass roots left as its major weakness. The LCC 'is not seeking a parliamentary influence but to coordinate the left in the constituencies', i.e. it is not in competition with the *Tribune* group for influence in the PLP.

Bernard Dix, who joined the Labour Party in 1951 after membership of the CP in South Africa and Britain) recalled the large meetings which were regular features of the Bevanite campaign during the middle '50s (before Nye Bevan made his peace with the right wing at the Brighton conference in 1957). These were a good model to aim for now. A mass membership of the Labour Party had to be rebuilt.

The key political question at present is the fight to democratise the Labour Party. 'We can make all the policy changes we like but without these changes they will mean nothing'. Will the left win at Brighton? Bernard Dix wasn't sure: 'I suspect it will hinge on what Callaghan and Co. will do. They may

come up with a formula at the last minute. Already Callaghan is trying to offset the effect of the changes by making the trade union inquiry into the Party the major decision. He could well introduce a third option to win over the smaller unions, given the whole thing hinges on them.' Victory would open up the possibility for the Labour Party to become a real mass membership org-

anisation. If we won what then? On gested that un followed up such organising as

Bea struggle which ively beat the r could be faced year or so by a right wing ons



Andrew Hornung reviews Tony Benn's new book, ARGUMENTS FOR SOCIALISM

DEMOCRATIC socialism says Tony Benn 'is very much a home grown British product which has been slowly fashioned over the centuries. Its roots are deep in our history and have been nourished by the Bible, the teachings of Christ, the Peasants' Revolts, the Levellers, Tom Paine, the Chartists, Robert Owen, the Webbs and Bernard Shaw who were Fabians, and occasionally by Marxists, Liberals and radicals who have all contributed their analysis to our study of society.'

So varied are there sources that there can be no real doctrine of democratic socialism, as Benn calls his cause, beyond the desire to replace the arbitrariness and injustice of tyranny and privilege by the rule of reason and the co-operation of equals.

The appeal of this democratic socialism is above all ethical rather than political. It is strongest when it is attacking power and patronage, and weakest when it is outlining a strategy for defeating these evils.

Take one of the central themes of these 'Arguments for Socialism': the attack on the enormous powers in the hands of the Prime Minister. 'Harold Wilson' he points out 'appointed or reshuffled 100 Cabinet ministers and 403 ministers of state and junior ministers, created 243 peers, appointed 24 chairmen of nationalised industries controlling twenty per cent of the nation's gross production and 16 chairmen of Royal Commissions to administer various policies or make recommendations for future policy, controlled all top appointments within the Civil Service and, of course, the Honours List. For not one of these appointments is a Prime Minister constitutionally responsible to the House of Commons.'

public or party. The Premiership in Britain today is, in effect, an elected monarchy. No medieval monarch in the whole of British history ever had such power as every modern British Prime Minister has in his or her hands. Nor does



any American President have power approaching this. Congress would not permit it.'

To remedy this, Benn proposes an end to the House of Lords — though it appears that he is not against the monarchy! — and an enlargement of the power of parliament to the detriment of the power of the Prime Minister.

But at no point is the institution of parliament itself questioned. It is simply stated

that it is basic and the best. A commitment to 'democratic change through parliament' is, for Benn, the sine qua non of Labour Party membership. Yet because his view of the necessity for parliamentary democracy is always argued against those who want a less democratic system (like corporatism), his tone appears radical.

In fact, however, Benn's inordinate faith in parliament and its processes is wildly unrealistic.

For instance, he claims that 'Parliamentary democracy means that all British governments, ministers, and the civil servants under their control, can only act within the laws of Britain and are accountable to parliament for everything they do, and hence [sic] parliament is accountable to the electors as a whole.'

Or again, 'Parliamentary democracy ... entrenches the rights of the people to elect and dismiss members of parliament, [it] also secures the continuing accountability of members of parliament to the electorate, obliging members of parliament to listen to the expression of the British people's views at all times, between, as well as during, general elections, and thus offers a continuing possibility of peaceful change through parliament to meet the people's needs.'

As Tommy Cooper would say: Just like that!

Not only does this contradict the experience of millions of people every day, but this description contradicts Benn's own statements about patronage, about the impotence even of ministers, about the huge concentrations of power that

overshadow parliament.

The same thing happens when Benn attacks government secrecy. 'The United States was dedicated to the idea of democratic self-government and it has, ever since, steadily developed and extended that ideal of democracy in all its political institutions. ...

'The United States has now made a serious effort to open up a discussion on the proper limits of security in a democratic society. There has of course been a long tradition in the US Congress of committees and committee hearings at which members of the executive have been required to answer questions which in Britain we would never be allowed to ask. Now there is a Freedom of Information Act which has conferred the right to know on citizens.'

No doubt a useful service is rendered here: mindless worshippers of the present form of British parliamentary democracy are reminded that Watergate, if it had happened in Britain, would go unexposed. But can US congressional democracy really be the radical alternative proposed by democratic socialism?

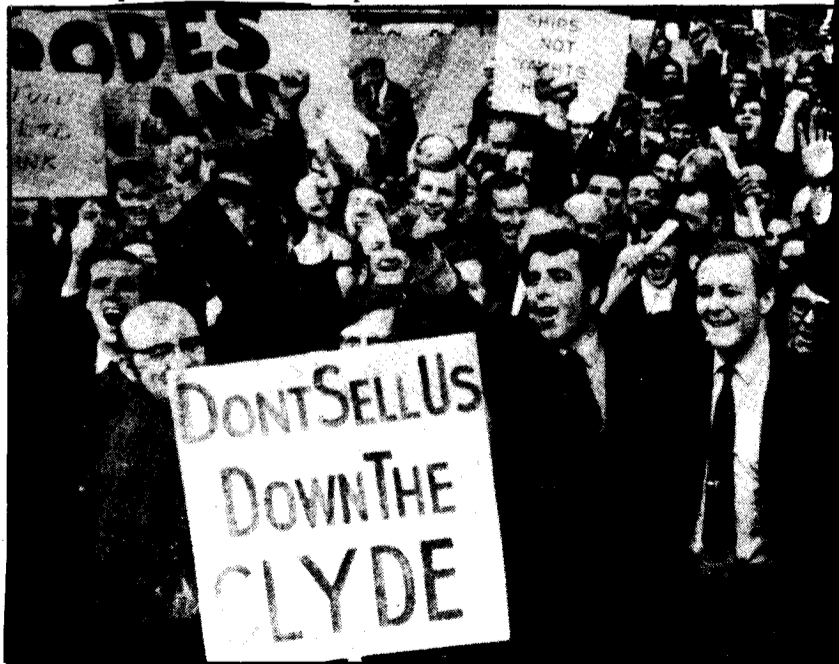
The timidity is most blatant when Benn comes to economic questions. British capitalism's long term decline and the mounting unemployment that is its consequence can be reversed in part, he says, by getting trade unions to invest their pension funds 'so as to guarantee that (their members) will retire in a buoyant economy'.

'This practical as well as moral entitlement is the case for change. It has been very much resisted. In effect what

the trade unions want is representation on the committees and a move towards some agreement that would permit their representatives to sit alongside investment managers in the big financial institutions to see that they are used as a development fund.'

timid as hallucinatory. Vast extensions of unproductive labour, advocated in one of the sections on new technology, would simply deepen the crisis of capitalism. Only if the profit principle, the competitive struggle — in short, capitalism itself — were abol-

broken. His suggestions limited to pa reform and the med of planning a (There is nothing Party or trade union Even these mill proposals have me siderable resistance



Benn championed the UCS work-in

The language itself expresses timidity: talk of entitlement, of permission, or a move towards and of some agreement, all to be enabled to sit alongside.

Benn's solutions on new technology are not so much

ished would such an extension be possible.

