

# Socialist Action

Women  
in the  
1980's



PAGES 6 & 7

For a Class Struggle Left Wing in the Labour Movement

August 1980

Price 15p

## As jobless total hits 1.9 m

# SCRAP MISSILES NOT JOBS



This month's announcement of 1.9 million on the dole brings the jobless total to something approaching the catastrophe of the 'thirties. And even this doesn't include the thousands of women not registered for work and the thousands more on part-time working in textiles etc.

Thatcher claims, or course, that the figures are due to the influx of school-leavers onto the job market. But the thousands who left school this summer merely join the steady trickle being made redundant every day in all parts of the country.

- \* In the West Midlands, 30,000 jobs have disappeared since January alone;
- \* In South Wales, 6,000 pitworkers jobs are to go besides the 11,000 in steel;
- \* In the North West, 290,000 jobless are chasing 14,000 vacancies.

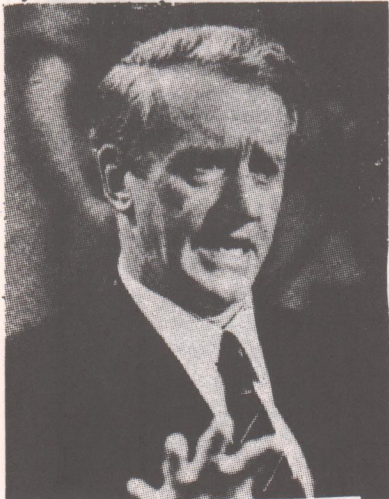
### ACCIDENT?

At a time when billions are being wasted on nuclear missiles, whole areas of the country — from South

*cont. back page*

## Protests Rock Racist Regime

by Pete Marais



Smith down — Botha next?

Despite the arrest of hundreds of Black demonstrators, the South African regime has been unable to crush the wave of student protest and strikes that have been sweeping the country for the past few months.

By June, the student boycotts, called to protest the regime's racist education system, had spread to parts of Namibia, a mineral-rich country occupied by South African troops and administered as a virtual colony.

The bulk of the more than 100,000 student protesters are from that section of the Black population classified by the government as Coloured (of mixed ancestry),

although African and Indian students in some cities have joined in.

### UPSURGE

The upsurge has not, however, been confined merely to Coloured students. It rapidly spread to Black workers who have been hit by a high inflation rate and a decline in their real living standards.

The strike wave started in Durban which has a tradition of militancy. Thousands of textile workers struck at the Frametex Company. The management responded by sacking 6,000 and calling in the police.

After that, it spread as far afield as the Stilfontein gold mine, where

4,500 downed tools, the Goodyear Tyre Factory at Uitenhage and Cape Town where more than 6000 meat and clothing workers walked out. The strike by the meat workers was particularly popular - a consumer boycott of red meat was organised by the Black townships in solidarity.

### GENERAL STRIKE

The extent of labour unrest was so deep that - towards the end of June - more than 200,000 of Cape Town's African and Coloured workers took part in a virtual two-day general strike.

Humphrey Tyler, in the *Christ-*

*ian Science Monitor*, pointed out how the action "...cut production in all major factories and greatly reduced the traffic on Cape Town's usually bustling streets and sidewalks".

While supporting the demands raised by the students, the Black workers also put forward their own demands for wage increases and an end to job discrimination;

### CLAMPDOWN

As it has done during previous periods of Black resistance, the apartheid regime has sought mainly to clamp down the lud through

*cont. on back page*



# SOCIALISM STARTS NOW!

Bob Swart  
(Streatham CLP)



Callaghan — and his right-wing cronies — got a rough ride at the special one-day Labour Party conference last May. Owen was booed when he called for the retention of Cruise Missiles and Healy mounted the platform to cries of 'Out! Out!'.

Moreover, they were also served notice that the gains in party democracy chalked up at the last conference were not to be played with. The Rank-and-File Mobilising Committee — launched at lunch-time — argued the need to deepen them still further, particularly around PLP accountability.

## SHIFT

The fact that the right-wing came in for such a drubbing clearly reflects the shift left among party

rank-and-file since the Tories came to power. There is a growing understanding that it is impossible to take on the Tories under the banner of the old leadership which lost Labour the election.

This was reflected in delegate after delegate who criticised not only the Tories but also the last Labour government. As Ron Hill (Monmouth CLP) put it: "South Wales steelworkers have been attacked by the policies of successive governments . . . I won't stamp the streets for a Labour government like the last one".

And yet despite the radical talk — and the obvious feeling for clear alternative policies — the mass of delegates left the conference hall empty-handed. What could have been a real chance to discuss how

to mobilise action against the Tories became a talking shop used by the NEC in its sparring match with the right-wing.

## WEAKNESS

This is precisely the weakness of the strategy followed by Benn and his allies on the NEC. Their fight for party democracy — and for certain policies in the interests of working people — clearly represent a step forward.

But counterposing the programme of a future 'democratic' Labour government to the anarchy the Tories are now creating is not enough. Just how will the programme of a Labour government in 4 years time stop jobs being axed today, the social services being

slashed, or the attacks on women and Black people?

Moreover, these attacks — if they are allowed to continue — could create such demoralisation among working people that there is no guarantee that Labour would be re-elected in 4 years' time.

## AWARE

Many delegates, representing thousands of party activists, are only too aware of this. One Edinburgh CLP delegate pointed out that "if the Tories are allowed to last their full term, then in 4 years' time there could be nothing to fight for".

She clearly spoke for many others — those Labour Party activists fighting, in their various areas against the Tory cuts, jobless totals and harassment of Black people etc. They realise that the fight for socialism cannot wait four years but has to be taken up now.

And they are right. Labour can only win back its mass base if it is seen to be fighting on their behalf. The struggle against Callaghan has to be rooted in a fight to turn the party into a fighting unit against the Tories.

## STEP FORWARD

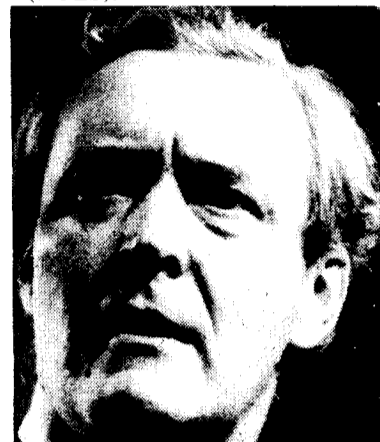
The lead given by the NEC in opposing Cruise Missiles — like its lead in promoting the anti-cuts demonstration last year — are clearly steps in the right direction. It is actions such as these that need to be promoted if Labour is to regain its credibility.

The coming Labour Party conference is clearly going to be a major event. But, unless it leads to a fighting programme — here and not 4 years' hence — the victories the left win will be merely paper ones. Socialism starts now.

## DEMOCRACY

In an important move to extend the gains on party democracy — begun at the last conference — a major new initiative has been launched by the Rank-and-File Mobilising Committee.

Launched at the Special Conference last June, the committee is supported by seven organisations including: the SCLV (Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory), Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Clause IV, Institute for Workers Control, Labour Co-ordinating Committee and National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS).



The Mobilising Committee is organised around 5 basic policies. These are:

- 1 Mandatory re-selection of MPs;
- 2 NEC to decide the Manifesto;
- 3 no change in the structure of the NEC;
- 4 the Party must decide the leader;
- 5 make the PLP accountable.

While some of the points are blurred — particularly over the issue of PLP accountability — the Mobilising Committee is a major step forward in uniting the left in the fight for party democracy and should be supported by all trade union and LP activists.

Dave McLeod  
(TGWU)

# SWP: OUTSIDE, LOOKING IN...

Since the Labour leaders were unceremoniously thrown out of office at the last election, the debate about policies and direction in the Labour Party has hotted up.

For socialists, such a debate is crucial because it is within the Labour Party that is being hammered out exactly *what* opposition must be mounted against the Tories and *what* government must replace Thatcher when she is finally removed.

Unfortunately, many left organisations seem to view this debate — which is gaining the attention of wide layers in the unions — almost as a non-event. Only last month, *Socialist Review* — the monthly journal of the SWP — contributed its sideline comments.

## WRANGLE?

The main thrust of the article — written by Ian Birchall — is to show how irrelevant, for the *real* class struggle this debate really is. The fight to 'democratise' the party, begun at the last conference, is seen as a 'long debilitating wrangle' and the opposition to the right wing, centred around Benn, as 'limited'.

It is clearly true, as Birchall says, that there are severe limitations on the oppositional 'groundswell' building up. The Bennite left, despite their rhetoric, have done

very little to mobilise union ranks against the Tory offensive.

Moreover, despite the calls for democracy, they have not yet sought to challenge the leadership head-on by calling for the removal of Callaghan and others who refuse to abide by the decisions of conference.

## POINT?

But this is hardly the point. What the SWP doesn't seem to understand is that the fight for party democracy or different policies — however limited they may be — is rooted in the radicalisation of thousands of trade unionists who are seeking an alternative to the Callaghan leadership.

When Benn calls for MPs to be subject to mandatory re-selection, when he opposes cuts (at least verbally), he is voicing the feeling of thousands of workers who are trying to turn their party — the one they built, finance and vote for — into a tool of anti-capitalist struggle.

## LESSONS

Perhaps, in this respect, it might be useful for Birchall and other SWP members to brush up a little on their history. They might find that the Labour Party was born out of the struggles of the unions at the turn of the century and that — for all its faults — it remains the

political arm of the trade union movement.

With this under their belt, they might even take another step forward and realise that this is why 10 million workers continue to vote Labour every year and will continue to do so for some time to come.

From there, they might also realise that a fight for alternative policies in the unions must, necessarily, overflow into the Labour Party in a struggle against its bureaucratic leaders.

## TWO-PRONGED

That struggle, which is developing at present, will take two prongs. The first will be an attempt to make the party adopt policies in the interests of working people.

The fact that it was the Labour Party which launched the mass anti-cuts demonstration last year, which has pioneered the anti-nuclear fightback and which gave serious support to the fight against Thatcher's racist immigration proposals shows that this is already beginning to happen.

Secondly, the fight will also take place at the organisational level to force the Labour leaders, once in office, to implement these policies. The big debate that is now opening up over mandatory re-selection, election of the leader of

the party and conference decisions being binding on the government are clear examples of this.

## SIDELINES

All socialists, if they are serious about getting involved in the way forward for the labour movement and not just commenting on it, should be in the Labour Party arguing for a clear perspective.

