



CUTLET

No.13

THE NEWSLETTER OF LAMBETH NALGO

25 FEBRUARY 1982

Refund is a 'Gimmick'
LAMBETH Conservatives plan to refund money to ratepayers if they win the May election has been given a mixed reaction.

'£50 rate refund if Tories win'
The local chamber of commerce described the package to cut £9 million from council spending as "wildly unrealistic".

A £50 REFUND FOR THE RATEPAYERS?
RATEPAYERS could get a refund of around £50 each if Conservatives...

Tories promise £50 rate rebate
Tories opposition group...

Tories' money-back guarantee
LAMBETH'S Tory...

TORY PLEDGE OF LAMBETH £50 REBATE
Tory group leader...

TORIES ELECTION OFFER HITS THE HEADLINES

THE PRIZE for a Tory council - Robin Pitt offers his cash incentive to Lambeth voters.

Lambeth's Conservatives have begun their election campaign by promising an average £50 rate refund to every ratepayer. Tory leader Robin Pitt said that they could cut £9 million from next year's budget to give the refunds, which would mean £3/4 million for Shell and "ironically" £1.2 million to the GLC.

The cuts as proposed by the Conservatives are:-

There would be a 2% cut in Gross Running Costs - mainly achieved by the Council giving itself a rate rebate. (financial wizards these Conservatives!).

The £3M overtime bill would be reduced by a third - Mr Pitt concentrated on making savings by reviewing the committee structures What he failed to mention was that overtime has been examined several times in the last two years. Savings have been made but often at the expense of services e.g. shorter opening times for parks and swimming baths. Other overtime commitments are absolutely essential eg to ensure staff are always present in children's homes. This overtime is largely needed due to the Council's failure to fill vacancies in

the first place.

There would be a further 4% reduction across the salaries budget by a recruitment freeze - The cracks are already showing in services following the loss of 304 jobs through early retirement plus a vacancy rate of 18%. Sheltered schemes for the elderly have already been left without a worker as the Council drags its feet filling posts even the Council recognises as essential.

The staff catering subsidy would be phased out - This outrageous service condition (also enjoyed by Conservative Councillors) is normal practice by many employers large and small, in the public and the private sector.

Consumer Advice would be immediately reduced by a 1/3

in the first year by closing the Streatham office and then phased out altogether - This ignores the fact that this is a popular and well used service. It also ignores the vast range of work done from advice concerning defective goods to dealing with LEB cut-offs.

The Housing repairs budget would face "substantial reductions" and "rationalisation" - I have no idea what the Conservatives mean by this and I doubt whether they do either. They might do better to examine the need for an improved service with more capital spending to cure major problems such as damp and asbestos.

Homesteading would be introduced to reduce the number of empty properties - This is a policy which has failed in

Continued on page 2

CRUNCH MEETING

Branch representatives were due to meet the Council yesterday, 24 February, in a 'crunch' meeting on the GLC transfer/New Technology and Service Conditions claim.

Housing members voted at a 500-strong mass meeting last Friday, 19 February, to reject the package on offer by the Council for the GLC transfer. A strong programme of industrial action, to start today unless the housing claim has been met, was approved by the meeting, with only one person voting against. The meeting was attended by members of GLC NALGO and the GLC staff association.

Branch vote on levy

The proposed national levy for a 'fighting fund' against redundancies should be debated at a branch meeting, the Executive Committee decided on February 15. The branch meeting will mandate our delegates to the national local government meeting to discuss the levy on March 5.

Tory £50 offer

Continued from page 1
Wandsworth and failed the last GLC administration. It is also a policy which fails to provide housing for those in greatest need. The local Conservatives might do better to convince their colleagues in Central Government that money is needed to put empty properties into repair and to start building new ones. Thanks to Central Government economies council building throughout the country has virtually ground to a halt.

There would be a £3.50 per week rent increase for Lambeth tenants from 1st July 1982 - Instead of £2.50 increase from 1st October

Members at Brixton Law Centre will receive full branch support in their refusal to expand their catchment area to include Norwood and Streatham as well as Brixton. There will in future be separate shop stewards committees for DTP and BDD. The E.C. received the results of a ballot of members supporting the change.

The E.C. meeting approved the setting up of a branch Health and Safety Committee

Special Branch Meeting

THURSDAY 4 MARCH
12.30 pm Assembly Hall

To discuss:

- 1) The Council's offer on the New Technology/GLC/Service Conditions package
- 2) National strategy against the cuts, including the proposed national levy.