That, of course, is the crux of the matter. Throughout the book Tony Benn rails against concentrations of power that are hostile to democracy, but nowhere does he set out how that power is to be decisively

is Benn's strategy: resistance and cr where. The com certain concepc ent and peacefu vents him from should be done power of those that commitment:

ays: we're ng

Brighton, of us suggest the left a victory by various class could decis- then we in the next determined ight which

could rout the left and perhaps even transform the party into a tight and intolerant continental-style social democratic party. The contradiction we saw in 1974-9, of a left wing party and a right wing government, was only possible because the party had no way to control the MPs or the party leader. Democracy would end such possibilities. Either the left or the right would have to

take full control. They agreed that the left must organise. Michael Meacher thought Callaghan would try every trick in the book to reverse or nullify the effect of the proposed changes if they go through. We might even see Callaghan making the sort of 'Fight Fight, and Fight again' speech Gaitskell made when the unilateral nuclear disarmament motion won at

Scarborough in 1960. Bernard Dix said that the Labour Party was unique in its relationship to the unions. And so long as there was an open valve between Labour Party and trade union membership this limit or exclude the possibility of the Labour Party being transformed into a continental style social democracy. Yet even today, and ever since the mid-1920s, the CP is excluded, though CP members are in the unions and often even pay the political levy to the Labour Party.

And the unions were not exactly pillars of democracy, were they? Both Meacher and Dix thought that democratisation of the trade unions was an inseparable part of the work of democratising the Labour Party. Bernard Dix cited the example of his own union: 'In NUPE ten years ago we had a king but not even a crown prince could get a look-in. Now the constitution ensures that the powers of our executive are evenly spread'.

It would not be very useful to push for a detailed programme of democratic demands for all unions. The first step in NUPE was to confine appointments of officials to NUPE members. The second stage could be to move to the election of officials....

He went on to say that he saw himself as a revolutionary socialist. Then he rejected the idea that a socialist transformation of society through parliament was possible?

That sort of question wasn't relevant or useful at present, he said. It was a matter of a succession of 'revolutionary moments'. Here and now the immediate breakthrough would be on democratising the Labour Party. We agreed. But what would qualify in society as a first qualitative breakthrough? A clear answer to that one somehow didn't emerge in the conversation, unless we missed it. Meacher explained that

the LCC was concentrating on four main campaign areas: Labour democracy; control over the press and the media; full employment and the problem of de-industrialisation; and Europe. We explained that though the SCLV had campaigned on questions like Ireland and organised the rent and rates conference, which we saw as a stage in the fight against the cuts, our approach was more 'total', based on the politics of the SCLV Platform. The left had to be organised: a certain minimum range of class struggle politics were necessary for that.

Bernard Dix then explained that the LCC was in some ways in the gestation stage. And Michael Meacher mentioned the unfortunate failure of the LCC to have a policy on Ireland. The LCC will be discussing it.

The LCC is, as we said at the beginning, still working out where it stands on a number of questions. That is, the LCC as an organisation is. It is recognisably a political part of the Tribune left.

Broad

The answer to two questions will determine the future of the LCC. Whether it can in fact organise the broad left which certainly exists in the labour movement. And whether it can maintain a sufficiently democratic structure to allow a proper democratic thrashing out of the political answers needed to solve the problems of the labour movement. We will have a clearer answer to the second question after the November LCC conference. Supporters of *Socialist Organiser* will be participating in that conference.

SCLV:SO has proposed to the LCC that we explore the possibility of collaboration by launching a series of meetings, to be organised jointly, against the cuts.

OUT FEAR OF HIS PLATFORM...

VICKY SCARBOROUGH Sept. 28, 54.



He hopefully suggests that a degree of intelligent and democratic planning could supercede the concept of market forces. Yes, it could — but only after the market system, capitalism, had been scrapped and with it the class that profits from capitalism. That aim can be achieved — by a vast, concentrated organisation of the power of the working class in struggle against the capitalists. That is hardly the same as 'a degree of intelligent and democratic planning'.

Like his vision of the trade union representative sitting alongside the investment manager, Benn's ideological world is a planet without struggle, one where agreement and collaboration are the result of intelligence and where the winds of force refuse to blow.

This is the central error in Benn's thinking: he does not deal with real social forces. He talks of the labour movement without mentioning its domination by those committed to the maintenance of capitalism (because consciously or not he shares their concern); he talks of the trade unions without mentioning the trade union bureaucracy (because, again, he shares their basic outlook).

Why is it that the capitalist class and its press see Benn as a bogeyman?

Tony Benn has come forward as the champion of industrial democracy, workers' cooperatives, the UCS work-in, Labour Party democracy and open government. In most of these areas his ideas have been wrong. But so unresponsive are Labour MPs usually (contrary to Benn's own picture of them) to grass roots movements which demand that the workers have a voice, that Benn's stance has been a factor in stimulating the development of a left wing within the unions and, even more, within the Labour Party.

Such a left-wing threatens the capitalists and their agents in the Labour movement far more than Benn's ideas themselves. So long as workers rally behind Benn's banner for a fight, he will remain Public Enemy No. 1 for the capitalists and for Callaghan.

NO LONGER A SMOKE SCREEN FOR BOURGEOIS POLICIES

Mike Davis interviews Vladimir Derer of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

What are the prospects for winning mandatory re-selection of MPs at Party conference?

It all depends on how the vote is going to be arranged.

It is not at all certain that there will be a straightforward vote on mandatory re-selection. The NEC recommended that the vote should be on the same alternatives as in 1978. The Conference Arrangements Committee ruled this out of order. But the NEC would still be free to put a motion of confidence in the existing position: this is the Mikardo formula, which extends the principle of accountability only to a few MPs. Most MPs are likely to be re-elected, because CLPs wouldn't want to go through the laborious procedure of re-selection. If it isn't automatic, we'd see maybe 50 re-selections, instead of the 5 we had in the last parliament — but that's still only a sixth of the PLP. It's a totally inadequate method of accountability.

If the NEC do put a motion to reaffirm the present position and it's upheld before a vote on the re-selection composite motions, then they won't even be put to the vote. However, if the NEC position is defeated

and the mandatory re-selection composites also fail, it would be even worse than at present. The voting procedure is of crucial importance.

How strong is the union support?

The AUEW vote will be decisive. It is unlikely Terry Duffy (AUEW President) will do a Scanlon and cast his votes against the delegation. He's more likely to do a Carron (the tyrannical 1950s and '60s AUEW chief) on the strength of his EC backing him. The power of the President has never been effectively curtailed. Carron defied his delegation's wishes with impunity and the AUEW constitution was never enforced, therefore Duffy would have a precedent.

The most immediate danger though is the denial of the right to vote. If we want mandatory re-selection we must be entitled to vote on it democratically. We must put pressure on the NEC not to put a motion, or if they do, that it be taken after the composites. That is the correct procedure.

What would be the implications of achieving proper accountability of MPs?

The implications would be considerable, though not felt immediately. The rank and file will gain effective influence on policies. It would

transform the Labour Party from a talking shop in which resolutions are discussed, passed and then ignored. The parliamentarians will be in a very difficult position if they defy party policy because they would be accountable to their CLP members.

For the left the possibilities are obvious. Far left critics will no longer be able to say the Labour Party is merely a smokescreen for bourgeois policies. It should encourage socialists outside the Labour Party to join instead of just dismissing it as a charade.

If we lose, obviously the struggle will continue to democratise the party. But how do you think Callaghan and the parliamentary leadership will react if accountability wins the day?

If precedent is anything to go by, their threats to reverse such a change will not materialise. Some of the most right wing will leave like Prentice did. The very fact that Shirley Williams declared she would not serve in the Labour Party if these democratic changes went through reflects the opinion of many in the PLP — but the majority will conform. Party policy will also be different because it won't be decided by a parliamentary caucus. And it's likely that Callaghan will retire once the status quo is defeated.

Break up this band of killers!

DAVE LUNZ of Moss Side CLP describes the background to their call to disband the SPG

MOSS SIDE police station stands alone on the edge of a huge council estate. Its windows are made of a special reflective glass, giving it a sinister, eyeless appearance; obviously the people of Moss Side are not meant to know what goes on in there.

But the people do know, and if they can't see through the windows, they can certainly see through the cosy myth of the friendly neighbourhood bobby.

Random arrests, beatings and trumped up charges are a way of life for a lot of people in this community. Only a couple of weeks ago the local Tactical Aid Group (TAG) — Manchester's own Special Patrol Group — went on one of their periodic rampages, attacking 300 young blacks as they returned from a local fairground.