It may well be, as Birchall says, that the Bennite left has no real intention of leading a struggle for socialist policies. It is no answer, however, to stand on the sidelines denouncing him. Such a posture can only cut the SWP off from those thousands of workers who do support him and who do believe his policies are a real alternative to those of the right-wing.

Rather than standing outside denouncing him — like spectators at a cup final — the SWP should be in the Labour Party, arguing its positions and helping to put Benn — and Callaghan — to the test before their thousands of supporters.

## MEDECINE

Strangely enough, in a truly paradoxical way, the end of Birchall's article spells out the basic weakness of the SWP's position. He writes:

"*Tribune* has devoted many articles to Thatcher's policies on wages

Below, Mike Rodney answers an article 'The Labour Left against Thatcher' in the June issue of *Socialist Review*.

and anti-union laws: some of them are interesting and well-informed. But all are characterised by a sense of looking at the trade union movement from the outside, of commenting on its policies and predicting its achievements, but not at any price fighting for a line inside that movement".

Only too true. But shouldn't the SWP drink some of the medicine it prescribes for others? Shouldn't it stop looking at the Labour Party from the 'outside' before it becomes peripheral to the fight now opening up?

## NEW PAMPHLET

The  
**LABOUR PARTY**  
Which Way?



SOCIALIST ACTION 20p

# Stop these racist attacks!

by Mike Rodney (CARL Steer. Cttee)

A few months back, an all-party Select Cttee called for the scrapping of the 'sus' law. This was clearly in response to the anger and indignation building up in the Black community which had erupted on the streets in places like Bristol.

What was the reaction of Tory Minister for Race Relations, Timothy Raisin? Speaking in the House he commented: 'I don't think we should adapt the criminal law to suit particular ethnic groups...'. In other words, thumbs down.

Far from curbing harassment of the Black community - under blatantly racist laws - the Tory government intends increasing it. The 'fishing' raids - as the press have dubbed them - bear ample witness to this.

## NATIONALITY ACT

The contents of the government's proposed Nationality Bill are not yet known in any detail. It is likely, however, that they will be based upon the Green Paper produced by a Select Cttee in 1977 of both Tory and Labour MPs.

The Green Paper suggested two classes of citizen - the British citizen (BC) and the British Overseas citizen (BOC).

It need hardly be stated that most BCs will be white and BOCs Black. If these proposals become law, the way will be open for an attack upon the democratic rights of most Blacks in this country to have a vote, to be eligible for health service treatment and for social security payments, and to have the right of permanent settlement here.

## RAIDS

Less than a month ago, for example, over 50 immigration officers and police swooped on nine 'Bestway' shops in London in true gestapo fashion. In a totally arbitrary way, they seized over 30 people and locked them up for

between five and ten hours.

This 'fishing' expedition led to seven people being charged with various offences under the 1971 Immigration Act. One old man of 62 was deported without being given the chance even to return home!

## ISOLATED?

Similar raids have taken place elsewhere. In one, over 50 immigrant workers were snatched in an army-type operation in which vans were posted outside a factory and police dogs used to patrol a neighbouring railway line to 'forestall any escapes'.

This type of behaviour - random raids on Black workers who have to prove they have a 'right' to be in Britain - is being increasingly used to intimidate and harass the Black community.



Whitelaw's curbs give police the green light to harass Black community

It is, in effect, turning them into second-class citizens who feel the need to carry a passport with them everywhere in case of police victimisation. As in South Africa - with its vicious apartheid regime - an unofficial version of the 'pass laws' is being introduced.

## NATIONALITY

Giving the green light to the police to harass the Black community is not, however, unexpected. It is merely another installment in the general campaign launched by the Tories against Black people.

Just before the election, Thatcher warned of the country being swamped by an 'alien culture' and Willie Whitelaw promised to toughen up the racist curbs of the 1971 Act. The 'fishing raids' are merely fulfilling electoral promises.

Another promise that seems likely to be fulfilled shortly is the Nationality White Paper due out in August. While they have been careful not to leak any specific proposals - for fear of a mass outcry - it seems clear that this will also tighten the screws on the Black community.

According to expectations, it may drastically effect the civil rights of

Black people here and turn thousands of British subjects into stateless persons.

## FIGHT-BACK

The Tory offensive has not, however, gone unanswered. The fishing raids have met with growing outrage, as at Kilburn where Black groups - backed up by the Trades Council and Labour Party - organised a mass picket.

Similar protests have been held against attempts to deport 'illegal immigrants' - such as the Vaarki family - on trumped-up charges. Camden Black groups - supported again by the local labour movement - organised a number of actions, including deputations to Raisin himself.

Such moves show that Blacks in Britain have no intention of meekly submitting to the Tories' racist proposals. The most recent example of this defiance was the decision by a meeting of 60 delegates from Black groups nationally to refuse co-operation with the police and to lead a fight for Black rights.

## CARL

What is important, in the coming

## South London CARL Public Meeting

by Terry Shew (Peckham YS)

Juno and Meena Vaarki - since leaving their native India - have spent most of their adult lives in Britain. They have roots here and have made a real contribution to community work in Camden.

Yet, under a technicality in the 1971 Immigration Act, the Vaarki family was for months threatened with deportation and, finally found themselves forced out of the country. The fact that doctors advised them that their son - suffering from a serious illness - ought not to return to India cut little ice with the Home Office.

## RULE ?

The experience of the Vaarki family is not unique. Thousands of black people have, under the racist powers of the 1971 Act, found themselves victimised and harassed by the police, given unlimited powers under the Act's provisions.

Now, to strengthen racist legislation against black people, the Tories intend to bring in their Nationality Act, which could result in hundreds more British subjects being considered 'stateless' - ie. deprived of many elementary civil rights.

## CARL

It was to fight this 'legalised' racism that CARL - the Campaign Against Racist Laws - was set up over a year ago. Since then, various local groups have appeared around the country, taking up cases



of victims of the Act and propagandising on the need to build a mass movement against it.

South London CARL, which has been in existence for about six months, has been involved in similar activities and has won the backing of a number of black organisations and Labour Party and YS branches.

## MEETING

Considering that the Tories' Nationality White Paper is due out now, S. London CARL has decided to make its priority the building of a mass meeting to spread awareness of the Act and begin to mobilise forces to fight it. Speakers at the rally will be Ann Dummett of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, and, provisionally, John Tilley (Labour MP for Lambeth central) and Vishnu Sharma, of the Indian Workers Association (South-all).

If you would like to join S. London CARL - or help with the preparations for the meeting - contact SL CARL, c/o Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

period, is that all these initiatives against the Tory offensive should be co-ordinated together into a national campaign against police harassment and the threat of a new Nationality Act.

The framework for such a campaign already exists. Last year, CARL - Campaign Against Racist Laws - was established as a broad movement with support from Labour MPs, Black groups, trade unions & left organisations. On November 25th, it mobilised over 15,000 in action against the Tory attempts to tighten the Immigration laws.

Such a campaign has to be concretely built in the coming months on a mass action focus, uniting all those willing to fight the Tories' proposals. Local CARL groups - of which many already exist - have to be set up and national actions planned.

## LABOUR

Building such a fight-back is not only of concern to Black people whose civil rights will be severely

eroded if the Tory proposals get through. It is also of concern to the entire labour movement.

The Tory attack on Black people has one aim and one aim only: it is to divide and confuse the labour movement, to pin the anger and resentment against soaring queue and falling living standards on Blacks instead of themselves.

This is why it is essential that the labour movement - which on paper is committed to repealing the 1971 Act - begins to support the campaign. Only by attacking, head-on, the Tory attempts to blame Blacks for the crisis can the labour movement face the difficult years ahead united.

Already, a number of local Labour Parties, Labour MPs and Trades Councils have given their backing to CARL. That support has to be increased a hundred times if the racist offensive is to be stopped in its tracks.

**REPEAL THE 1971 ACT  
NO MORE RACIST CURBS  
NO NATIONALITY ACT**

## discussion forums

Socialist Action holds regular discussion forums on the problems facing the labour, women's and black movements, and also on liberation struggles taking place internationally. If you are interested in coming along to any of these forums, which are conducted in an informal manner - where everyone has a chance to contribute - please contact us c/o 58 Auckland Road, London SE19. We will send you full details of our current programme of forums.



## Malcolm X

His Writings:

By Any Means Necessary  
The Autobiography of Malcolm X  
Malcolm X Talks to Young People  
Two Speeches by Malcolm X



Malcolm X evolved, during his brief life, into the most prominent Black Freedom Fighter in the USA. Gunned down in 1965, Malcolm had begun to show thousands of Blacks the need to define their own history, to demand their rights and to stand up and fight for them.

In his evolution as a Black Freedom Fighter, Malcolm became convinced that this struggle would have to be related to a broader struggle by all the oppressed against capitalism. His writings are those of one of the most prominent revolutionaries of our times.

Copies of the above are available from: Socialist Action, c/o 58, Auckland-Rd, London, SE 19.

# PEOPLE BEFORE BOMBS



by Terry Viney (Croydon CLP--)

Last month's mass demonstration against Cruise Missiles marked a major re-surgence of the anti-nuclear movement in Britain. It was in direct response to Tory Defence Secretary Francis Pym's announcement that 160 missiles were about to be sited over here.

2,000 US Air Force personnel will, it seems, accompany the missiles which will be guarded by 220 British soldiers. Pym justified the new import on the grounds that it will 'balance' Russia's deadly SS20 long-range missile. He also went on to assure us that the weapons will only be used by joint agreement between Britain and the USA.

What he was less keen to admit was that there will be no 'dual-key' system and that the button will operate on Carter's orders alone.

## CUTS

The Cruise missiles - which form part of 'our' commitment to NATO - come from US funds. Tory plans to replace the ageing Polaris submarines do not. Massive increases in defence spending are already underway at a time when Thatcher is only too keen to slash health, education and housing to the bone.

When it is realised that the cost of replacing one Polaris submarine could buy the equivalent of *twenty-five new hospitals*, the government's priorities couldn't be better illustrated.

The Tories, who have also given £16 million for the modernisation of NATO's nuclear complex, are not alone in this. Carter also plans a massive build-up in arms over the next five years - doubling military expenditure to 250,000 million dollars a year by 1985

## CAUSE

But why have Carter & Thatcher plunged so suddenly into the arms race at a time of growing recession? Why are the so-called limited resources to be spent on nuclear

death-traps rather than on social need? The answers - at least from them - are predictable.

Using the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as a 'bogeyman', they have stressed the need to preserve security in the face of the Warsaw Pact. Pym's decision to site the Cruise Missiles was, he affirmed, a 'clear expression of the determination of NATO as a whole to preserve its security'.