These items affect YOU -
BE THERE

1982 suggested by the present administration - What anyone but the Tories happily advocate raising charges while at the same time running down the service?

The Tories would "sell 1000 council houses" in their first year - even though there have been just 800 enquiries since October 1980, let alone serious applications.

They would look at privatisation of various council services, Mr Pitt said, as they had carried out a study which showed that savings could be made. Their 'study' was of street cleaning in one road!

STOP PRESS

BLUE STAR MOVE REJECTED

Two hundred branch members who work in Blue Star House voted overwhelmingly at a meeting last Thursday, February 18, to reject council and management proposals to move Social Services headquarters to 91 Clapham High Street (Sainsbury Building) and 361 Clapham Road (the old Area 4 office).

Every section had complaints about the proposals, such as the problems it will present to the public, lack of space and desks, inappropriate working arrangements and heating and lighting problems.

Although 91 Clapham High Street is undoubtedly in better condition than Blue Star House (e.g. the ceiling isn't falling in and the lifts work), the members did not accept management's view that the old Area 4 office had been improved by fire damage. They felt that the two buildings together do not appear to be suitable for Social Services needs.

Further discussions will be taking place with management.

JENNY NYMAN, DSS

The Tories are suggesting tired old policies which have already failed elsewhere. The fact that they have not been in office for years is apparent in their naive approach.

The refund scheme was described as 'wishful thinking' by the Lambeth Chamber of Commerce and "vote buying" by Labour Leader Ted Knight.

The South London Press commented that ratepayers might "prefer a more prudent investment of £9 million, aimed at stimulating the borough's starved economy in a lasting way".

HUGH WILLIAMS, DHPS



WHAT PRICE SOLIDARITY?

NALGO's national local government committee is proposing a national levy of £2 per month to set up a national fighting fund to support strong action against redundancies in the coming year. Thelma Gemmell considers branch reaction to this proposal.

I left the Lambeth NALGO Executive Committee last Monday evening with mixed feelings of anger and sadness. The last item on the agenda had been the proposed £2 monthly strike levy and almost every speaker had reported their members' "reluctance" to support it. Trades Unionists these, confronted by the traditional threats of redundancy and unemployment, plus Government legislation removing strikers' Social Security payments. And yet they can scarcely be recognised as the descendants of early Trades Unionists who risked all to win the first victories of industrial action from which we, today, directly benefit.

FORGOTTEN

It appears that the Lambeth NALGO members of 1982 have forgotten their own history and have so to re-learn the basic truths.

The realities of today are a Government which boasts of its determination to destroy local democracy and render trades unions powerless. Local Conservative parties will pursue the same policies - we all know what the Lambeth Tories threaten, should they win in May. If anyone has any doubts, ask the brothers and sisters

in Consumer Services.

I can hear murmurings of "Oh, the Tories won't get in; it'll be the SDP".

SDP/TORY ALLIANCE

But if there is a split vote between the 3(?) main parties it would come as no surprise if the SDP were to form an alliance with the Tories; after all the rhetoric there would be no re-alignment with the Labour Group. And if any one thinks that the SDP offers a softer option, I recommend an examination of Islington's very new experience of the 'moderate' SDP majority (Britain's first!). The SDP council has:-

CUT ALL THE 1982/83 GRANT to the North London Unemployment Centre. Islington has over 16,000 unemployed.

SACKED the Mayor's chauffeur - and before anyone chirps that he was an unnecessary luxury anyway, it might be polite to muse a little on whose job will also be tomorrow's luxury. (he has since been re-instated after NALGO intervention).

BROKEN AN AGREEMENT, reached late in 1981, to improve staffing in children's homes.

BROKEN AN AGREEMENT about the quality of food in residential children's and old people's homes.

SUSPENDED SOMEONE FOR TRYING

TO DO THE JOB HE'D BEEN EMPLOYED TO DO - an employee applied for an advertised post and was offered the job. He accepted - but the SDP then decided to freeze the post. When the officer presented himself for work on his first day, he was immediately suspended by the new SDP bosses. Islington NALGO members are now on strike in his support.

GANGRENE

Since this year's improved Lambeth HIP allocation was announced, complacency has set in like gangrene and all ready members are forgetting the trauma of last year instead of preparing for the Ides, or thereabouts, of May. Of those NALGO members who voted for the Thatcher Government and of those who intend to vote for them or the SDP in the May elections, I would request a clue to the contradiction. I would also reiterate both the Tory and SDP vows to cut services - and therefore jobs. Perhaps it will be someone else's job, eh?