In the light of this, the resolution from Moss Side CLP to this year's Labour Conference has a clear local relevance. It's a strong resolution condemning the anti-working class nature of the police, and was passed while the events at Southall were still fresh in everyone's minds.

We call for the immediate disbandment of the SPG, the TAG, and other similar units, and the Special Branch. We demand an end to police harassment of black communities. We clearly spell out the real role of the police — to suppress any and all opposition to the state that employs them.

The police today have more power than ever before. The new National Police Computer can store information on forty million people. The Public Order Act can be used against a demonstration, march or picket which the police decide is not wanted. The Police Immigration Unit is used for surveillance and extra harassment of blacks, while the Prevention of Terrorism Act has been used against Irish and left wing activists, allowing up

to seven days' detention before someone has to be brought before a court.

In Manchester the notorious Chief Constable James Anderson is keen to put the Greater Manchester Police at the top of the league of most hated forces in the country. He sees his patch as a guinea pig for what may become standard treatment.

Last year terrified people in Collyhurst, near the city centre, were woken in the middle of the night by gunshots, when the TAG took over a block of flats for a special unannounced manoeuvre designed as a test of the force's capacity to fight 'terrorists'.

At the GMC when we voted on conference resolutions, we spelled out exactly what the real purpose of the police force is and catalogued a long list of examples (Grunwicks, Garners, Southall etc).

But supporters of the Militant grouping were not convinced. They argued that the police were only 'workers in uniform' who should be approached with appeals for socialist solidarity. The movers of the resolution, supporters of Workers' Action, replied that the police are far from being just misguided. The coppers who attacked and arrested one of our GMC members at Southall knew perfectly well what they were doing.

The meeting gave its judgment, the right wing voting against our resolution and for the Militant resolution which called for the nationalisation of the 200 top monopolies.

It's high time that the labour movement took a position on the police. Already we are under attack. But that is nothing to what is likely to come, as workers take to the streets in increasing numbers to defend what's left of the welfare state and to keep the Tories' hands off our trade unions.

An understanding of the real role of the police in the class struggle will help prepare the working class for the real attacks.



Zimbabwe: Thatcher's

feature by Graham Raley

Waiting for the settlement bonanza

FOREIGN capital in Zimbabwe has not suffered much from UDI, and it is planning well ahead to protect its interests.

Foreign capital is dominant in all areas: services, finance, industry, agriculture, communications — and has been even since Rhodes claimed the territory for his wealthy South Africa Company in the 1890s. At UDI, foreign capital accounted for two-thirds of productive capital, and British interests owned 2/3 of that two-thirds. The other third was settler capital. The black bourgeoisie is tiny, and limited to farming, transport, and retail trades.

Foreign ownership has grown since UDI, though South Africa, not Britain, is now the major investor. Firms unable to repatriate profits have been forced to reinvest and diversify. Dunlop, for instance, which set up tyre factories in the '50s to supply the whole of the Central African Federation, were restricted after UDI to a local market, and so have moved into other areas, buying up many small companies. It now holds 90% of the market in coffins.

Rio Tinto Zinc and South African firms which do not respect sanctions have reinvested in mining, so that nickel now dominates, providing £20 million a year in exports. In agriculture, the dominance of tobacco production for export has been broken, and sugar and meat production have been developed.

Capitalists with idle funds have also been able to buy Rhodesian government bonds, and if these are not honoured by a new government British firms, at least, will expect compensation from the British government.

Foreign capital on the whole did not support UDI, as the creation of a black bourgeois state like others in Africa would serve its interests better than the present war. It has pushed for a settlement ever since, and an influential sector was sceptical about the Internal Settlement and looks to the Patriotic Front as a future government. Lonrho in particular is known to have links with Nkomo.

Lifting of sanctions would allow free movement of profits for foreign capital. Some firms, like the powerful British-based asbestos mining firm, Turner & Newall, expect eventually to be expropriated, and seek the lifting of sanctions to enable them to recover as much as possible from their operations in Zimbabwe. Others such as Lonrho have long-term perspectives of staying in the country.

It seems likely that major capitalist interests will stay in. The programme of the Patriotic Front does not seriously threaten their freedom of operation or their profits. Without a clear socialist programme for Zimbabwe, the domination of foreign capital will continue.



Mugabe and Nkomo in London

1,500 mercenaries are fighting for stooge regime

MARTIAL LAW has now been extended to the 10% of Zimbabwe which was not previously covered by it. Salisbury and Bulawayo are now included.

While a clear picture of guerilla activity is difficult to get, Nkomo has said that "90% of the country is covered by this war; the towns and cities are surrounded by and often penetrated by the armed struggle."

"Parts of the country the regime has written off and abandoned — these we term the liberated areas. In other areas the regime can only achieve a temporary daily presence, with punitive raids on the villages — these we term the semi-liberated areas."

"The remaining contested areas include the towns and the citadels of the regime which we are poised to conquer".



In its extension of the war, the Smith-Muzorewa regime is attempting to undermine the front-line states, making daily raids according to the regime's Commander of Combined Operations. The targets are principally economic ones, not the Patriotic Front: in the recent raid on Mozambique, on 5th-10th September, they destroyed roads, railways, bridges, agricultural equipment,

machinery and vehicles in the fertile Limpopo region where much of Mozambique's rice is grown and stored.

About 100 civilians were killed, and 10 Mozambican soldiers.



Rhodesia's white population of around 250,000 is fully mobilised in support of the war. Everyone, both men and women, from 18 to over 70, has to do some military service. This now includes the previously exempt categories of civil servants, MPs, judges, priests and male nurses.

The 10,000 Asians and 22,000 Coloureds are included in the call-up, and conscription is now extended to cover all African males over the age of 18 who have taken an apprenticeship.

First moves in the direction of extending black conscription, in January 1978, met with resistance from school and university students throughout the country, and only 300 of the more than 1500 liable responded. Training resources are already stretched to the limit and would be unable to manage even a small percentage of the 50,000 now liable to recruitment.

According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the potential

strength of Smith's armed forces in 1977 was 111,550, though these are not all mobilised at the same time. 10,000 to 15,000 of these are African: the regime's claim that 80% of the armed forces are black refers to the regular army and police force, not to the conscripts.

Foreign mercenaries play an increasing role in the Rhodesian forces: there are now 1,500, an increase of 50% over last year. The private armed forces of Muzorewa, Sithole and Chief Chirau have been reorganised as auxiliaries for the army.

The Patriotic Front, for its part, has a force of some 30,000 men, trained or in training.

The war has displaced nearly two million blacks in all. There are 200,000 refugees in Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana and Angola. An estimated million squatters live on the outskirts of Salisbury and Bulawayo, where they have to dismantle their flimsy shacks every morning lest the police charge them with illegal squatting.

In order to cut guerillas off from contact with villagers in rural areas, the regime has set up 'protected villages' along the length of the Mozambique border, and probably also in the north west. About 580,000 people are contained in some 200 protected villages, which are little more than concentration camps. They are surrounded by a security fence and controlled and guarded by the auxiliaries, the private armies of Muzorewa, Chirau and Sithole, which are known as even more brutal than the army itself.

Nearly 100 people a day die as a result of the war, almost all Africans. They are not, however, the passive victims of the war, caught in the middle, as the bourgeois press portrays them. Without the support of the mass of the African population, the Patriotic Front would never be able to recruit its members or sustain its operations in Zimbabwe.

IF A settlement comes from the current talks, it is likely to be a rotten one.

The success of the talks depends on the willingness of the participants to compromise. Certainly the British Government and the Patriotic Front have a clear basis on which to compromise, if their respective constitutional proposals are compared. The Patriotic Front constitution remains squarely within bourgeois limits.

Both propose a structure of President, Senate and National Assembly. The British Government plan places power largely in the hands of the Prime Minister, whose recommendations the President must follow. The Patriotic Front wants a more powerful President, elected by popular vote rather than by Parliament as in the British scheme.