Similar answers have come from the Shadow Defence Secretary, David Owen, who also supports the Cruise Missiles. At the special Labour Party conference recently, he declared: 'Peace..is won by making a bargain and negotiating with the Soviet Union from a position of strength'.

## RED ARMY

In order to justify this position, figures about the Soviet Union's 'better-stocked military arsenal' are deliberately exaggerated. CND's journal, *Sanity*, for example suggests that figures on the actual size of the Red Army differ by as much as one million.

It also notes that the supposed superior tank force of the Warsaw Pact is made up entirely of T54/55s - tanks which first saw service as long ago as 1949. Others, it claims, are even older.

Moreover, in the nuclear field, it explains how the government and press have deliberately sought to mislead the public. While drawing attention to the USSR's so-called 'advantage' in 'theatre' weapons, they totally fail to take into account the undisputed advantage of the West in inter-continental 'strategic' weapons.

## IRAN

So what is the build-up really about? If the Imperialists already outdistance the Warsaw Pact, why the clamour to pour yet more money into arms?

The West's change in mood began

in reality with the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1978. Three years earlier, the then President Ford had openly stated that the US government regarded the Persian Gulf as having an 'over-riding strategic and economic importance'.

It was, he went on, 'vital to the national interests of the USA...'. Ford was, of course, referring to the vast oil reserves in that region on which US - and European - industry depended. He ended by saying that the USA would consider military action to secure an uninterrupted supply of that oil.

## BULLY-BOY

The Shah's army - with its huge stock of modern equipment - was vital in securing the US oil interests. Its role was to police the Gulf on behalf of its Western masters.

When the Shah was overthrown - by popular revolution - Washington's interests were directly threatened. Moreover, growing anti-US struggles in countries from Grenada to Nicaragua have threatened them still further.

It is within this situation that the Western powers have begun to indulge in an arms frenzy. Unable any longer to control the Third World through local puppets, direct bully-boy tactics are being considered.

## CAMPAIGN

This has led, in the USA as in Britain, to a three-pronged offensive (all 'justified' by hypocritical propaganda about the USSR's expansionist role):

- \* developing a rapid growth in armaments;
- \* promoting the idea of bringing back conscription;
- \* discussing how to make ourselves 'safe' from nuclear attack.

Getting away with their nuclear blackmail will not, however, be easy. A deep anti-war feeling still exists among working people as was expressed, a decade ago, in the mass anti-Vietnam war movement. Cutting back on hospitals, housing and schools to fuel further war aims will only deepen this feeling.

## OPPOSITION

The task, however, is to begin

# MONTY PYTHON'S NUCLEAR GAMES

by Phil Dent (NUT)

Did you know that with a few home-made props you & your family can survive a nuclear war?

No? Then read *Protect and Survive*, just published by the government. Or wait for one to be pushed through your door when the country is faced with an immediate nuclear attack.

The first lesson is - don't waste your time protesting. 'Your best protection is to make a fallout room & build an inner refuge within it'.

## FALLOUT ROOM

The fallout room should be downstairs, away from outside walls and roof. Radiation can penetrate brickwork, but don't worry - there is a picture of a man pulling his wardrobe against the French windows.

Whatever you do, don't take shelter in a block of flats above the 5th floor. What's that? You live in a high-rise block? Tough.

A caravan is not much use either, nor is a bungalow.... In fact, if you don't live in a suburban semi-detached outside the five-mile blast area, you've got problems.

## INNER REFUGE

Here are some ideas for the 'inner refuge':

- \* Use three doors from your upstairs rooms. Lean them against a wall and pile sandbags around them. Crawl in with your four kids and stay there for a fortnight.

- \* Put sandbags on the stairs and live in the cupboard underneath.

- \* Live under the table surrounded by suitcases, chests of drawers and any other radiation-proof items lying around.

You will need a fortnight's supply of food until normal



services are resumed. Also, buy hundreds of other things including a 'loo' bucket and a calender to tick off the days.

## ATTACK WARNING

Then you hear the sirens. If you are at home, shut the windows and draw the curtains. Take everyone to the fallout room. If you are not at home, then get there in 'a couple of minutes'.

'If you are out in the open, go to the nearest building'. If you can't get in - because everyone's in their fallout rooms - take any kind of cover. For example, lie flat in a ditch 'and cover yourself with a coat'. That will take care of any bombs that happen to be floating about.

## FALLOUT

After the nuclear attack you get up and attend to any essential tasks before the fallout descends.

If the house is on fire, you put it out. 'If there is structural damage from the attack, you may have some time before a fallout warning to do minor jobs to keep out the weather'. Well...if you can't keep out the fallout, at least you can keep out the weather.

Then you hear three bangs - the fallout warning. If you are out of doors, wipe all the fallout dust off your skin before entering a building. If you are at home, climb into your inner refuge.

It's all very simple, really. What I can't understand is why - if it is this easy - all those government officials are building massive underground shelters.

now a fight within the labour movement to commit it to a clear policy of fighting Thatcher's nuclear madness.

The mass demonstration called by the Labour Party last month was a major step in that direction as

is its decision to support the CND demonstration this October. Continued action must now be mounted to commit the Labour leaders to agree to abandon any British 'deterrent' and to get out of NATO now!

## NEC backs anti-nuclear demo



Following on the major anti-Cruise Missiles demonstration last month, the Labour Party NEC has decided to support

another march - called by the CND - for October 26th.

Joyce Gould and Jenny Little have been nominated to represent the party on the steering committee organising the march.

The decision created a major uproar on the NEC as, indeed, did the previous demonstration. Jim Callaghan warned that supporting a march against nuclear weapons was tantamount to accepting a policy of 'unilateral disarmament'.

Clearly, the nuclear issue is going to be a major debating point at the coming conference of the party. Callaghan may be right that unilateral disarmament is not yet party policy - but that's exactly what we've got to fight for. A good first step will be organising maximum attendance on the October 26th march.

Phil Edwardes

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# Cuts: THATCHER TURNS SCREW

As the Tory government enters its second year, its determination to rip into the welfare state continues. For the Tories, who have no illusions as to where their interests lie, the reasons are self-evident.

The only way they can put capitalism back on its feet is by cutting workers' wages either directly (by an incomes policy) or indirectly (by cut-backs in the welfare state).

Frightened of taking on the big unions in struggles over pay, they have opted for the second. A survey of proposed public spending cuts for the coming years shows just what they have in store.

## \* HOUSING

Housing is to be cut by 13% in 1981, compared to when the Tory government first came to power,



rising to 48% for the years 1983/4. In reality, of course, this figure is even worse since it doesn't take into account the damaging rate of inflation.

What it will mean is simply the elimination of local government housing programmes - already a fact in many areas - and a drastic increase in homeless families & slum dwellings.

## \* EDUCATION

Carlile's decision to lop 10% off education by 1983/4 reveals the same depressing story. State education, as we know it, is being destroyed before our eyes.

Overcrowded inner city classes, overworked teachers in inadequately staffed and crumbling buildings, inadequate resources (such as textbooks)...all of these are, even now, becoming commonplace.

For Carlile and his ilk, of course, this is hardly important. The children who 'matter' can be sent to fee-paying schools where they will not be affected by such problems.

## \* HEALTH

At the last budget, to show how concerned they are with ordinary

people, the Tories announced a 5% increase in health care by 1983/4. In fact, when the inflation rate is taken into account, health will have suffered a massive cut.

If you don't believe it, just look at the number of hospitals being currently closed around the country.

## DEFENCE

The result of these cut-backs will not only be decrepit housing, out-of-date schools and inadequate health care stretching into the next decade, but a massive increase in the jobless total.

In education alone, for example, it was recently leaked that the government was projecting cuts that would lead to a decrease of over 100,000 employees (50% of which would be teachers). Just

by Tim Robinson (NALGO)

been occupied.

It was undoubtedly this pressure which forced the Labour leaders to call a national day of action against the cuts last year. But, while they have been willing to speak loudly and mount one-day protests, they have refused to turn this mounting anger into an ongoing anti-cuts campaign.

## WARNING

On the contrary, figures such as Jim Callaghan has issued stern warnings against unions using any industrial muscle to defend jobs or the social services. Moreover, they have given no lead to Labour controlled councils up and down the country to refuse to implement the Tory proposals.

The main concern of Callaghan and others seems to be combining protest actions with weak-kneed appeals to 'wait' for the return of a Labour government in 4 years.

This is not exactly surprising... After all, when he was in office, didn't he slash social expenditure by a record 30%? How can he be expected to stand up to the Tory government when he clearly has some sympathy for the policies it is pursuing?

## FIGHT-BACK

The Labour leaders cannot be allowed, however, to get away with their toothless threats against the Tories combined with a masterful inactivity. They have to be forced now - as Ted Knight explained at the recent one-day conference - to lead a real fighting campaign to challenge Thatcher.

Such a campaign could begin to draw together the various struggles that have emerged - against the break-up of ILEA, against cut-backs in nursery provisions, against hospital closures - into a national fight to halt the Tories in their tracks.

This wouldn't mean that these campaigns would lose their 'independence' but that a real working relation between them could be developed on a common objective: stop the cuts going through.

## POTENTIAL

The potential for such a campaign clearly exists. It will grow stronger in the coming months as more and more people begin to feel the pinch of Tory policies & begin to get involved in defending jobs and services.

While building around these issues, they should be taken into the Labour Party to commit it to supporting them, first locally and then nationally. It is only in this way that the Labour leaders can be pinned down and forced to act on behalf of those they say they represent.

**NO CUTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR!  
NO REDUNDANCIES -  
FOR THE 35 HOUR WEEK!**

# Parents protest ILEA break-up



by Sally Bowdrey (Streatham CLP)

## ADVANTAGES

The Tory attack on ILEA has provoked a widespread response. Teachers and ancillary workers' unions, Labour Parties etc - all have declared opposition & held local protest meetings.

One interesting development in the growing opposition has been the setting up of borough-wide parents' associations determined that the break-up of Britain's most progressive education authority does not occur.

Starting with WASP, similar organisations have been set up elsewhere as in Lambeth where, only recently, LAMP was established.

## SINGLE-ISSUE

Since its formation, LAMP has held public meetings, leaflettings and organised letters to the Lady Young Committee. It has gathered a wide response and, at present, has a representative in all of the borough's 128 schools.

The ability of LAMP to draw in such wide support - from left-wing Labour activists to parents representing the ten Catholic schools in the area - is no accident. It stems from the fact that it is willing to unite all organisations & individuals - whatever their other views - on the concrete task at hand: defending ILEA.

Although many of us in LAMP recognise the Tory attack on ILEA is just part of their general thrust, limiting the campaign to a single issue with precise objectives has a distinct advantage.