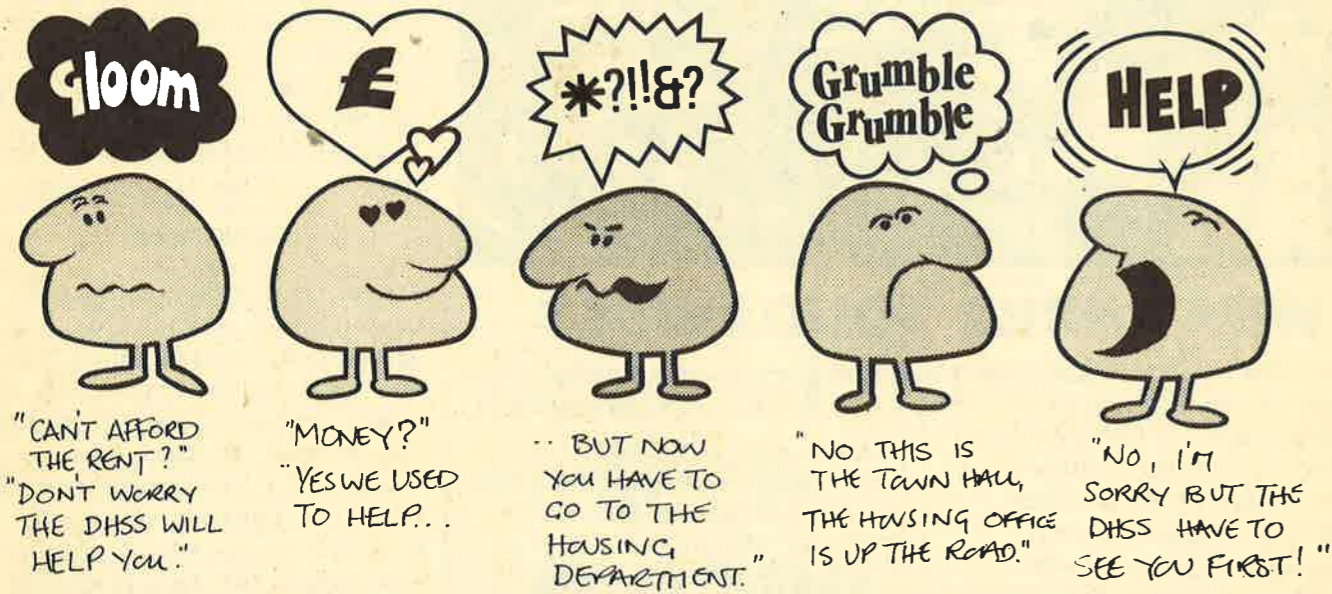
VALUED

Finally - the levy. Times are hard, as we all know, and belt-tightening is something we have all become familiar with. Some amongst us, I'm sure, are experiencing real difficulties. For the rest of us, the levy would be equal to 50p per week - less than a pint of beer, much less than 20 cigarettes, the same as some magazines and so on and so on. Just our well-earned little treats? Aren't our jobs - which pay for those 'little treats' - to be valued and protected too?

For this small amount we could build a strong national fighting fund and so support Sisters and Brothers in Islington, Bootle, Midlothian, Liverpool, Hull, Hackney - or Lambeth.

Thelma Gemmell, BDD

A NEW IMPROVED PAYMENT SYSTEM



It is December 1982. Mr Hardy, a newly retired pensioner, is finding it difficult to make ends meet. His neighbour suggests that he claims supplementary benefit to help pay for the rent and rates he has to pay to the Council. After a number of telephone calls, Mr Hardy discovers the whereabouts of the nearest office. His son takes him down there, because Mr Hardy suffers from severe bronchitis and finds travelling on his own very difficult.

The clerk at the DHSS office tells him "We don't pay for housing costs anymore. You must go and claim from the Council!"

Mr Hardy duly goes to the council housing department. They take his details. He is told "Ah, but you might be entitled to supplementary benefits". "But I've just been there", explains Mr Hardy, "and they sent me here".

"Well, that's right. But you also have to go back to the DHSS. They should have taken your details and then contacted us. I'm sorry about all this to-ing and fro-ing, but unfortunately this new system of us paying you, possibly as well as the DHSS, was rushed through by the Government. We haven't quite worked out how to deal with it all yet.

"And one more thing - because we don't have the staff to

cope, if you do go back to the DHSS, they won't be able to help you until we've worked out your housing benefit. Unfortunately, that could take quite a long time".