The British proposals on the legislature are clearly racist. There will be a white voters' roll electing 20% of the parliament and a black 'common roll' electing 80%. This Assembly will then elect the Senate. One third of this Senate will be elected by ordinary members, one third by white members, and the election of the remaining third will give due weight to regional considerations, ie give greater representation to areas of white concentration like Salisbury and Bulawayo.

This clause will not be open to amendment for a period (probably ten years) after independence.

The Patriotic Front at first insisted on no white representation. This principle was readily abandoned as they hastily followed Muzorewa in accepting 20% white representation. They 'prefer' that out of a 120 strong National Assembly, 15 of the whites are elected from a whites only roll, and nine from the common roll. But they are now conceding this in favour of all 24 whites being elected by the whites-only roll.

The British Government also wants other safeguards for the whites, though they recognise that the overall interests of imperialism in Africa must take precedence over those of the settlers in Zimbabwe. A Zimbabwe Development Fund (first suggested by Kissinger) could be used to buy out (on generous terms) settlers who want to leave a black-ruled Zimbabwe, and also to encourage those crucial to the economy and the state to remain. The fund, according to the original suggestions, would be about \$1.5 billion, with 40% contributed by the US, 15% by Britain, and the rest by other countries. As well as easing the transition, the Fund would put a new Zimbabwe government firmly in the grip of a debt burden from the start.

The British government is insisting strongly on 'certain provisions of the Bill of Rights', including 'protection from the arbitrary deprivation of property'. This will safeguard the interests of the multinationals.

The really critical issue is control of the army, civil service, police, and judiciary. The British government proposals provide protection for the existing institutions: "a scheme will be introduced to encourage officers of the public service and members of the police force, army, air force, or prison service, who were in office prior to 1st October 1978, to continue to serve on and after a specified date".

The Patriotic Front constitution leans as far towards the British as the leadership dare. "Existing officers in public service may be required to take fresh oaths of allegiance. Notwithstanding, an officer's appointment may be terminated within one year of independence by three months' notice". All



How the land was taken

83% OF THE population in Zimbabwe live on the land, and the vast majority gain their livelihood from agriculture. The best land is reserved for whites, the poorest for the black majority.

The first African reserves were marked out in 1896 by the white settlers while they expropriated 15 million acres of the country's total of 96 million acres.

In 1969 the Land Tenure Act codified the racist setup, allocating 45 million

acres to the white 4% of the population, and 45 million acres to the African 96%. The African land was subdivided into the Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs), covering 40 million acres, nearly 4 million acres of African purchase areas, and rest for forest and parkland.

The Tribal Trust Lands are owned by chiefs and Tribal Land Authorities, and divided into communal grazing land and individual plots of arable land granted to male cultivators. The Afri-



plan is a racist plan

judges and magistrates should cease to hold office on independence, according to the Patriotic Front, but they may apply for reappointment within one month.

Already Mugabe has said that 'desirable elements from the other side' can be included in a future army and Nkomo has opened the way for a third force — UN or Commonwealth — to be introduced. The British government hopes to preserve the existing state structure from too much damage, and safely integrate the guerilla forces, by these means.

Socialists in Britain cannot dictate policy to the liberation movement in a country colonised by Britain and dominated by British capital. The Patriotic Front should be supported insofar as it fights for majority rule against the racist settlers.

At present, the Front is deliberately quiet on the policies it will pursue if it gains power, making great play with the idea of not revealing their plans to the enemy. But their silence makes one thing clear: they have no intention of mobilising the Zimbabwean masses against imperialism and capitalism.

Far from it: at a mass rally recently, the Patriotic Front secretary for Foreign Relations said that 'a tightening of belts' will be needed after independence, during the period of social and economic reconstruction. When that call comes from bourgeois governments, it means: no strikes, no wage demands, independence first and socialism can wait.

We should oppose any attempt to send an imperialist-sponsored third force into Zimbabwe; support the Patriotic Front against the white racists, while giving no political confidence to the Patriotic Front leaders; and campaign for a labour movement boycott of the bastion of white racism in Africa, the apartheid state of South Africa.

can Purchase Areas are allocated to more wealthy Africans who can purchase land.

The land area figures only show part of the inequality. The European areas contain almost twice as much of the land in the country most suited to crop production as the African areas. 92% of the marketed output comes from the European-owned farms: the African-owned plots are mostly small and capable of providing little more than subsistence for the cultivators.

These miserable conditions would drive Africans off the land — if it were not for the fact that wages in the cities are mostly below poverty levels. There are also laws restricting access to urban areas. So when Africans do go to the cities for work, they usually leave their families in the Tribal Trust Lands and expect to return there themselves.

Only 15% of the total African population is employed in the cash economy, and they are mostly restricted to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Whites earn on average 11 times more than blacks: black workers in agriculture earn an average Rh\$17 a month (Rh\$1=95p), while whites get Rh\$408, and blacks in manufacturing get an average Rh\$68 (whites, Rh\$534).



Smith and stooges

From union struggles to the Patriotic Front

REPRESSIVE legislation has played a big part in restricting the growth of trade unions in Rhodesia.

It started with the Masters and Servants Act of 1891, which was modelled on South African legislation going back to 1856. This forbids workers in domestic service, in forestry and in agriculture (most of the African workforce then, and still today 52%) from forming or joining trade unions. These workers face fines or imprisonment if they are 'disobedient or neglectful'.

This remained the major law governing trade unions, together with the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934, until the latter was amended in 1959 to give the right to form or join a trade union to carefully defined categories of African workers, mainly in manufacturing and trade.

This Act defines trade union representation by occupation, industry and area so as to reinforce race barriers in particular industries and specific areas.

Unions are classified as registered or unregistered. In 1971 registered trade unions participating in Industrial Councils, which 'freely' negotiate wage settlements, represented just 5.2% of the total urban African workforce of 790,000. 17 of the registered unions are white, 14 are multi-racial and 19 are African.

In addition, there are 15 or so African trade unions that have not qualified for registration but are allowed to submit evidence to Industrial Boards. These Boards make recommendations on wage levels which a government official can accept or reject, and they cover under one fifth of the African labour force.



A registered union faces a whole range of restrictions. Union officials are compelled to answer any questions put to them by the registrar of trade unions; no assistance may be accepted from the international trade union movement.

This has not in fact prevented the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions [ICFTU] from 'aiding' black trade unions. In the words of one leader of the African TUC in 1973, 'Regrettably, indiscriminate handouts to individual trade union leaders outside the control of their unions

by the ICFTU in Rhodesia are reasons for dividing and retarding the growth of the African labour movement'.

Chronic high unemployment is also a crucial factor in holding back trade union militancy. In 1973 a rumour in Salisbury that 150 workers had been sacked brought a queue of 2000 workers queuing for their jobs at the factory gates.

At that time the Johannesburg Financial Mail commented on 'Rhodesia's Labour Calm'. It calculated that the average African income in industry, construction and commerce was Rh\$480, Rh\$240 short of the Rh\$720 which a survey made 15 years before had said was the minimum a family could live on. Meanwhile transport workers, who had been able to put up a fight, were earning an average of Rh\$717.



The Mail commented 'The wonder is that industrial unrest has been so restricted. [As few as 0.1% of the joint white and African workforce had been involved in strikes, and the proportion was even lower among African workers.] The Mail actually advocated wage increases of 20%, arguing that this would only entail a 1.8% rise in manufacturing industry's gross operating costs and that this would probably be absorbed by better productivity. In the long term, it said, a 50% increase was necessary, leading to a 4.8% rise in gross operating costs.

Needless to say, its advice went unheeded! But Rhodesia's bosses have not had an entirely trouble-free run.

The emerging African proletariat mounted a major strike in 1927 in the Shamva mines for better wages and conditions. It was crushed with government help.

During the second world war migrant workers increasingly assumed permanent urban residence in Salisbury and Bulawayo, and in the post war years staged a series of militant struggles which began to challenge white rule and led to the formation of African political parties.

The railway workers' strike of 1945 and the African general strike of 1948 were accompanied by the growth of a number of unions headed by Mzilingeli's Reformed Industrial Council of Unions. Many of

the prominent figures in Zimbabwe politics today started as union leaders. Joshua Nkomo led the Railway Union, Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe came from the African Teachers' Association.