First, it enables us to build the widest opposition to the Tory attack - and that, after all, is the only way that ILEA will be saved. And, secondly, it allows many people to go through a concrete struggle with the government which can open their minds to other aspects of its policies.

## YOUNG CTTEE

Building the widest possible alliance is key since - although the Baker Report dropped - the Young Cttee will soon be delivering a new one, possibly this September or October.

The very fact that the Committee has refused to include teachers, parents or members of the ILEA on it - i.e. anyone concerned with education! - gives a clue as to what it may come out with. Even though it might - under pressure - recommend the retention of ILEA, it could still do so with such reforms as to make its dissolution by another name.

In this sense, continuing to build the campaign on an long-term basis remains the only viable perspective.

# A CUT IS A CUT...

Phil Davenport (*Postbag*, June *Socialist Action*) is missing the whole point about rate increases.

Phil says that rate increases 'give the council a breathing space' in the fight against the cuts. What he doesn't realise is that a rate increase is a just another form of cut - it's a cut in the 'social wage' received by working class people because they will be forced to fork out more from their own pockets to finance social services - at a time when real wages are already being beaten down by the effects of inflation.

Surely, whether or not a Labour council gets forced out of office as a result of refusing to do the Tories' dirty work is not the central question. As the recession bites deeper and deeper, and attacks on the working class intensify, the labour movement will revert much more to the original role which it was set



Council leader Knight:  
'Fight to raise the rate'

up to play, that is to be an independent political voice of the class - and not to retain power of this council or that council at the expense of forfeiting any real defence of our basic rights and living standards.

*Socialist Action* is quite right to make its demand on this issue 'No cuts, no rate increase'.

Ian Gumbrill

## Statement: L.S.A. & THE 4th INTERNATIONAL

A recent issue of *Socialist Challenge* contains an article appraising the national conference of the LSA in late spring. The article correctly points out that the LSA affirms its full solidarity with the Fourth International.

It goes on, however, to call the LSA's refusal to immediately fuse with the IMG — after a year's discussion between the two organisations — 'irresponsible' and to imply that the LSA is building a 'dead-end bureaucratic sect'.

### SECT ?

But for socialists, the word 'sect' has a scientific meaning. It refers to an organisation whose programme and perspective cut it off from the broad labour movement. In this sense, the left in Britain is indeed littered with 'sects' (many of whom the IMG has sought to fuse with).

It would be difficult to apply this term to the LSA, however, since it has— ever since its inception— always fought against the sectarian attitudes among the 'far left', particularly when it comes to an attitude to the Labour Party. 'Dead-end' and 'bureaucratic'— the other epithets used— are, presumably mere slips of the pen.

### CONVERGING

The IMG is correct, however, in pointing out that the LSA—after a year's negotiations— did decide to slow down any fusion perspective with the IMG. This was not a whim. It was based on a re-appraisal of political questions.

When the LSA approached the IMG for discussions over a year ago, it was on the basis that the general perspectives of the two organisations seemed to be converging. Despite the odd difference in tactics, it was widely felt that fusion was a practical possibility.

This is not to say that the LSA did not have differences— particularly over the Socialist Unity issue— but that it felt the dynamic of both organisations was moving together.

### THRUST

The decision of the IMG at its last conference, however, to orient to-

wards the SWP with a fusion perspective— regardless of the SWP's hostility to the FI both politically and organisationally— led the LSA to reconsider the position.

It was felt that the IMG's orientation to the SWP— a continuation and deepening of the Socialist Unity campaign— was dangerous for two main reasons:

- \* First, it could cut the IMG off from the broader labour movement where major possibilities exist;
- \* Second, it could lead to the IMG accommodating to the SWP's sectarian views and practice in its attempt to make fusion a viable possibility.

### PRECEDENTS

Such considerations were not viewed as unimportant since, in the LSA's opinion, the IMG had earlier made considerable adaptation to sectarian forces during the Socialist Unity offensive. Its running of joint candidates against the Labour Party was a case in point.

From this perspective, it was generally felt that the IMG's orientation to the SWP— which is hostile to the Labour Party— is incompatible with a serious orientation to the labour movement.

### POSTPONE

It was for these reasons that the LSA, while maintaining full solidarity with the FI, decided to slow down the fusion between the two groupings, in order to test out the two different lines in practice. A period of time would allow both organisations to see whether they were moving together or, as the LSA suspects, apart, on the vital question of orientation to the labour movement.

Naturally, within this framework, the LSA wishes to maintain the most comradely relations with the IMG, to continue discussions and engage in as much joint work as possible.

A more detailed view on the question of 'unity of the left' is given in LSA pamphlet *Splits & Fusions— Methods of building a Revolutionary Party*, price 20p from 58 Auckland Road, London SE19

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialist Action sees as its central aim building, within the labour movement, a class-struggle left-wing fighting for socialist policies against those which lost Labour the last election and disillusioned thousands of Labour supporters.

Such a left-wing should support not only policies in the interests of working people but also their allies among the youth, Blacks, women and oppressed national minorities. It is only by showing that Labour champions the rights of all the oppressed and exploited that a really united offensive can be organised against the Tories (and their right-wing allies in the labour movement).

Socialist Action believes that a fighting left wing should be built around the following demands:

- \* Hands off the unions! No curbs on the right to strike or picket!
- \* For the 35-hour week! End unemployment by work-sharing (with no loss of pay) and introduce a mass public works programme for those already on the dole.
- \* Oppose all wage curbs. For wage increases tied to the cost of living to offset inflation.
- \* Open the books of all companies claiming inability to pay a decent living wage or threatening redundancies. Nationalise those that put profit before people.
- \* Tax the rich not the poor. No cuts in the social services — for social spending to be tied to increases in the cost of living.
- \* For women's rights. For the right of all women to abortion on demand, free nurseries, equal pay and opportunity. Support NAC.
- \* Fight racism. Repeal all racist immigration laws. Defend the right of Black people to organise as they see fit in the community & labour movement.
- \* For the right of all oppressed nations to determine their own future — Get the troops out of Ireland now!
- \* For a safe environment. End nuclear reactors and base an energy strategy on coal. Explore alternative energy resources.

# WOMEN IN



The Thatcher government is 'deadly serious about its economic strategy. In order to solve the problems of big business, the rights of working people have to be savagely eroded. Doubly hit by these attacks will be women.

- \* Hospital and nursery closures will compel women — once again — to become responsible for the care of the young, old and sick;
- \* The Employment Bill will make it doubly difficult for women to return to work after a pregnancy;
- \* Attacks on abortion rights — as under the Corrie Bill — will seek to force women to have children they do not want;
- \* Cuts in social services will hit jobs of women — as teachers, nurses, cleaners and cooks — hardest.

The meagre gains won in the 'seventies — when women won increasing economic independence — are over. The central thrust of the Tories is to push women out of the workplace into the home where she is expected to provide those very services the state should provide.

### UNITY

That the Tories are aware of this can be judged by Social Services Secretary Patrick Jenkins reply when quizzed on the impact of cuts on women's jobs. "If the good lord had intended us to have equal rights to go out to work, he wouldn't have created man and woman".

It is clear that, if the government's offensive is going to be halted, then

serious struggles will have to be waged. Women will need to seek the widest unity among themselves and the most powerful allies they can.

Yet, it is precisely at this stage — when unity is needed — that the Women's Movement, which won some notable successes in the seventies around the abortion issue, has become divided.

### NAC

This was dramatically shown on the mass NAC demonstration last year against the Corrie Bill. A number of women — chanting "Not the unions, not the state, women must decide their fate" — clearly opposed the TUC presence on the march.

Such a mood was apparent at the

# National Child Care Ca

by Carol Rees (National Steer. Cttee)

On July 5th, over 200 people from as far afield as Aberdeen to Cornwall met in London to discuss setting up a national Child Care Campaign.

Representing many organisations from the labour & Women's movements, the conference opened on a lively discussion with speakers from other campaigns (such as Angela Phillips from NAC) giving the benefit of their experience.

The workshops that followed — taking up issues such as 'how to run a campaign' to 'community control of facilities' — were both lovely and informative. A report on the discussion in the workshops will be circulated to all who attended the conference or who request it.

### CAMPAIGN

In the plenary session after, a motion presented by the London Nursery Campaign to formally set up a national organisation was accepted. A national steering committee of 27 was elected by the conference, representing people from all parts of the

country and different organisations (local child care campaigns, women's groups, trade unions and political parties).

It was agreed that further discussion on the aims & structure of the campaign should take place at the next conference in 6 months' time. Meanwhile, the steering cttee was given the brief — at its meeting in August — to discuss concrete proposals for the campaign stemming out of the workshops.

These included producing a national newsletter — to advertise the aims of the campaign and its activities — and setting a 'day of action' to formally launch it.

### MASS ACTION

The fact that the conference was so well attended — mainly in terms of representatives from the labour movement — was a clear indication that concern over childcare is growing.

More and more women are realising that unless the cuts in child-care facilities are stopped — and more facilities provided by the state — women will never be able to take an equal place in society.

### Conference Resolution:

"This conference, recognising that a comprehensive child care service is essential for women's equality, agrees to set up a national child care campaign. Its overall aim will be to build a mass national campaign around the demand for comprehensive, flexible and free child care facilities provided by the State".

This is why such a campaign — fighting for this basic right — is so urgent today.

### LABOUR

Many people at the conference however, were aware that building a mass campaign — with roots in the local areas — could only be achieved by taking it into the labour movement.

This will involve not only fighting for the issue in union branches — forcing them to make the TUC implement its Charter for the under 5s — but also in the Labour Party.

The campaign should clearly see its focal point in forcing the Labour Party to pledge, in its manifesto, to halt all cuts in

# THE '80's

NAC conference shortly later where some feminists argued strongly for the campaign to be limited to women only (thereby cutting it off from the labour movement in terms of membership and affiliation).

Such an attitude is not only unfortunate. It is dangerous. Do these feminists seriously believe that unions are a threat to women's rights? Do they seriously believe that the TUC — which was fighting for abortion rights — can be placed in the same category as the government which was trying to curb them?

## SHORT-SIGHTED

How do these feminists expect to be able to rebuff Tory attacks except by unity with their most powerful allies? And what do they say to those millions of women who are union members and whose fight, within the unions, was key in getting the TUC to support NAC?

This doesn't mean, of course, that unions — or the Labour Party — will 'spontaneously' defend women's rights

Moreover, in many unions, women — while being an overwhelming majority of the members — are grossly under-represented at all levels. In CAWU, for example, there are only three women on the Executive while female membership stands at 72%.