Mr Hardy goes home, thoroughly confused. He doesn't bother going back to the DHSS. Later he finds out that by not doing so, he has missed out on £5 a week.

COMPLEXITY
This, of course, hasn't happened yet. But this little story is an illustration of another twist in the ever-growing complexity of the benefits system. It is called the "unified housing benefit" scheme and is due to be introduced between November 1982 and April 1983.

It is intended to provide an answer to the overlapping complexities of rent/rate rebates and allowances provided by councils, and supplementary benefits which can also cover housing costs. The idea is to centralise money for housing under one system, administered by councils.

In Lambeth, it will mean that 20,000 + claimants who at present get money from DHSS will in future get their housing costs 'rebated' by the Council instead. People on supplementary benefits will get a 100% rebate, which effectively a 'credit' whilst they're unemployed against

their account. Everyone else will get a proportion of their housing costs rebated, depending on income.

It sounds simple enough. But as always, there are problems. For councils, it means rebate sections taking on additional case load which will more than double the number of tenants they deal with. For the DHSS, it means discarding part of their work - and in process, making "savings" on staff. For claimants, it means the confusion of dealing with yet another agency - the council - in the process of getting their dues whilst unemployed.

WORSE OFF

The introduction of a new system should cost money. But because the Government are intent on cuts they have done two things. One is to propose a formula for working out the new rebates which will make huge numbers of people with low incomes worse off than they are at present (possibly two-thirds of those who get rebates at present will be worse off). Claimants out of work may also have to 'top up' their income by claiming back money from Supplementary benefit - as illustrated in the story above - and no-one has worked out a fool-proof way of ensuring that this happens.

GREATER CONTROL

Secondly, the Government is offering a mere £5 million to be distributed amongst councils throughout the country to pay for the new scheme. They are also pressing councils to accept part implementation of the scheme for council tenants - by this November.

The attractions to councils are the possibility of some extra funds to run their rebate schemes, and a system which enables greater control over tenants' rents - because those out of work will no

ISOLATE APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA NOW

DEMO!

LONDON: SUNDAY MARCH 14 1982

SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE TIME TO CHOOSE



Now, more than ever before, is the time for people in Britain to act in support of the cause of freedom in Southern Africa. In a New Year interview, Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Robert Mugabe warned:

Right across the length and breadth of our Southern African subcontinent - from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean - South Africa is trying to influence the direction of events, both by military methods and by trying to destabilise the economies of the countries of the region.

Today South Africa is escalating its aggression against the front line states, intensifying its military occupation of Namibia, and unleashing a new wave of terror against opponents of apartheid within South Africa. Most dangerously of all, South Africa is building up its nuclear arsenal. The Pretoria regime makes no secret of the encouragement it has received from President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher. They miss no opportunity to protect South Africa.

The UN has proclaimed 1982 the International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions against South Africa. Sanctions are vital in order to

- halt South Africa's aggression against Angola and other African states
- compel South Africa to end its illegal occupation of Namibia
- undermine the apartheid economy and its war machine

The Anti-Apartheid Movement has launched a nationwide campaign on the theme *Isolate Apartheid South Africa: Sanctions Now*. It calls upon all opponents of apartheid and racism to help make 14 March the largest ever demonstration of solidarity with the struggle for freedom in Southern Africa.

ASSEMBLE HYDE PARK 12-1pm

FORWARD TO FREEDOM IN NAMIBIA & SOUTH AFRICA!

ANTI APARTHEID MOVEMENT
89 Charlotte Street London W1 Telephone 01 580 5311

longer have the money for rent and rates paid direct to them. Rent arrears will be "controlled" for the unemployed, and claimants will no longer be able to use rent/rate money to pay off other pressing debts.

IMPOSSIBLE

There is a danger that these attractions of a bit of extra money and some control over rent arrears will prevent local authorities from lobbying for the additional resources needed - beyond those offered by the Government - to make sure that the

new system works properly.

There are already long delays in processing rebates (in some London boroughs, claimants can wait nearly six months). Rebates staff are hardpressed. Proper negotiations must take place to ensure that the sections affected are not burdened with an impossible and ill-thought out workload. Otherwise, the criticisms levelled at present at DHSS Staff by claimants and advisers, will soon be directed towards hardpressed Council staff.