The militant response of the black working class to a call for a bus boycott in 1957 led to the foundation of the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress. A wave of strikes and demonstrations followed the declaration of UDI in 1965. And in 1972 Edward Heath's

Pearce Commission, sent to feel out the way for a deal with Smith, was met by strikes of miners and railway workers.

The British politicians, unit trusts and massive industrial combines with interests in Rhodesia are well aware of the potential strength of the African working class. It is this strength that imperialism is so consciously trying to strait-jacket by drawing a neutered Patriotic Front into a constitutional settlement.



Iran: The terror grows

THE victory of Iran's first counter-revolutionary wave has not succeeded in stabilising either the armed forces or the government. Bazargan, the Prime Minister, is still the target of savage attacks by leading members of the Council of the Revolution, the real base of decision-making, and General Riahi, the minister of defence, has quit.

In both cases, the trend towards domination by the group around Khomeini is clear. It is they who are publicly flaying the Prime Minister, talking of 'uprooting the Bazargan government in order to replace it with a more revolutionary team', and accusing him of incompetence. It is Khomeini's assumption of the role of commander of the armed forces (without consulting the government) that is said to be behind Riahi's resignation.

Most important has been the designation of Imam Khomeini as the seat of real power in the new draft of the constitution being discussed by the so-called Council of Experts.

News continues to leak out of atrocities by government troops and Guards in Kurdistan. Kurdish sources in Tehran have accused the Guards of massacring the population that had stayed on in a village near the Kurdish stronghold of Mahabad. According to these sources the bodies of many women, children and old people were found.

The Organisation of Iranian People's Fedayeen Guerillas has issued two statements detailing outrages by the government. In one they protested against the execution of leftist teachers in the southern Kurdish town of Kermanshah. In another they protested against the murder of dozens of members and supporters by firing squads.

The same organisation has also issued a counterblast to Khomeini's call on students at the university and in schools to point out any of their fellows who put forward anti-Islamic and anti-government ideas. 'It is the right of every single student' they say 'to expose the counter-revolutionary acts of the government and its officials'.

The university, due to open on 24th September, will not open for at least another month. According to the government, this is because of administrative problems with enrolment, but it appears to be more to do with the purge of the staff being carried out by the regime, which claims to be dismissing pro-SAVAK elements.

Meanwhile, in Kurdistan, the fightback is beginning already. The national radio has announced that an Islamic Guards' post at Baneh was overrun by Kurdish guerillas. Several roads have been cut off through guerilla activity and the press have carried a number of reports of the assassination by Kurdish militants of tribal leaders of the region that sided with the government in its attacks on the Kurds.

An ad hoc committee has organised a tour of speakers on the wave of repression in Iran. Meetings have taken place in Liverpool, Edinburgh, Coventry and Birmingham, and others are due in Cardiff, Bristol and Glasgow. More information can be obtained from John Leadbetter, PO Box 50, London N1 0DD.

CLIVE BRADLEY reviews "What Went Wrong?", edited by Ken Coates, published by Spokesman for the Institute for Workers' Control.

Did it ever go right?

"WHAT Went Wrong?" is an attempt by the mainstream Tribune left to assess the failures of the Labour Government and work out a strategy to prevent those failures in the future. Richard Clements wrote in *Tribune* that it gives us "the socialist answers for the future from our experience of the immediate past".

Terms

Unfortunately, even in its own terms, the book is disappointing for two prime reasons. It attempts no self-criticism. There is nothing on the failure of the Tribune left itself to challenge the leadership which they so indict in this book while it was in power. Tony Benn in particular is praised in several essays, with no comment on the fact that he not only remained silent on the anti-working class policies of the Government, he also participated in the Government that carried them out.

Worse, the book has nothing at all to say of direct relevance to now. Not a single writer in this collection even mentions how the labour movement should combat the Tory government now it is in power. All the policies outlined relate to what a future Labour government could do (when?). The authors also say nothing about how we make sure the future Labour government does carry out those policies, or how we deal with the present Labour leadership which obviously will not carry out the policies the authors recommend.

Both these failures of the book arise from the overall political conceptions of the writers.

"What Went Wrong?" is a series of articles covering a wide range of issues, from Labour's record on economic policy and industrial policy (with particular reference to industrial democracy) and the relationship between government and Whitehall, to internal Labour Party affairs.

The main criticisms of the Government centre on economic policy. Despite promising in 1974 "a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families", the Government did the opposite. Useful statistics are given.

Entry

The authors argue this happened because the government did not heed Tribune advice to reflate the economy, impose import controls, etc. As Michael Barratt Brown puts it:

"If Harold Wilson had not joined with the Establishment to argue for Britain's entry into the EEC... Britain could have taken independent measures to impose import controls, refuse loans, and embark on the first steps of a democratically planned economy with socialism as its objective" (pp.42-44).

Here all the problems are put down to foreigners in the International Monetary Fund and the EEC, and the solu-

tion proposed is to retreat into an island economy, with measures like import controls which only threaten workers' jobs in other countries. But why, according to Barratt Brown and his co-authors, did the Labour Government knuckle under to the IMF and the EEC? They cite several reasons.

- The undemocratic nature of the Civil Service, which has close links with industry, in general prevents radical legislation from being implemented.

- Further, the House of Lords can block legislation.

- The Parliamentary Labour Party and the Cabinet are subject to no control by the Party as a whole. Consequently they can ignore Party

'time for doctrine' it would have been all right.

As the authors themselves show, the Callaghan government did not merely fail in an attempt to be good old-style social democrats. It deliberately acted in defence of Capital. It deliberately increased unemployment, deliberately broke strikes, deliberately and savagely attacked the working class — not only in Britain, but specially in Ireland. It was, quite clearly, a capitalist government.

Stuart Holland calls it 'left-wing capitalism, an outdated disorder', but draws no political conclusions from this other than 'good advice' for the future. The obvious conclusion, that it was nec-

essary and industrial democracy are considered in abstraction from the class struggle.

For the Tribunes represented here, nationalisation is not a means by which in struggle the working class can defeat the bosses and lay the basis for control over production. Nationalisation is a way in which Governments (including 'left-wing capitalist' Governments) can introduce a little more social justice. Or, alternatively, they can do this by securing shares in the top companies and negotiating planning agreements. Nationalisation is reduced to being a means of helping capitalists plan their economy better and avoid crisis. Such a concept-

benevolent gift from above — with nationalisation as an optional extra.

Coates even quotes approvingly from proposals calling for 'parity representation' for trade unions on boards of directors, both of existing nationalised industries and of private companies. Given that there would always be at least one sell-out merchant on the trade union side, this would leave actual control still in the hands of the capitalists. The race for profits would continue, but with workers drawn into aiding the management of a capitalist economy.

The concentration on legislation through Parliament, to the extent of ignoring altogether struggles beyond the gates of Westminster (and in particular struggles now against the Tories), is also reflected in the authors' stress on the problems of government. Things are made difficult even for radical governments because of the Civil Service and the House of Lords, they say, without seriously considering how such radical governments are to be obtained, or how the working class should be mobilised to counter the capitalist class power of which the bureaucratic power of the Civil Service is only one aspect.

Of course, there is no doubt that the Civil Service and the House of Lords are undemocratic and that we must campaign for the abolition of the House of Lords and reforms in the Civil Service. But behind the Civil Service stands the army, the police, the judiciary... the entire state machinery is capitalist through and through, and the enemy of the working class. The conclusion we

bias can be removed.

Stuart Holland's article, "Capital, Labour and the State" is the most important in this collection and deals precisely with this question: with the political and economic 'power relationships' in society.

Holland argues that at present under all governments, "both the political process [i.e. popular involvement in it] and labour tend to be marginalised within the system, which is concentrated on the State and capital, and serviced by the dominant ideology..." (p.216).

In other words, the State and Capital are the twin dominant factors in society. The task therefore (for a future Labour Government, of course) is to establish:

"both the political process, and labour as a social and class interest, at the centre of the system of democratic power" (p.232).