## POTENTIAL

**This position clearly has to be challenged. It can only be challenged, however, by women being in the unions and fighting for them to take up issues of female discrimination. The fact that the TUC and Labour Party were won over on the crucial question of abortion rights shows the potential that exists.**

The need to be in the unions

Anne Williams  
(NUT)

fighting for them to pioneer women's rights is going to be doubly important in the years ahead when the Tories have launched a direct attack of female employment. This has now become a central question of women's rights.

It is only by being part of the labour movement — fighting against the anti-union laws, the cuts etc — that women's rights to a job can be protected. This doesn't mean that women don't have *specific* rights to advance, but they can best advance these by organising within the general struggles of the labour movement against the Tories' attacks.

## CAUCUSES

Key to doing this will be setting up women's caucuses in the unions where women can discuss their specific problems and fight to get the unions as a whole to support their demands. Such caucuses already exist in unions like ASTMS and the NUT.

A similar action must be undertaken in the Labour Party. The women's sections must be turned from organising 'garden fetes' into caucuses fighting to advance women's demands inside the party. Building actions in the unions and on the streets, women's caucuses could become a way of taking them into the Labour Party and pledging it to a programme of women's rights when it returns to office.

Key issues could be the struggle for an adequate child-care system, for abortion rights and for 'affirmative action' for women's rights.

It is only in this way — by seeing the struggle of women as part of the general struggle against the Tory offensive — that we will be able to defend (let alone extend) our rights in the coming years.

# Campaign Launched

child care provisions and make resources available for all children under 5 and after-school centres for those who require them.

If you are interested in affiliat-

ing to the NCCC - or finding out more about it - contact: NCCCL, Surrey Docks Child Care Project, Dockland Settlement, Redriff Rd, London SE 16. Affiliation: £2.50 (indiv), £5 (local groups), £15 (national organisations).



# SHOWDOWN LOOMS IN NICARAGUA

It is now one year since the victorious revolution took place in the Central American republic of Nicaragua. A.D. Scott reviews the position that the 2½ million gallant workers and peasants of the country now find themselves in.

**A decisive battle is shaping up in Nicaragua. On one side are the bosses, the rich landlords and their supporters— the government and bosses in the United States. On the other side stand the mass of Nicaraguans— the workers and poor peasants.**

The outcome will decide whether Nicaragua will be run in the interests of the majority, or for the profits of a few.

A victory for the masses will see the establishment of a government which would create the conditions for a victory over illiteracy, hunger, rampant disease, and unemployment — as did the Cuban socialist revolution 21 years ago.

Nicaragua started down the road of the Cuban revolution when, in July last year, a mass uprising of workers and peasants overthrew the brutal dictator Somoza, who

for the defense of the revolution from its enemies both at home and abroad, the fsln has now launched volunteer militias in the workplaces and countryside.

The government has also shown that it intends to push forward with its top priority of improving the quality of life for Nicaragua's people.

The 1980 Plan for Economic Re-activation which has been announced sets aside 62% of the budget for health, education and housing, compared to the 17% set aside in Somoza's 1978 budget.

But in implementing these policies, and achieving the goals set, the government faces extreme difficulties. Nicaragua is in a desperate economic position.

Somoza ordered massive destruction of factories when he knew he could no longer hold on to power.



had ruled the country. The revolution was led by the *Sandinista National Liberation Front* (FSLN), who formed the new government when Somoza fled.

This came on top of the effects of world-wide inflation, the 1972 earthquake in the capital Managua, the corruption of Somoza's regime, and the disruption of industry and agriculture during the civil war.

## FOR THE MASSES

Right from the word go, the Sandinistas took measures which benefited the majority. And they organised the masses to start to take control and run the country.

Land was taken from the big landowners and given to the poor peasants. Trade unions were formed; Somoza's property was seized; the old army was destroyed and a new revolutionary army was formed. Committees were established to help run the neighbourhoods and the factories.

1980 has seen further steps taken by the Sandinistas to consolidate the gains won and push the revolution forward.

A literacy campaign has been launched, with the aim of teaching more than half the adult population, who are illiterate, to read and write.

On 2nd March, the government took over more privately-owned land holdings.

## PEOPLE'S ARMY

Having constructed a professional Sandinista People's Army (EPS),

## OPPOSITION

Also totally opposed to the direction that the revolution is taking, are those bosses and big landlords who have remained in Nicaragua.

This tiny minority still controls key sections of industry and agriculture. They have formed the *Superior Council for Private Enterprise* (COSEP)— the equivalent of the CBI in Britain.

COSEP has denounced the 'anarchy and social disorder', the 'take-overs of enterprises' and has warned of the 'grave consequences' of the new government's measures to spread more equally the resources and wealth of the country.

But they are doing more than just moaning. They are deliberately trying to sabotage the Nicaraguan economy.

## SABOTAGE

Coffee growers have refused to complete their harvests, and cotton producers are threatening not to plant crops. Industrialists are illegally smuggling out equipment, raw materials and money, and are slow-

ing down production.

These actions indicate that a decisive showdown is coming in Nicaragua.

Either the bosses and landlords, with the backing of the US government, can continue their old ways of exploitation and repression, or the workers and peasants, under the leadership of the Sandinistas, can take over completely the running of the country.

But the Nicaraguan masses have already shown— through their historic struggle against Somoza and their determined efforts to rebuild their country— that they intend to put up a massive fight to push forward to their goal of building a new Nicaragua.

## AID NEEDED

To help rebuild Nicaragua, the Sandinista government has appealed for aid from supporters around the world.

Cuba, also a poor country, has responded generously. It has pledged £25 million in direct aid and has sent hundreds of doctors and teachers to Nicaragua. Trade and aid agreements were signed with the Soviet Union in March.


However, the United States government, which is responsible for many of the problems which Nicaragua faces— they helped to install and backed Somoza's brutal and corrupt regime— has turned its back on the plight of the Nicaraguan people. The US congress has frozen a £35 million loan promised earlier.

Unable to send in troops to militarily defeat the Nicaraguan revolution because of the deep anti-war sentiment at home, the US rulers hope to starve the Nicaraguan masses into giving up their fight for a better life.

**That is why we in Britain must build maximum solidarity inside the labour movement for the heroic people of Nicaragua.**

**PATHFINDER**

**THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION**



**"We represent the immense majority of humanity."**

**Fidel Castro at the UN**



# SOCIALIST ACTION LPYS MEETING



Last month, Socialist Action supporters in London called a public meeting to discuss the way forward for the Labour Party Young Socialists. Addressed by George Hold and Graham Weight, the meeting was attended by over 30 people and a lively discussion followed the main speeches.

Both speakers touched on the ways in which the Tory attack was affecting young people today. What with Thatcher's policies, George Hold explained, "the only foreseeable future for thousands of young people leaving school is the dole queue".

Cuts in education—in training courses and vocational facilities at college—only made the unemployment statistics among school leavers even worse.

## DEAD-END

All young people are affected by these policies, George went on, but certain sections are hit doubly hard. "If you're Black, the situation is doubly hard since unemployment is made more intense by the racist attitudes of employers

and police alike".

The same is true for young women. Cuts in abortion rights or in nursery facilities—which the Thatcher government has been pursuing—are an attempt to drive young women back into the home and deny them a right to a job.

"Is it any wonder", he pointed out, "if, after leaving school and being faced only with the pittance handed out by social security, explosions like that at Bristol take place?"

## CAMPAIGNS

Echoing some of George's point, Graham Weight went on to show that the problems facing young people today were having an increasingly radicalising effect. This offered, he said, a real opportunity for the Young Socialists to boldly move out with a dynamic policy and win layers of young people into its ranks in the fight for socialism.

But, he stressed, this won't happen "if the Young Socialists concentrate on endless talk and passing endless resolutions of no concern to the real interests of young people

today".

Why is it, he asked, that the YS was still as small today as it was a decade ago? Was it because it had been unable to link up with the real issues of concern to young people—the fight for abortion rights, the fight against racism and unemployment?

## WAY FORWARD

The key task before the YS was, he ended, to turn it into a real campaigning organisation in which young people can find a voice and a role—an organisation that wins young people around clear issues.

It should be taking part in all the struggles against the cuts—particularly around issues like the break-up of ILEA—and against sexual discrimination and for black rights. An acid test was also the need to inscribe on its banners 'Troops Out of Ireland', on which the YS so far has a dismal record.

Equally important, he said, was the need to take up the needs of young workers to fight for training schemes, for apprentices' rights and for proper union representation.

## DEBATE

The debate following the speeches was a lively one, with a supporter of *Militant*—the majority tendency in the YS—disagreeing with many of the points put across, and arguing for a more 'propagandist' line.

At a more concrete level, it was suggested that one of the ways in which YS branches in London could begin now to get involved in concrete campaigns was to lead the fight against the Tories' racist laws by affiliating to CARL—the Campaign Against Racist Laws—and helping to build it into a mass anti-racist movement.

by Liz Easton (NUS)

## DEBATE: Socialists and Cannabis

What should the attitude of socialists be to drugs - particularly cannabis? Should they support or condemn the practice?

Below, John Hicks presents his view. In next month's *Socialist Action* an opposing viewpoint will be printed.

by John Hicks

The *Misuse of Drugs Act* - the legislation which in this country is directed against cannabis users - has the effect of restricting peoples' choice in the way that they spend their limited amount of free time.

Cannabis is used in a way comparable to nicotine or alcohol - or even caffeine - as a way of facilitating relaxation. The laws against the use of cannabis are accepted only because there is a widespread myth that the drug is harmful.

### SCIENTIFIC?

Every so often, the government

commissions a 'scientific report' - carefully vetted before publication - which claims that cannabis 'destroys the brain', impairs sexual performance, causes 'violent psychoses' or leads to the consumption of hard drugs like heroin.

But a survey carried out in 1973 by the BBC showed that 39% of people between the ages of 17 and 39 had used cannabis... If these reports are to be believed, nearly one-third of the entire population would be in a pretty bad way!

The truth of the matter is that there are no known harmful effects of the drug

### REPRESSION

Why, then, has the government been so far unwilling to consider legalising the use of cannabis? To give a satisfactory answer to this question, it is necessary to look at the whole context of the role of repressive legislation in capitalist society.

There are in fact many laws on the statute books that are there purely and simply to ensure that vast numbers of working people 'break the law' when they take some perfectly normal activity. The anti-cannabis law, the age of consent and the notorious 'sus' law are all cases in point.