LIZ ADAMS, DSS

Letters TO THE EDITOR

SIDE EFFECTS

While glancing through "Cutlet" (28 January), I was surprised that, although one writer was described as a member of NALGO, this assertion was not supported by a plausible name. As the writer and friends purport to be anarchists, it is hard to believe that they would sink to enjoy such privileges of the State as the prospect of inflation - proof pensions. Such doubts would dissolve if all future contributors to "Cutlet" publicly revealed their real

identity.

I realise that such a policy might have the side-effect of raising the tone of the newsletter. However, this would be a small price to pay for the assurance that those whose scribblings are printed at our expense are indeed NALGO members.

Francis Howcutt, DTP

MORONIC NONSENSE

I was outraged to read the story 'stink bombs as SDP start Lambeth campaign' in Cutlet No. 11. It was utter drivel and a complete waste of paper. How much of our subs go towards this moronic nonsense?

What you need is some really nice articles on contraception and primal scream therapy. And maybe one or two things for the menfolk

like how to be subservient and how to do the washing up properly and how to clean out the bath - things like that.

Anyway I hope this so called newsletter improves in the future and has some things in it like - facism in our time or was Hitler misunderstood or is Maggie all that bad and not so much of this sexual harassment

A READER, DALs

TOOTHsome

Dear Ed,
I like Cutlet but, like Chinese food, once I've read it, I'm hungry for more.

Why don't you put more in it? In the good old days we used to have crosswords and long articles to get our teeth into. Bring back the long article and I'll get my teeth out. Yours sincerely
A.Nuther-Reader.

This is a silly letter we wrote to fill the space. If more of you wrote to us, we wouldn't have to do such things.

the workers to have more leisure - all my life they fought against us having the 40 hour week, Society as a whole is crying out for the services to provide more and better hospitals, schools, homes, roads, sewers, water mains, libraries and a pollution free environment, and we can't have them, why, because, monopoly capital says we need neutron bombs, missiles, atomic subs and poison gas. What a crazy system! and its our money to!

I retired because I was coned, to those of you still on the staff take my advice. If you don't like the job you do, ask for double salary for doing it, but if you enjoy your work like I did, hold on to it for dear life. You are doing a worthwhile service to the community and don't let any bastard of whatever political complexion talk you out of it!

JIM LINDSAY, Ex-DEHCS Convenor

SERVICE CONDITIONS NEWS

Review of car allowances

The provision of essential car user allowances is being reviewed by the Directorate of Finance and Management Services. Any officer claiming less than 1500 miles per annum and holding an essential car allowance has been scrutinised under the review and a recommendation made whether or not their essential allowance should continue.

Recommendations were originally made that 134 people falling into this category should have their essential allowances terminated and casual ones substituted. However, when the proposals were received by Directorates and the Branch, many criticisms were levied. The Senior Management Group of DEHCS was particularly forceful on why they felt DEHCS staff were being wrongly penalised.

The Branch has clearly stated to the Council that it considers the granting of an essential allowance to be determined by whether a person's duties are of such a nature that it is essential

Branch presentations

To mark their service with the Branch over the years, the Executive Committee has made presentations to three members who retired under the voluntary early retirement scheme in December. There were Roly Newton - past President and Chairman of Staff Side; Jim Lindsay - Convenor DHCS; and John Green - Convenor DCEPS and past Staff Side Chairman.

A presentation will also shortly be made to Neil Davies who has held various posts including Branch President, Chairman of Staff Side and Assistant Branch Secretary.

for them to have a motor car at their disposal whenever required. This definition is as stated in the purple book. The fact that someone may not bother to claim for some of their miles travelled, or travels less than 1500 miles per annum does not alter their essential status. The proposals are being revised in light of these and other points, and a further report is anticipated shortly.

MIKE WALLER

DMS/Staff side

Issues under discussion with Management Services at Staff

Side meetings include:

Provision of fire certificates for all council buildings.

The effect of Job Evaluation on linked grades.

Facilities for trade union representatives and members.

Personal files and disposal of confidential information

Increase in the level of snow stand-by payments.

Gradings of Continuity Assistants, DAS.

Progress made will be reported in Cutlet.

MARCH FOR OUR FUTURE

A fortnight of CND Events.

Bringing the issues of nuclear disarmament to the people of Lambeth

Mon 1st Mar. Open Day of exhibitions & Video in Lambeth Town Hall. Lunch Time Press Conference. Film 'The War Game'.

Sat 6th Mar. CND Cycle Parade. 11am from County Hall, visiting six nuclear sites in the borough. Tel 552 0044 for details. PM. MNUkes Benefit Lambeth Town Hall. See posters for details.