In this, "the State apparatus... would have a role in, but not dominate", government, while:

"the interests of labour [would transform] the ownership and control of capital in society — effectively transforming capital itself" (p.233). This requires changing the dominant ideology, which involves, amongst other things, greater public control over the media.

Virtue

In place of the class struggle and the fight for workers' control, we have a Labour Government of a hypothetical sort securing workers' control over capitalists — presumably by virtue of good intentions. Having established that the State is closely connected to Capital, Holland does not draw the logical conclusion that the State (and the capitalists) are likely to resist this attempt to change 'power relationships' — if necessary by violence.

His strategy, ignoring the class struggle, would condemn us to a second Chile.

In substance, despite the pretentious theoretical presentation, Holland's scheme for the future is no different from the old Tribune schemes. Import controls (now the planning of foreign trade), planning agreements, increased public spending, more public ownership, and so on.

The movement of Ford workers, lorry drivers, and public sector workers against the Labour Government is not mentioned. For these writers, the working class is the passive recipient of policies, not the agent of change. The lessons of mass struggle — against Heath as well as against the last Government — and their relevance in the coming battles with Thatcher & Co., have also passed these writers by. Everything revolves around their own Parliamentary sub-committee.

The measure of the value of this book's indictments of the last Labour Government will be the preparedness of the Tribunes to fight not just Thatcher but also Callaghan. Yet Holland, who, alone in this book, stresses the need for democracy in the Labour Party, did not vote against Callaghan when he came before the Parliamentary Labour Party for re-election.

"What Went Wrong?" is a passive criticism, a half-criticism. Unless the verbal opposition of the Tribunes is turned into action, unless they organise a fight, even a longer and more thorough cataloguing of 'what went wrong' will be useless to the labour movement.



February 1979 — Leyland workers walk out in the "winter of discontent" over Labour's policies.

policy.

Why did the Government choose to ignore Party policy and go along with what the Civil Service wanted? The answer given is that they accept the prevailing ideology in society (i.e. bourgeois liberalism). As Ken Coates puts it:

"The Callaghan administration was not mad, nor deliberately wicked... but it was composed of people who, in the main, had no time for doctrine" (p.14).

And Coates bemoans the demise of those old social-democrats who honestly believed in fighting for social justice and full employment. The basic message is that today's social democrats don't even live up to their own ideological commitments.

This is true as far as it goes. But the changes in the economic situation since the 1960s are hardly referred to. The recommendations are timeless. The reality was that the crisis of capitalism stripped the social-democrat-paddling from the Labour leadership's pro-capitalist policies. But the authors argue as if the Labour Government was just too pragmatic. If it had had a little more

essary to fight that government tooth and nail, is not drawn.

The authors fail to see the relation between socialists and the Callaghan leadership as a relation of struggle between opposing and irreconcilable class loyalties. It is all a matter of a 'doctrinal' retreat from Keynesianism and bowing down before monetarist policies. The Wilson/Callaghan government should have stuck to old-fashioned Keynesian economics and thus not sold out to the IMF, the EEC and all the lesser devils. Their anti-working class policies were merely an unfortunate by-product of this lack of 'time for doctrine'.

Sober

The main emphasis of the book, therefore, is on what should have been done in Parliament and what should be done next time. A sober assessment of what the recommended policies would mean in the real world, and whether reformist bourgeois policies of a Keynesian type are feasible in the current capitalist crisis, is missing. Issues like nation-



Callaghan didn't just "go wrong", he was out to bear down the low paid.

ion is utopian.

Similarly, industrial democracy is not a weapon of workers in struggle. Ken Coates' article, "Whatever happened to industrial democracy?" does not see workers' control as a means of fighting capitalism. It is a

draw is that the state must be overthrown and replaced by a state under the control of the working class: a workers' state, a workers' democracy.

Yet for these writers the State is fundamentally neutral. It is biased but the

DON'T EXPAND THE ECONOMY — REPLACE IT!

ON BOTH the right of the Party and most of the left, the view persists that 'expanding the economy' is the answer to a lot of our problems. If we can get growth again, we're told, we'll be able to afford spending on social services, and reduce unemployment.

This view is entirely uncritical about what the economy is. It means expanding a great many things socialists should want to reduce or abolish, such as most of the advertising industry. It means expanding the use of labour-saving new technology which, far from reducing unemployment, generally tends to increase it. And it means the multinationals more rapidly draining resources out of declining areas into whatever is most profitable for them.

'Expanding the economy' is no good if it's the same economy. Instead, a socialist approach should focus on questions of priority and control. In particular, we need to be selective about new investment, because what sort of technology we have to a large extent shapes what sort of society we're going to get.

SERA — Socialist Environment and Resources Association — is concerned with a wide range of issues surrounding the control of technology.

We're particularly active on the issue of nuclear power, where there is currently a shift taking place in trade union attitudes — just in the space of a few months, the policies of the TGWU, the engineering section of AUEW, and the Scottish TUC, have all changed. Meanwhile, the Tory Government is planning to go ahead faster than ever, importing into Britain

the type of reactor (the Pressurised Water Reactor) that caused the accident at Three Mile Island in America.

On microprocessors, whilst we aren't opposed to them in principle, we believe it's very important to establish some degree of democratic control over their use, particularly as regards the communication of information. We'd like to make contact with anyone concerned about this.

The Lucas Aerospace alternative plan challenged the management's priorities. Although that battle has not been won, and is still continuing, the Lucas approach has spread to a number of other areas of industry. There have recently been workers' reports on Vickers and the motor industry which apply the same basic ideas — transfer of resources and skills away

action, such as at Lucas, is important, but we should also be looking at other focuses for activity — in particular, local government. Clay Cross showed an example of what an independent-minded Labour council can do. We believe Labour local authorities should take increasing responsibility for the economy of their areas, as has happened to a limited extent already in some parts of the country, notably Wandsworth, until the Tories got in. We should argue against the spending cuts for an expansion in the role of local councils, including an increased municipal public sector.

SERA has affiliations from four national trade unions, and from CLPs, Trades Councils, and union branches, as well as about 600 individual members. We're organised into working groups on different subjects (e.g. transport, energy, employment) and into local groups, throughout the country. We always welcome new members.

Recent activities have included an Open Door TV programme, lobbying within unions for changes in policy on nuclear power, a campaign for Combined



Tory energy plans include building the type of reactor that nearly caused disaster at Harrisburg

from present products (which are often in decline anyway) to 'socially useful production'.

As unemployment rises, it's clear we can't wait for the return of a Labour Government to office before we start doing something about it. That's why trade union

Heat and Power (to use the waste heat from existing coal-fired power stations), and numerous leaflets, articles, and public meetings.

If you'd like more details, write to: SERA, 9 Poland St., London W.1.

VICTOR ANDERSON

Out of sight, out of mind

BETTER and earlier health and sex education in schools, the repeal of the law relating to the age of consent, coordination and improvement of services to help pregnant schoolgirls to continue their education, and more financial aid for schoolgirl mothers and their children, are among the key recommendations in a report entitled *Pregnant at School*.

The report, published in September, was the product of extensive work by a joint working party set up in 1975 by the National Council for One Parent Families (NCOF) and the Community Development Trust.

This first-ever study of schoolgirl pregnancy was the outcome of surveys in 443 schools, interviews with education, health and social services authorities, and evidence from 30 other organisations and individuals.

Predictably, most of the gutter press and the self-appointed defenders of public morality of the Mary Whitehouse ilk could scarcely contain their outrage.

Their venom was not for the plight of pregnant schoolgirls with no social support and the loss of educational opportunities, no maternity grant or social security rights. Neither was the outrage directed against the social stigma and ostracism of under-16s who get pregnant, or the education system which provides girls with scant education in health, sexual and contraception matters.

Rather their fire was on just one of the 53 proposals in the report — the proposal to scrap the age of consent law.

Jane Streather, Director of the NCOF and a Labour councillor in Islington, told *Socialist Organiser* that the age of consent proposal had been taken right out of context. 'Essentially the report is about girls being pregnant in school. The main concern was the interruption of the education of the girls, some of whom go to special units, others to homes, and are lost to the further ed-

ucation system altogether'.

Jane summarised the report as concerning three main points.