### DEMOCRATIC RIGHT

These types of law are used by the police as an excuse for harassing and intimidating people, particularly young Blacks. The drugs laws allow the police to stop and search people on the streets without any form of warrant.

Whatever might be our own personal opinions about the use of cannabis - or for that matter alcohol, tobacco etc - as socialists we must always defend & fight for democratic rights.

That is why we must give our wholehearted support to the demand 'Legalise Cannabis now'.

# Youth and the Jobless Total

by George Hold (Peckham YS)

Prior to last year's general election, the Tories' advertising machine - engineered by Saatchi and Saatchi - was campaigning vigorously with giant-sized posters proclaiming 'Labour isn't working'.

The posters showed a dole office with hundreds of people queuing outside. After a year with the Tories in office, this advertising campaign has slapped back into their faces.

Between May and June, there was a 10% increase in the jobless total - pushing it up, at 1.6 million, to the highest point since the end of the last war.

## HARDEST HIT

The section of society that will inevitably bear the brunt of this 10% increase is that which is already the hardest hit - young workers and those who are leaving school this summer. Among school-leavers, unemployment increased

school without any experience of a workplace, young people are isolated and less aware of the need for an organised struggle along the lines of trade union action etc.

## COSMETIC

But what of the 'Youth Opportunities Programme'? Is this perhaps a serious attempt being made by the government to shield young people from the effects of the deepening economic crisis? The impression that the YOP is designed to create is that youth can use it to escape from the dead-end of the dole scrap-heap, by getting an apprenticeship-style training for a skilled career.

In reality, however, the YOP is no more than a cosmetic measure to keep official unemployment figures down, and also in many cases a means of providing cheap labour—a state-financed £23.55 per week—to capitalists or to public sector projects which can conveniently help to disguise the cuts.



Photo: MARK RUSHER (FL)

by 137,509 to 186,926. This is expected to rise still further this month, with the bulk of school-leavers coming onto a shrinking labour market.

For many young workers, the situation in which they find themselves is becoming more and more desperate: over 50,000 people under the age of 24 have been out of work for at least one year.

## TACTICS

This worsening unemployment situation is not simply being imposed by the government because the bosses refuse to provide jobs unless they can continue to roll in the profits. Unemployment is yet another area where the astute Mrs Thatcher and her coterie of Tory ministers can make political capital.

They know that a large pool of 'reserve labour' can have the effect of weakening the ability of those still in employment to keep the level of their real wages up as inflation soars.

Moreover, they can exploit the very divisions they have created - fostering the illusion that 'young people today' are 'scroungers' or 'lazy'. And, coming straight from

In many cases, employers 'discover' at the end of the training period that they do not have a vacancy. Not, that is, for a trained worker who will want union rates. But another 'trainee' who just happens to be provided free by the government—that could be a different story.

## MASS CAMPAIGN

Because of the position of young people in the field of unemployment, they will become more and more thrust to the forefront of the struggle. But in order to adopt an effective role, they will need to have a focus around which they can organise.

That focus must be provided by the Labour Party Young Socialists, which is the only youth organisation which has the potential for developing into a truly mass organisation which could have an audible voice within the labour movement generally.

In order to attract young people to its ranks, the LYPS should begin now to organise an active response to the Tories' attacks, by building a mass campaign which can overcome the isolation of unemployed youth today.



# Education for Socialists

## The Origins of the Labour Party

Writing in *Red Mole* in 1970, a few months before the elections, Robin Blackburn dismissed the early Labour Party as a 'bureaucratic manoeuvre'. Facility almost always has a knack of distorting the truth. The early Labour Party was not hatched (as Blackburn implies) in the committee rooms of the then equivalents of Callaghan or Williams. It was born despite such figures out of the escalating struggles of the labour movement, at the turn of the century, and the hesitant understanding of ever-wider layers of a common interest to defend.

The creation of the Labour Party took place, interestingly enough, in a period similar to our own in several respects. Its seeds were embedded in a decade of shocks and upheavals sparked off by the growing threat to Britain's dominance in world trade by the industrial powers of Germany and the USA. In order to retain their slackening grip over the world market, British employers resorted to a well-coordinated attack upon workers' living standards and rights almost identical to the one we have witnessed over the past decade or so.

An intensive drive was heralded to reduce wages, introduce 'speed ups' (productivity deals), abolish 'restrictive practices' and break the backs of the unions which had grown enormously in the preceding period. (Trade union membership, between 1885 and 1890 alone had tripled).

Such an offensive, coupled with the attempt by the employers to create a ready supply of 'scab labour' in the National Free Labour Association, gave rise throughout the 1890s to a whole wave of 'lock outs' and provoked strikes

TAFF VALE

The impact of these struggles on the consciousness of the labour movement— particularly newly-unionised sectors who lacked the conservative approach of the older craft unions— should not be



minimised. They gave birth, slowly and hesitatingly, to a growing awareness among more militant layers of a common interest of the labour movement that had to be uncompromisingly defended.

Up to that point in time, as Pell-ing is eager to point out, 'there had been little concept of 'labour as a distinct class in the community, and there was often intense hostility between the semi-skilled and older craft unions. The of-

fensive launched by the employers increasingly centralised through the creation of Employer's Federations, slowly began to overcome 'craft' and 'sectional' differences as the unions increasingly identified together around the need to defend the cause of labour.

much wider implications.

It was clearly recognised that this was a threat not only to the railmen's union but to trade unionism itself, since, if any union could be made to legally compensate a company for losses incurred in a strike, the unions would be rendered virtually powerless.

LIBERALS

It was in response to such attacks upon the unions, no longer on a sectional but on a national basis, that the fertile ground was created on which the propaganda of the early socialist groupings such as the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party was to fall. The deepening awareness among unions of common interest to defend— that of the labour movement— began to drive a wedge through the 'marriage of convenience' which had hitherto caused the unions to clutch at the apron-strings of the Liberal Party.

Up to that point in time, the majority of the unions— particularly the craft unions— had trailed behind the Liberals in much the same way as today's labour movement in the USA supports the Democratic Party. The unions advocated support for the Liberals in exchange for the latter's policy of free trade (which guaranteed cheap food prices) and a less antagonistic attitude towards the labour movement.

The sharp offensive launched by the employers, however, cemented in the labour movement a growing awareness of its class interests and pushed growing layers inside the unions to break from the alliance with Liberalism and seek an independent political voice.

STEP FORWARD

Such a process did not, of course, take place overnight. Unions such as the NUM decided to break from the Liberals as late as 1908. Nevertheless, it was out of this deepening awareness of a common class interest that had to be defended that, in 1899, the Labour Representation Committee was formed. The LRC, sponsored by a loose federation of trade unions and socialist currents, set itself limited objectives, it is true.

It wasn't even sure whether its aim was to set up a party, let alone a party based on clear socialist principles. Its aims, as originally defined, were as limited and fuzzy as they are today, 'to ensure that working class opinion should be represented in the House of Commons by men sympathetic with the aims and demands of the labour movement and whose candidatures are promoted by one or other of the organised movements'.

Behind these unclear and hesitating words, however, lay a radical change in consciousness by important layers of the labour movement which 'marxists' such as Robin Blackburn contemptuously dismisses when comparing the Labour Party with the Democratic Party in the USA. A radical change because, in the decision to promote candidates 'sympathetic with the aims and demands of the labour movement' lay an awareness of the need for these layers to create a political voice for themselves.

This fact should not be underestimated by those— particularly outside the labour movement— who see only its negative features represented by figures such as Callaghan or Williams. The Labour Party symbolised, in its creation, an important step forward in the awareness of millions of workers, an awareness of themselves as a class with distinct interests which had to be fought for not only at an industrial but also at a political level.

By RALPH WOOD

## PAY THE NURSES! ASTMS: New Militancy

In spite of the pittance which nurses are paid, the government's contemptible offer of 14% is in reality a savage cut when inflation shows no sign of abating from its current level of 22%. And in some areas, health authorities are considering rent increases of up to 100% for nurses' accommodation.

In the wake of the 31% award to the doctors— the Tories know that they need support from somewhere— nurses representatives were told at 10, Downing Street, that the nurses could have 14% and 'not a penny more'.

CYNICAL

Thatcher hoped that the nurses 'can find it in their hearts to be well pleased'. In other words, she was giving notice that the Tories are willing to cynically exploit any reluctance by some nurses to take action in defence of their living standards.

But evidence of a determination to fight is already materialising. Last month in Glasgow, a 700-

strong march took place, demanding a 30% pay increase, a freeze on rents, and an end to hospital cuts and closures. There was strong pressure from delegates to the annual conference of COHSE, one of the three nurses' unions, for decisive action from the leadership. At the time this article goes to press, preparations are going ahead for a nationwide mobilisation during the resumed negotiations with management in July.

BACKING

One thing is predictable— that if the nurses stand up for their right to a decent living standard, they will be subjected to a vitriolic barrage of propaganda from the Tory press.

For this reason, the widest possible backing from all sectors of the labour and trade union movements will be crucial. Not only is the nurses' claim well-deserved on its own merits, but it must also be recognised that the government has to be shown that workers will always come to the support of those sectors which are under attack.



MOBILISE

Trade union and Labour Party branches should express their support for the nurses' claim and mobilise for demonstrations and pickets. Thatcher and Co. must be shown that the nurses— or any other sector— will not bear the brunt of the bosses' crisis.

by Sylvia Brookes

The advent of the Tory government has clearly begun to affect ASTMS members, as could be seen in the militant mood at conference this year. The NEC's compromise line was challenged a number of times and— on certain significant items— defeated.

The mood of the conference was registered at the beginning when the NEC's vague motion of opposition to the Employment Bill— pledging no real action— was challenged by an amendment from the floor.

The amendment clearly implied the need to break the law to defend members' interests and pledged solidarity with other unions under attack. While the NEC won the day, its position was challenged by a large minority.

DEFEAT

The NEC didn't have it all their own way, however. Its position of support for the Edwardes Plan— axing 25,000 jobs at British Leyland— was challenged by an emergency motion from the Birmingham district. Despite Jenkin's opposition to the motion— which deplored NEC acceptance of the plan— it was carried by a large majority.

What this showed was

the growing worry about job prospects in the face of Tory 'rationalisation' schemes. It was implicit in other motions relating to new technology— seen by many at the conference as a threat to jobs, living standards and union organisation.

Motions were passed opposing any introduction of new machinery without ASTMS agreement, and any 'voluntary' redundancy schemes. Any increases in productivity, it was stressed, should be paid for by the shorter working week and not longer dole queues.

LABOUR PARTY

A similarly militant mood was apparent on the question of the Labour Party. Several motions were put endorsing the position of last year's conference (mandating of MPs, election of the party leader and NEC control over the Manifesto).