Mon 8th Mar. Film 'The Bomb' 7.30pm. Nettiefold Hall, West Norwood.

Tue 9th Mar. Film 'The Bomb' 7.30pm. Brockwell Park Lido.

Thur 11th Mar. Film 'The War Game' 7.30pm. Longfield Hall, Knatchbull Rd, SE5.

Sat 13th Mar. Category 3 Theatre Group presents a musical revue 'The European Bomb Contest' 8.00pm. Nettiefold Hall, West Norwood. With the FBU-Cat Marching Band.

Tue 16th Mar. Film 'The War Game' 7.30pm. Surrey Hall, Binfield Rd, Stockwell.

Thur 18th Mar. Film 'The Bomb' 7.30pm. Holy Spirit Church Hall, Hambrook Rd, Stalk.

Fri 19th Mar. Film 'The War Game' 7.30pm. Colombo St, Community Centre, Waterloo.

Look out for the CND double-decker bus which will be touring the estates, schools and high streets of Lambeth with video shows and information. And in the libraries, too, you will find exhibitions on disarmament and for the first time a public display of the Government's Emergency War Plans in preparation for Nuclear War. Come along and find out what plans they have for you.

Supported by the London Borough of Lambeth

Early retirement 'was a con'

Early last year I was one member of the Branch Leadership who believed Comrade Ted Knight's statements on the difficulties facing Lambeth in the current year. I was aware that it was possible to err on the bookkeeping, and as a result, find you didn't actually have £1M you thought you had.

Mr Hicks must have found a long sock that Jack Halligan left behind at 18 Brixton Hill, for he has unearthed £11M that nobody knew about. This means that all the guff Ted Knight gave us at our mass meeting in July was an unnecessary con. There was no justified reason for the early retirement! Like 300 others I was coned. I humbly apologise to any member who listened to the false advice I may have given them.

To those people in their late 40's who are wishing their lives away by contemplating early retirement or voluntary severance, don't!

It is absolutely clear to me now that Mike Waller was 100% right in his policy of defending every job, if not for the people holding them at least for the youngsters leaving school and the unfortunate unemployed.

I am 58 nearly, and technically unemployed. I am not on the statistics yet - I can't draw benefit. After two months I am absolutely sick of it! I listen to the guff on the radio that we were brought up all wrong, the work ethic is out of date, we will have to adjust to a leisure society. Just imagine monopoly capitalism telling

NOTICEBOARD

Lambeth NALGO

BLACK WORKERS GROUP

Our future programme - an important issue to all black members of Lambeth NALGO

This is to be discussed at a specially extended meeting on:

Wednesday 3 March 1-3pm

Room 2, Town Hall

PLEASE ATTEND.

Time off has been negotiated. Ask your supervisor.

LAMBETH NALGO TABLE TENNIS KNOCK-OUT

If you wish to take part
in the above competition please contact

R. Edwards int 2915

all applicants must be NALGO members

and will be responsible for
arranging their own matches

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATION

FRIDAY MARCH 12th 82

DAY WORKSHOPS FOR WORKPLACE REPRESENTATIVES AND OTHER TRADE UNION ACTIVISTS

EMPLOYMENT ACT & TEBBIT'S PROPOSALS

MONDAY MARCH 1 and MONDAY MARCH 15, at TUC Congress House, WC1

The workshops aim to:

- develop a better awareness of the trade union approach to the law and workers' rights
- critically examine the Government's policy on employment law and assess its implications for trade unions
- develop skills to communicate the movement's response an strategy to the membership, employers, the media and so on
- examine and review general trade union bargaining objectives and specific collective agreements in the context of the Government's strategy

Ring Bob Lane, Education Secretary, if you are interested

Tel: 274 7722, x 2208

TUC WOMEN'S COURSES

- * FED UP with getting a raw deal?
- * WANT to get better organised and make your voice heard?
- * WANT to play an active role at union meetings but don't know where to begin?
- * WANT to discuss union issues with other women trades unionists?

There is still time to get on one of the TUC courses for women trade unionists.

Ring Bob Lane, branch Education Secretary, for more details - soon! Tel: 274 7722 x 2208

DON'T FORGET THE SPECIAL
BRANCH MEETING ON
THURSDAY MARCH 4.

LAMBETH NALGO

SPORTS DAY

SUNDAY 16 MAY

Athletics
Fun races
Children's events
Invitation races

Medals and prizes to be won

Details and entry forms
from:

Molly Dale, NALGO office
(274 7722 x 2858)

or Jim Hurley
(622 6655 x 225)

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