First, that sexual experience at an early age is common and hence the risk of pregnancy in schoolgirls is high. 'It's not a question of encouraging or condoning such sexual activity but taking the realistic view that one in eight girls — 40,000 — are sexually active below the age of 16. Therefore it is necessary to ensure that their lives are not ruined.'

Second, health and sex education in schools must be improved. Society must recognise these girls need help — one out of three have abortions.

Third, on the age of consent, the report finds that the disadvantages of the law far outweigh the advantages. The problem is that it is illegal for a man to have sexual relations for under 16s, but the girl herself is not breaking any law. But the girls do fear that they themselves are breaking the law, or they fear that the father will be prosecuted, so they don't talk about their pregnancy until very late. They also fear abortion. (Contrary to popular ideas, the majority of the fathers are only one or two years older than the girls.)

'These fears mean that the girls do not get proper antenatal care. There is a high incidence of low birthweight, and deformed or handicapped babies. Basically, this law means that these young mothers put themselves and their babies at risk. We didn't think the answer was just to bring down the age of consent, but that the whole idea of a chronological age of consent should be reconsidered.'

Jane argued that the law in no way protected girls from assault and rape. 'Other laws and means must be used.'

Jane also highlighted the fact that most of the girls getting pregnant were the working class poor. 'They are not entitled to any financial support in their own right. All they get is £6 a week for the

child. They get no Supplementary Benefit (SB), as their parents are supposed to support them, and no maternity grant (which at present is £25). We're supporting the campaign for an £85 maternity grant and for all mothers at school or elsewhere to have the right to claim SB'.

Linda Chalker, the Tory spokeswoman for Social Services, said these girls would get none of this sort of support.

The *Evening Standard* dubbed the report 'The Teeny-likes charter', while most other papers sensationalised about 'love surveys' and frothed about 'sex in schools' — all alongside the Page Three nudes and titillating sex scandals. Jane said that the *Daily Mirror* had been offered an exclusive on the report but turned it down. 'Only the *Star*, which got the exclusive, and the *Guardian*, gave relatively balanced reports and didn't misrepresent the issues.'

What should the labour movement do? Jane pointed out that the Corrie Bill was likely to put thousands more mothers and babies at risk, especially as the young are the group that generally leave it till late to ask for an abortion, and whose grounds for termination would be undermined. The Labour Party and unions, which have opposed the Corrie Bill, should logically also support many of our proposals.

'The other thing the labour movement must do is fight for bigger financial support for single parent families, and campaign for maternity grant for all mothers — particularly the under 16s, and students who are denied financial support because they pay no health insurance.'

'The Labour Party attitude of 'out of sight, out of mind' on these questions of sexual and social freedoms is amazing. It's quite incredible that the party has been in existence since 1901 and here we are in 1979 with so little having been done for single parents.'

MIKE DAVIS

NUPE's Catch-22

Several months after the winter strikes, Scottish NUPE officials are attempting to remove the credentials of two militant shop stewards from Edinburgh South Hospitals branch, despite the fact that the branch backs the stewards fully. PAUL MACLEAN (branch treasurer) and MICK NAPIER told John MacDonald about it:

How did this start?

■ Mick: There has been a history of victimisation of the left by NUPE officials, but the origins of this attempt were when our branch as a whole broke away and defied the dictates of the full-time officials during the low pay campaign. Unofficial strikes involved hundreds of Edinburgh South Hospitals members and a mass meeting of 200 demanded NUPE President Fisher's head after the sell-out.

What are you accused of?

■ Paul: Our crimes include the fact that we 'had discussions with pickets at a refuse collection depot', that we were 'involved in unofficial strikes', and 'collection of money to sustain unofficial action out-

side the national fund'.

□ Have they succeeded in victimising you?

■ Mick: This is still in doubt. We have seen nothing, but they have sent a letter to the secretary of Lothian Health Board (our employer). The full timers called a special branch meeting which overwhelmingly voted against their recommendation. They tried to get a branch decision and when they lost they just tried to ignore it.

The Scottish National Officer, Ron Curran, claims that he has support from the NUPE National Executive, but we know that the matter hasn't even been discussed by the NEC. We believe that they are doing this in defiance of union rules.

Why is this happening?

■ Mick: They are out to straitjacket every steward in the branch and all shopfloor activity. It seems that NUPE officials have their very own concordat which will deliver the stewards into the hands of management. The union officials' document against us says that any steward who was involved with strikes or branch finances 'will act only in accordance with union policy as indicated through correspondence with the General Secretary, the Scottish National Officer, or the Area Officer. Failure to give an understanding will result in the withdrawal of the official union steward's certificate'.

The basic issue is this — the union machine is a non-elected creature which in the past ruled the roost in the union. They are now using two sacrificial victims to cover up their recent shabby record. The union official attached to the branch, Andy Wilson — an

atront to his fellow CP members — made his debut in the branch by trying to victimise another shop steward for the crime of collecting money for the firemen during their strike.

What now?

■ Mick: We're in a quandary because we want to use the appeals machinery to get our credentials as stewards back — but we have not been officially suspended. This is NUPE's own little Catch-22. Our main hope for stopping this witch-hunt lies in informing enough NUPE activists up and down the country of what is happening.

To do this we are publishing a fact-sheet. * To release some of the smears that have been used against us would soil the pages of your newspaper — theft of funds, making abusing phone calls — the full-time officials will stop at nothing.

Any NUPE member who's concerned with NUPE democracy should contact us for the fact-sheet and help to bombard



Enthusiasm for action stifled first by union tactics, and now by witch-hunts?

the NUPE executive committee with resolutions demanding the restoration of our stewards' credentials.

[*c/o Paul MacLean, Portering Dept., Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh.]

Women's sections: tea and chat or a fight for rights

BRENT East Labour Party Women's Section will be holding a meeting open to all party members titled *What future for women in the Labour Party?* at Brent Town Hall on October 9th at 8pm.

Answering the question *Do women need to organise separately in the Labour Party?* will be Jo Richardson MP and Ann Bliss, Na'go shop steward and member of Lewisham East Labour Party.

The women's section felt the need for such a meeting to sort out the many misconceived ideas on the function and form of women's sections. The problem is that many women's sections do revolve around tea and chat rather than a fight for women's rights. And many members consider that if Labour women organise separately that is a deviation from their 'proper' role of working alongside the men and ignoring the special problems of

women.

But women are no more equal in the Labour Party than elsewhere in our society. Locally and nationally, leading bodies have few women on them. Women with young children can be active only by beating all the odds piled against them. But why should they have to fight the odds? We should organise to abolish them, and one important campaign is for creches and baby-sitting rotas to enable women

to get out to meetings on an equal footing.

The task is to transform the women's sections into a fighting working class women's movement, based in the Labour Party but linked to the independent women's movement and trade union women's caucuses; a movement strong enough to take the vital issues raised in the women's movement into the Labour Party and fight for them to be implemented.

Among these is the question of socialising the home, of rebuilding community estates with good social as well as domestic facilities; adequate 24-hour nursery provision; and free abortion facilities.

These issues must be taken up in the Labour Party and wider labour movement as a serious start to free women from their oppression.

M. AMORY and A. SHARIFF

Socialist Organiser

ENGINEERS: All out strike call grows

WORKERS at the GEC traction factory in Sheffield are the first to occupy in response to the bosses' attempt to lay off 30 workers. At Wm. Ward's in Sheffield, there is now an all-out strike against the lay-off. These two Sheffield factories show the way to winning the full claim — occupy every factory threatened with a lockout, an all-out strike in every district.

Throughout the country, District Committees and shop stewards meetings are voting for all-out strike and some factories are already taking action in spite of the Confed officials pussy-footing with the 2-day strikes. At Peter Stubbs in Warrington, 500 workers, mostly women members of the Metal Mechanics, NSMM, are on all-out strike, as are Ryders in Bolton, Harvesters in Bradford, and Birmid Qualcast No 3 foundry in Birmingham.

Week after week, press stories of "back to work brigades" have flopped. First Mike Savage of Leyland, then Rolls Royce, and recently the Brush Switchgear factory in Loughborough, where management claimed the 98% of workers who returned ballot forms wanted to work — but only a handful of the workers actually crossed a picket line on Monday September 24th.