What now remains to be seen — as the Tory attacks escalate— is whether the NEC will live up to some of the positions which conference has adopted. Certainly, the ASTMS left will have to organise seriously in the coming months to make sure the the leaders support any group of workers who come under attack.



# Afghanistan ~ behind the press lies

by Pete Marais

Half a year after thousands of Soviet combat troops entered Afghanistan, the government in Kabul is still facing stiff resistance from counterrevolutionary guerrilla forces.

Operating in numerous small bands, the insurgents stage hit-and-run actions from Afghanistan's rugged mountain regions or seek to create disturbances in the cities and towns. They attack Afghan and Soviet military units, burn schools, destroy hospitals, mine roads and bridges, and murder supporters of the revolution.

The rebels claim to be fighting for Islam, but they are actually fighting to preserve the class interests of privileged layers of Afghan society. Their armed actions are aimed not at 'liberating' Afghanistan, but at obstructing the land reform programme, literacy drive, expansion of women's rights, and other progressive measures enacted by the PDPA regime.

## BACKING

As it has from the very beginning this counter-revolutionary drive has received open encouragement and covert material backing from the Imperialist powers, particularly Washington.

In mid-February, a White House official admitted that the General Intelligence Agency had begun to send arms, many of them of Soviet make, to the Afghan rightists through Pakistan. *New York Times* correspondent David Bender called it the CIA's first operation "of this nature and magnitude since the Angolan civil war ended in 1976".

Some reporters travelling with the guerrillas have confirmed that they are receiving US-supplied weapons.

## FACT?

The Western governments have backed up their armed support for the guerrillas with a campaign of lies and slander in the press. Even the wildest assertions and rumours, it seems, are good enough to tarnish the image of



Former political prisoners walk away from the gates of Kabul's Pul-E-Chakri prison after being freed by the new Afghanistan government.

The prison, on the outskirts of the capital, had been crammed with up to 15,000 inmates before President Hafizullah Amin had been deposed.

Moscow and Kabul.

On report claimed that Moscow had stationed medium-range nuclear missiles in Afghanistan; another that student protesters were being shipped to Siberia to 'teach them a lesson' and yet another that 12 to 17 year old schoolgirls were being massacred by Soviet troops on the streets of Kabul.

The obvious aim of such stories is to bolster Washington's charge that the Afghan regime - besides being inept and on the brink of collapse - is bloodthirsty and completely unpopular. The Soviet troops are pictured as facing opposition from virtually the entire Afghan population.

## FIGHTING

Nevertheless, there has been serious fighting. *Pravda*, the

Soviet Communist Party daily, admitted as much in its May 10 issue, stating: 'The struggle against the bandits in the mountains is no easy matter'.

Kabul radio reported on June 8 that during the previous two months, 140 persons had been killed during clashes in Kabul. Thirty schools were reported to have been destroyed, as well as one hospital. The radio report accused 'criminals' backed by Washington and the Chinese regime of being behind the disturbances.

The Soviet press agency Novosti reported on June 13 that there was fighting in the suburbs of Kabul and that 'bandits are shooting peoples' power representatives, poisoning the water, terrorising the population & even trying to infiltrate into the capital in small groups'.

## OVERTURES

In an effort to undermine the outside backing for the rightist insurgents, the Afghan regime on May 14th issued a proposal for a negotiated 'political settlement' to the conflict.

Specifically, Kabul demanded a 'clearly expressed commitment' by Washington 'not to carry out any subversive activities against Afghanistan, including activities from the territories of third world countries'. A similar commitment was asked of the Pakistani regime. With an end to outside interference, the statement continued, a withdrawal of Soviet troops could then be considered.

Both Washington and the Pakistani regime spurned the offer, refusing to give the kind of public commitments that were asked for.

## DEFENCE COMMITTEES

In response to Washington's hard-line stance, the Afghan regime has taken limited measures inside the country to step up defence against the counterrevolution.

The Karmal government has established armed militia units in Kabul and other cities and towns. A report in the March 30 *Washington Post* described them as 'an adaptation of the Defence of the Revolution Committees set up in Cuba and Ethiopia.

A commission has been set up to study proposals for a 'second phase' of the land reform programme. New peasant formations, called Democratic Peasants' Unions, have been established in various parts of the country.

Trade unions have also been extended. Although the working

## PUBLIC DEBATE

### AFGHANISTAN .

Soviet troops in or out ?

Socialist Action and  
Workers Action

Wed 6th August 8.00 pm at

Lansbury House  
41 Camberwell Grove London SE5.

class in Afghanistan is quite small - only about 330,000 industrial, transport and communications workers out of a total labour force of 5.6 million - unions have been set up in Kabul, Helmand, Kandahar, and other areas since the PDPA came to power.

## DEFENCE

If the counter-revolutionary bands are to be decisively defeated, however, it will be necessary in the next period to organise the workers and peasants to a much greater extent than before.

The Soviet intervention into Afghanistan was a clear aid to the revolutionary process there. It was a firm rebuff to the guerrillas, and their Western allies, who were trying to destroy the real gains of the PDPA regime and take Afghanistan back to the feudal age.

What is needed now - to defend that revolution and take it forward - is to harness the strength of Afghan's working population behind it.

## Support the Musicians !

by Jason Hill

BBC musicians are on strike because the BBC, implementing the cuts imposed by the Tories, plans to sack one third of its musicians and disband five orchestras.

To fill the gap left by the sackings, more of the BBC's output of music will be in the form of commercial records and tapes, ie less musicians employed, and more 'needle time'. There is a long-standing agreement between the BBC and the Musicians Union on the level of employment of musicians and the amount of 'needle time'. The BBC has now decided unilaterally to break this agreement.

The musicians need support from other trade unionists in their fight against the Tory cuts. Trade union branches should pass motions instructing their members not to cross MU picket lines. This not only involves unions whose members work at BBC premises, but also those whose members deliver food, mail and other supplies to BBC studios and offices. Nor does it only involve union branches in London; there are regional or local studios in most major towns.

A victory for the musicians will be a step forward in the fight against the Tory cuts.

No sacking of musicians!  
No trade unionist to cross MU picket lines!  
Victory to the musicians!

## RELEASE PETER UHL !

By LEN WAGSTAFF



PETR UHL

Petr Uhl, a leader of Charter 77, the Czechoslovak civil rights movement, was sentenced to five years in prison last October despite protests by Communists, socialists, and trade unionists from around the world. His only crime was to defend the democratic rights supposedly guaranteed in the Czechoslovak constitution.

Although Czechoslovakia's Law on Imprisonment states that the prison conditions should be 'humane', Uhl is being held under circumstances that amount to a calculated attempt to destroy him.

Confined at the notorious strict regime labour camp at Mirov, Uhl is not allowed to keep any written material - not letters from his family,

not even a copy of prison regulations. He is also banned from keeping pictures of his wife and children.

Uhl is allowed only one-hour visit from a close relative every six to eight months, and that meeting must be supervised by guards, and nothing but family matters discussed.

Because of the extremely heavy work to which he is subjected, his chronic bronchitis has become acute. Uhl is forced to carry loads weighing as much as eighty-six pounds up sixty-seven steps.

Defenders of Uhl and the other Charter 77 political prisoners are asking that protests against these conditions be sent to Czechoslovak embassies.



# Whatever happened to the ANL?

by GRAHAM WEIGHT (Dulwich YS)



Last month, the NF marched under the banner 'Kick out the Iranians and Lebanese'. With 700-800 supporters stepping out from Hyde Park, it looked like one of the strongest protests the ultra-right have launched for sometime.

But where was the opposition? Where was the ANL which only a few years before - had been drawing over 100,000 onto the streets in opposition to the 'Nazi Front'?

The answer is quite simple. As a national organisation, the ANL no longer really exists. Despite its promise of a few years ago, it has now declined to such an extent that its branches are no more than empty shells.

## STATE RACISM

The reason for this is not difficult to discover. While it was able

to pull thousands of young Black and white youth onto the streets, many of them - as time progressed - began to realise that turning up once in a while to combat the NF wasn't enough.

They realised that, despite the filth pushed out by the NF, they were not the main threat. The main threat stemmed from the Tory government which, by tightening the Immigration Act and 'sus' law, was deliberately whipping up race hatred against Black people.

The extent of disillusion with the ANL by the black community was shown recently in Bristol, when they told the ANL - which had come to 'defend' them from police harassment - where to go. Clearly they realised that the ANL was not really concerned with building opposition to racist laws, but only in 'parachuting' itself in at a time of publicity.

CARL

Far from getting involved at this stage with mindless 'confrontations' with the NF, the Black community has become involved in more serious campaigns. One of these is the Scrap 'sus' campaign and the other, and more far-reaching, is the campaign against the 1971 Immigration Act (CARL).

This campaign - mainly with the support of the Indian Workers Associations - mobilised a mass 15000 strong demonstration last November against the Tory proposals and local CARL groups are now beginning to develop around the country.

As socialists, our main struggle against racism today should be to win as much support as possible - from within the labour movement - against the racist immigration policies of the Tory government and to build CARL.

# TROOPS OUT CONFERENCE

The Troops Out Movement (TOM) held its latest twice-yearly national conference on 28th June in Edinburgh. A large proportion of the one-day conference was devoted to the plight of Republican prisoners held in the six counties of the north.

Representatives from the Derry branch of the RAC - Relatives Action Committee - spoke in detail about the four-year-old 'blanket' protest conducted by the prisoners at Long Kesh who aim to regain political status, and the protest by women prisoners to wear their own clothes, for free association, and to organise their own education and recreation - to be taken up especially in the labour movement, was carried.

It was also agreed that TOM would organise a delegation of about 500 of its supporters to go to Belfast to picket an army station, and that TOM will support a demonstration being planned by Sinn Fein to commemorate the start of internment. Plans were discussed for the expansion of activities such as the picketing of army installations, selling TOM's paper 'Troops Out', public meetings, film showings, debates within the Labour Party, and TOM stalls at festivals.

Another result of the conference is that TOM will be strengthened organisationally with a national Steering Committee elected by conference, and a headquarters for the campaign, with full-time staff, held at Armagh, for the same objectives, since early February.

Whilst morale amongst the Re-

publican prisoners is high, the inhuman treatment to which they are being subjected in response to the campaign could eventually lead to the death of a prisoner, an RAC speaker said. Should this occur, delegates were told they could be sure that 'all hell will be let loose'.

The issue of the prisoners was a central theme at the conference and it became clear that much of TOM's campaigning activity during the next six months will be centred around it.