Management ballots, widely covered by the press, have been shown up as a complete phoney. Less than half the workers returned forms at the Brush factory, and at Rolls Royce factories in Anstey and Derby, workers showed what they thought of the procedure by

burning the ballot papers and ballot boxes.

Everywhere engineers, faced with blackmail and threats from press and bosses, are showing their loyalty to the union and the claim which, although inadequate, will be of real benefit to all of us if won in full.

But Duffy is looking for any opportunity to retreat without losing face.

Already Confed officials are dropping their commitment to 35 hours. The foundry section of the AUEW has sent out instructions to districts to give dispensation to firms offering 39 hours who don't even make a written commitment to 35 later. Dispensation has also been given to firms who offer to pay the 40th hour at overtime rates.

Ex-Cell-O Corporation, in Leicester, is back at work after agreement was reached to give 4 1/2 hours pay for 40 hours work. What a way

to conduct a national wage fight! The EC should be calling out engineering workers not covered by the CSEU agreement to support us, not handing out dispensations like confetti.

Full-timers are arguing that it would be impossible to call an all-out strike because each member union has a different rule-book, some requiring a ballot of members, others not, and anyway an all-out strike with strike pay would bankrupt the unions.

These arguments are only excuses. The only way we are going to win the claim is by an all-out strike. We should appeal for support from the whole labour movement, not sit around totting up the money in strike funds like misers.

Duffy admitted on television that the executive committee of the AUEW has been flooded with resolutions calling for all-out action. We must keep up this

pressure. But more importantly, we must force Duffy to follow us by taking the initiative in our own hands. Our fight is no longer just about £80 and 35 hours. If we lose, the way is clear for the Tories' anti-union legislation and for the bosses to force through mass redundancies and automation.

The bosses' confidence has been boosted by Thatcher's victory and the press is now talking about a new-found "employers' solidarity". We need to strengthen our own solidarity. We must push for weekly meetings of stewards in every district to organise picketing, to make sure every factory knows what is going on, and to build links between factories. We must take the arguments for all-out strikes to every engineering worker and build support for every factory which occupies against a lockout.

MARK HALL



At GEC Traction Works in Sheffield, 600 strikers have organised a sit-in in response to lay-off threats

Scouse pickets hit Harwich

EIGHT THOUSAND workers at Vauxhalls Ellesmere Port factory on Merseyside have been on all-out strike since September 4th, when they rejected a company wage offer. The company's 'final offer' of a 14% wage increase and one extra day's holiday at Christmas fell well short of the workers' demands for a 25% increase with wages linked to the cost of living, a reduction in the working week to 38 hours without loss of pay, a full paid week off at Christmas and increased holiday pay.

The company's offer even had strings attached: the introduction of 'bell to bell working' so that all jobs have to be done non-stop between official breaks, new rights for the bosses to transfer workers to other jobs in the factory to cover for any strikes or dis-

ruptures, and an end to the guaranteed shift.

Vauxhall's Luton plant has now accepted the company's deal, despite coachloads of Ellesmere Port workers going down to ask for support for their action. In the absence of parts from Merseyside, the Luton plant is being kept open by the shipment of parts from West Germany, through Harwich docks.

Ellesmere Port workers have sent pickets down to Harwich to try and stop this movement of parts, and they have had support from drivers in the Harwich distribution depot who said they wouldn't cross the picket lines — and from Essex University Students Union who have lent transport and accommodation.

The response of the convenors at the Luton plant was to

place themselves squarely in the management's camp. At a mass meeting on September 24th they announced they would escort the firm's lorries through the pickets at Harwich.

Despite a massive force of police, including SPG and dog handler units, in Harwich the next day to supervise the operation, only 7 or 8 waggons from Luton actually tried to go through. After pickets succeeded in blocking the road and talking to the drivers they turned back saying they would not cross the picket line.

The Luton convenors' actions are a disgrace to trade unionism. They have divided the Vauxhall's workforce and stabbed Ellesmere Port in the back.

But if the picketing is made successful, the claim can still be won. TONY CASHMAN

Talbot bosses try productivity con

AFTER 13 weeks on strike, workers at the Talbot Stoke plant in Coventry are still refusing to talk to the bosses who have made a 5 1/2% wage offer and are threatening to close the plant if it is not accepted.

The union leadership at the nearby Talbot Ryton plant, however, have been in negotiations with the bosses, and on September 25th said they had agreed on a "back-to-work formula" but both sides "refused to comment" on the contents of the agreement, which still has to be put to a stew-

ards' meeting and then to a mass meeting at the start of October. Earlier, TGWU officials had agreed to a management plan for a return to work pending an "investigation into productivity".

Workers at either of the two Coventry plants stand to gain nothing from productivity. Both Stoke and Ryton are obsolete by the standards set by the firm's Peugeot-Citroen owners. Peugeot achieve a high level of "productivity" in their own French plants by employing mainly immigrant

labour working in slave labour conditions on piece-work, controlled by the threat of having their work permits revoked.

The outcome of a deal to investigate productivity in Coventry would undoubtedly see the Talbot bosses going for similar conditions to those operated by Peugeot-Citroen bosses.

Talbot workers realise very well after the closure threats made by their bosses that there is no "middle ground" — they are fighting for their jobs.

Rover: A model for the Leyland fight

Early in September Michael Edwardes announced the latest instalment in his plan for Leyland — closure of Canley and two smaller plants, severe cutbacks at ten others, and a 'review' of the operations of 30 more.

25,000 jobs are to go out of 165,000 — on top of the 18,000 already lost over the last ten years.

How much resistance Edwardes will face remains to be seen. Three days after the announcement, a meeting of 70 senior stewards voted unanimously to support plant strike action and for blacking of the transfer of work from affected plants. The BL Combine Committee itself has a policy of blacking transfers — but that policy existed last year at the time of the Speke closure, yet Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson did nothing to

implement it then, and TR7 work was transferred to Canley.

In the meantime, workers at Rover, Solihull have already struck in face of a threat to 1500 of the 4000 jobs in the SD1 plant. The outcome of this dispute could set the stage for Leyland as a whole. Socialist Organiser talked to PAT HICKEY, TGWU Deputy Senior Steward at the SD1 plant, about the issues.

Our present dispute started before the new Edwardes plan was announced, but it's clearly part and parcel of the same company attack on manning levels and line rates.

Early in August they announced cutbacks in programme in the SD1 (saloon assembly area) of a third,

along with 1500 redundancies — a cut in labour of over 40%. The redundancies were to be used to impose speed-up on the grounds that we are supposed to be BL's 'most modern and least efficient' plant.

The shop stewards committee recommended all-out opposition and proposed work-sharing with no loss of pay. But a mass meeting voted narrowly to accept voluntary redundancy. However, it did vote to uphold opposition to both compulsory redundancy and speed-up.

In the event, management got more than enough volunteers, so the outstanding issue was speed-up. Management informed the unions that they intended to implement the industrial engineers' figures and any talks with the unions on manning levels would only take place

after the labour had been taken out.

An example of what this would mean is that over 150 jobs would go on assembly systems One and Two, despite no change in the line rate. Effectively, management are trying to get rid of the mutuality and status quo clauses in the collective agreement, which guarantee that agreement has to be reached before labour is removed.

A mass meeting of all SD1 workers on 5th September voted overwhelmingly to strike, and despite one attempt by the Works Committee to get the management's position accepted at a recall mass meeting, the membership has remained firm.

What's happening here — redundancies, speed-up and de-manning — will obviously

set the pattern for the rest of the company. It isn't widely understood that the Edwardes plan will affect not only workers in plants scheduled for closure, but also those in places like Longbridge, Cowley and Rover that stand to gain work from the closed plants. Edwardes has already said that he wants massive increases in productivity, up to ten cars per worker per year in all the remaining plants.

If we can win this battle it will be a big boost in the fight to stop the Edwardes plan altogether. Here at Rover we are due to get the TR7 from Canley, but I'm sure that after a success in the present dispute the workers here would be quite ready to black any work transferred from Canley, especially if Canley puts up a real fight and occupies.