A resolution which called for the 'political status' demands - the right to refuse prison work,

There is growing resentment within the Labour Party's rank and file at the parliamentary leadership's 'bi-partisan' policy on Ireland - ie refusing to challenge the ruling class's repression

there. TOM's decision to step up work in the Labour movement can only be welcomed.



TOM has launched a new pamphlet, entitled 'No British Solution', giving a detailed analysis of Britain's involvement in the six counties since partition took place. It is available from Box TO 2a St Pauls Rd, London N1, price 50p plus postage.



## Letter from H Block

They show you the excreta on the walls  
And tell you how we have done it all  
But they don't tell you why  
Of taunting screws that made the soft ones cry  
They taught us how to cope with dirt  
They who have done it long before  
When they kicked our slops around the cell floor  
And bade us clean it or be beaten more  
Call me sir you rebel swine  
And on the floor you must dine  
A dinner topped with a dirty spit  
And tea that smelt of urine  
Far better it be to inflict our own thorn  
Than to lie down and take it issued with scorn  
They can perform cosmetic operations  
for visiting British MPs  
Who in turn make a cosmetic statement  
To put the enquiring population at ease  
The propaganda that they spread  
is dirtier than our cell wall  
But amidst the torture and the dirt  
The prisoner he walks tall

## POST BAG

Dear Socialist Action

I've been browsing through your paper and liking quite a lot of the articles. However, on reading 'What We Stand For', I was appalled to find that you do not take an unequivocal stand against nuclear weapons!

As an old stager may I appeal to you all to consider the proposition that our socialist aspirations and our interim demands may be valid beyond question. Yet what is virtually certain is that a world nurturing a build-up of nuclear weapons will sooner or later burst asunder. There will almost inevitably be an unimaginable holocaust unless there is an early change of direction: our aspirations will then be of no account. Our demands will appear retrospectively futile and irrelevant, if we can still think before expiry.

I am not suggesting for one moment that we should not have aspirations; nor that we should not make demands and strive to maintain jobs, hospitals, public transport and so on. But in heaven's name let us not forget that we have to survive (not least of all our children) to make possible the achievement of a viable soc-

ialist system. Let us put right our priorities before it is too late!

May I therefore hope that you will include in your demands: 'Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament as a move towards global sanity, survival, and socialism'?

Fraternal greetings  
Frank Viney  
Bromley, Kent

Dear Cde,

In last month's *Socialist Action*, you devoted a major article to the May 14th rally. Like many other papers on the left, you conclude that this was the 'biggest protest yet' against the Tories.

That is true, but I think the left really must learn to look facts in the eye. The turn-out on May 14th while significant, was lower than almost everyone predicted. It's no use trying to blow the situation up and, at the same time, blaming the trade union leaders for it not being bigger.

If the rank-and-file had really felt the need to tackle the Tories, they would have turned out despite their leaders, as the steelworkers did. The truth of the matter is that, while there is an

active minority in the unions willing to fight, the vast majority are still apathetic and have not yet felt the pinch from the government's policies.

It's no use pretending otherwise to 'keep up morale'.

Sandra Hill  
London

Dear Socialist Action

The new nationality proposals are an insidious attack on black people in this country. What the proposals set out to do is to create a form of second-class citizenship, which means that the government will be able to take away basic rights from black people like, for example, the vote. They also pave the way for the possible introduction of a 'pass law' state, by requiring 'overseas citizens' to carry their passports or some other form of identification.

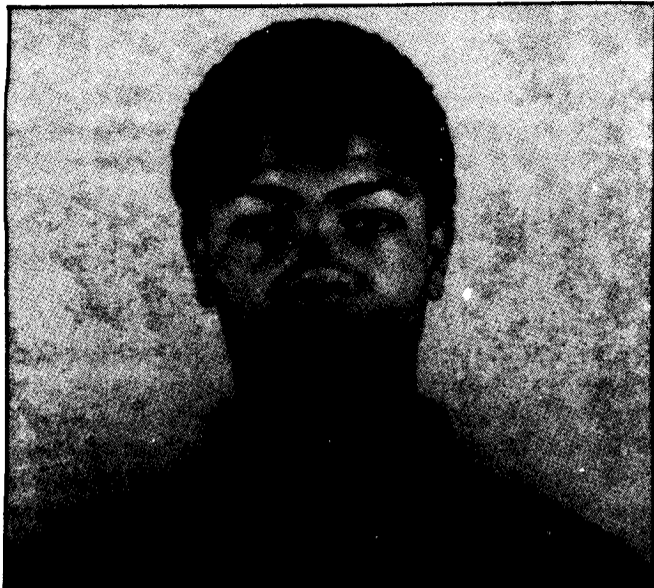
Socialist Action supporters should take up this issue whenever they get an opportunity, be it in their union branch, Labour Party ward, YS or anti-racist organisation.

Andy Sharpe  
Watford



# Socialist Action

## Who killed Richard Campbell?



by Sylvia Brook (NUT)

Richard 'Cartoon' Campbell died in Ashford Remand Centre on March 31st.

He is yet another number to add to the official list of 273 deaths in police custody. Three months have passed and still no explanation for his death has been given.

### ARREST

Richard was arrested on 1 March, allegedly attempting to break into a sports shop in Brixton. He spent a weekend in Brixton police station and was remanded to Lewes prison after appearing at Camberwell Magistrates

### Court.

A week later, he admitted attempted burglary and was sent to Ashford Remand Centre. Three weeks later he died in the hospital wing.

From the time of his arrest to the time of his death - four weeks - none of his relatives were told where Richard was.

### ILLNESS

The family were later told that Richard was mentally ill; that he had given a false name; that he refused food; that he tried to escape and had to be 'restrained'. If all this is so, why was no effort made to contact his relatives?

His mother, Jean Campbell, saw him the day before he was arrested & a friend saw him the day he went to Ashford - on both occasions he was happy & fit as usual. However, a probation officer who saw Richard twelve days before he died described him as 'haggard and drawn' and as having lost 'a phenomenal amount of weight'.

### CAMPAIGN

On 5th of July, the Friends of Richard Campbell held a march from Balham to Brixton to demand a public enquiry into his death. Supported by groups in the Black and labour movement, the rally at the end linked his fate to that of Liddle Towers, Jimmy Kelly and Blair Peach.

Socialist Action supported the march and the decision to build a really determined campaign to find out: what happened to Richard? How did he die? Why did he die? Lift the lid of police brutality and legalised murders!

The family and friends of Richard have started a campaign to demand a public enquiry. For further information, contact: FORC, 136a Lavender Hill, London SW11 or phone 01-672-9643

## SOUTH AFRICA (CONT.)

repression. Well over 1000 students have been arrested and detained, under the regime's various security laws, as have numerous Black leaders.

These include Curtis Nkundo, former President of the Azanian Peoples' Organisation, and Bishop Desmond Tutu, general secretary of the anti-apartheid S. African Council of Churches.

Where demonstrations & strikes went ahead, the police and army were let loose with a vengeance... By the end of June, it was estimated that well over 32 Blacks had been killed and 175 wounded. If anything, these are conservative figures.

### ALERT

The seriousness with which the regime views the growing 'unrest'



### TOTTERING

The dangers facing the apartheid regime have caused concern not only in Cape Town but in London and Washington too. For them, South Africa remains the only reliable bulwark they have in the region after the fall of Mozambique, Angola and - most recently - Zimbabwe.

Maintaining stability in the area - and preserving their massive investments there - depends to a large degree on the strength of the racist regime which acts as a 'police-keeping force'.

This is why the upsurge among the Black population - led by a determined Black working class - frightens them in their boots. Such an upsurge might not only topple apartheid but also take over their massive economic investments on behalf of the work-

## JOBLESS TOTAL (Continued)

Wales to the Merseyside - are being turned into industrial deserts.

And the policy is quite deliberate. As Eric Heffer pointed out in the Commons recently, the jobless total is part of the Tories' strategy. Throwing thousands on the dole will, they hope, force wages down and profits up, thus making industry more 'competitive'.

The laws against the unions they intend bringing into the next session will, they also hope, finish off any resistance that will be left.

### RESPONSE

What has been the response of the Labour leaders to the latest figures? Jim Callaghan tabled a polite

motion of 'no confidence' in the government & announced that - when returned to office in 4 years - he would save jobs by introducing 'selective import controls'.

In other words, apart from making a few pledges for the future: nothing. What Callaghan - and his TUC allies - have to be told is that we cannot wait another 4 years. By the time Labour is returned, millions of jobs will have been lost as industries close and the social services are mutilated.

### FIGHT-BACK

Last May, under mass pressure, the labour leaders were forced to hold a 'day of action' against Tory

policies. But one-off protests are not enough. What is needed is a real drive in trade union and Labour Party branches to force the leaders into a determined fight to remove the Thatcher government before it's too late.

A first step in this will be to support the lobby for jobs of the TUC this September around the demands 'For a 35-hour Week' and 'Fight to kick the Tories out now'.

By LEN WAGSTAFF (ASTMS)



A new devastating slump

can be measured not only in the numbers arrested or the threat - by Jaap Cillier, top government official - to ban all Black trade unions.

It can be seen, above all, in the fact that the South African army has for the first time ever been placed on a war footing within the country.

Not even during the mass urban uprisings of 1976 and 1977 - which were put down by the use of the police and army - was the regular army placed on such an alert. They are no doubt aware, as an ANC member told the *New York Times* last month, that "... the lifespan of the regime is much shorter than any of us thought a few years ago".

ing population.

### BACKING

This is why, despite the embargoes placed against Iran or the hysteria whipped up over Afghanistan, neither Carter or Thatcher have seen fit to denounce the mass repression against the Black population in South Africa.

But time is not on their side. Despite all its repressive techniques, the white minority regime is finding it ever more difficult to hold back the struggle by 22 million blacks for democratic rights.

It will be up to us in Britain to help them in this struggle by ensuring that the Tory government gives no aid to its racist allies.

## Mugabe denounces S.Africa

Earlier this month, Robert Mugabe - recently elected Zimbabwean PM - closed down the South African mission in Salisbury.

Mugabe's reasons were clear and to the point. "South Africa", he said, "has a policy of destabilising our region, mounting attacks, organising sabotage and continuing to disrespect the principles of peaceful co-existence".

Despite South Africa's threat to cut off trade links with Zimbabwe - and use military force if Zimbabwe allows its land to be used as a base for South African freedom fighters - Mugabe has refused to back down.

Speaking before a meeting of the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) in July, he continued to show support for the liberation struggle and called on all African countries



to draw up a 'concrete programme of aid'.

Mike Hopkins



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