

Socialist Action

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Build the ANTI-CUTS CAMPAIGN

BY M. TICHELAR (NALGO)

NO ONE CAN ACCUSE the Tories of not punishing their enemies and rewarding their friends. Tax cuts for the rich are to be paid for by working people in a massive attack on jobs and the welfare state.

Howe's decision to lop £4,000 million off social services means one thing. Hospitals to be run down to boost private medicine. Schools to be closed (and class size increased) to bring back direct grant grammar schools. Local authority direct labour schemes to be axed to give private building firms more business. Juicy bits of nationalised industries to be sold off to the benefit of asset-strippers in the City.

While the rich reap a bonanza, working people will be faced with hospital and housing queues stretching into the next decade. The extra few pounds gathered from income tax cuts will be eaten up within weeks by an inflation rate expected to top 17% by the end of the year.

FIRST STEP

This is, however, only the first step in the Tories' hatchet job on the welfare state. Thatcher has also announced that any wage deals made with the public sector unions must be financed by even greater cut-backs in health, education and housing.

Michael Heseltine—Tory wonder boy—has made it clear that November's rate support grant, totalling 61% of local government spending, will not be increased to meet wage demands already in the pipeline. This simply means that the cost of this year's wage claims will have to be found in either further cut-backs on in massive rate and council rent increases.

No doubt Thatcher hopes, in this way, to shift the blame for dismantling the welfare state on the unions' shoulders. As the cut-backs bite, she obviously intends laying them at the door of 'excessive wage claims' in the public sector to drive a wedge among working people.

LAYOFFS

Cut-backs in the public sector will not only lower living standards, however. They will also have a dramatic effect on jobs. It was COMSE at its annual conference last month which announced that the 8% cut-back in health services



under the budget would mean a reduction of 39,000 jobs.

The trend for redundancies to rise will be escalated by the Tory decision that all public sector pay rises must be self-financing. By calling for jobs to be swapped for wages, Thatcher is condemning thousands of teachers, nurses, building workers, etc to the ever-growing dole queues. A taste of what she intends can be seen in her decision to freeze recruitment to the Civil Service in order to finance the CPSA wage claim.

It is no wonder that Moss Evans (T&GWU General Secretary) announced recently that the cut-backs in social services—combined with withdrawing support from school leavers employment programmes, etc—would push the jobless total to two million by the end of the year.

FIGHT-BACK

The Thatcher proposals have, of course, sparked off a vigorous outcry from Labour's shadow cabinet to the TUC which has announced plans for a 'concerted campaign of action'. They can obviously sense the groundswell of feeling mounting in the public sector unions like the CPSA which has

(continued back page)

DEFEND ABORTION RIGHTS !

BY SABINA ROBERTS

It is now certain that the Thatcher government will give Tory MP John Corrie ample time to push through his anti-abortion Bill. Published on July 10, the Bill's main thrust is to cut down on the time-limit on legal abortions from 28 to 20 weeks.

Further measures include tightening up the 'grounds' on which an abortion can be obtained and strengthening the 'conscience clause' to allow medical staff to opt out of performing one.

The net result of these measures (if they get through) will be to push thousands of women into an age-old dilemma. Either they will be driven back to the horrors of back-street abortionists or they will be forced to bear children they do not want.

LONG-TERM

This attack on the 1967 Abortion Act has, of course, been carefully prepared. During the build-up to the election, the media splashed, in full technicolour, a number of horror stories designed to whip up anti-abortion feeling.

Pictures of foetuses being 'born alive' were hoisted onto the front pages to create a climate in which the offensive could be launched. Even well-known pro-abortionists such as Diane Munday (of the Pregnancy Advisory Service) were taken in by the campaign and pledged support for restrictions on the time limit for abortions.

HORROR STORIES

The lurid horror stories promoted by the media were obviously part of a long-term campaign by the 'right-to-lifers' in SPUC to turn the clock back on women's rights.

By fraudulent publicity and mass mobilisations over the years, they have twice forced Private Member's Bills into the Commons. Both the James White & Benyon Bills originated from this reactionary lobby.

While both these Bills were



halted in their tracks by the mass opposition that NAC* mobilised, the anti-abortionists feel much more confident this time. With a strong Tory majority in Parliament and with many Labour pro-abortionists - such as Maureen Colquhoun - out of the way, they no doubt hope Corrie's Bill will have a safe passage.

MOTIVATION

If the Corrie Bill does manage to get through, it will not only be a set-back for women's rights but for the entire labour movement. The Tory anti-abortion offensive is merely the first step in an attempt to push women out of the workforce and place them back where

they 'belong' - bringing up children in the home.

By whipping up such a climate the Tories no doubt hope to pit men against women in the fight that is bound to increase, in the years ahead, over jobs, pay and a livelihood.

OPPOSITION

This is why it is important in building a mass opposition to the Corrie Bill, wide layers of the labour movement are involved. In mobilising to halt any erosion to the 1967 Act - which NAC has called for - the labour movement must play a leading role.

(continued back page)

Build CAIL! ESCALATING RACISM

by
D. MUNRO

CAIL* was set up about a year ago to mobilise opposition to the overtly racist immigration controls of the 1971 Immigration Act. The platform adopted by the campaign was to agitate for the repeal of the Act and for opposition to all future racist curbs.

During its year of existence, the campaign has been heavily involved in publicising the draconian nature of the present curbs in the labour and anti-racist movement and has produced two bulletins to this end.

In addition, pickets have been organised and participated in around specific issues which operation of racist curbs have thrown up—most notably the 'Virginity test' scandal which came to light in February, although evidence exists that such Gestapo-like methods have been going on for years.

AIMS

It has become increasingly apparent to CAIL that, while numerous anti-racist groups committed to opposing racism exist, their links are minimal and they have no central thrust.

This seriously hinders the struggle since no campaign against racism can achieve any impact unless it is conducted on a mass scale. Furthermore, no campaign against racism can begin to seriously take up the central issues unless they confront head-on, policy-wise, the most explicit form of racism; namely, the Immigration Laws.

It is for these two reasons that CAIL exists and should set itself two main functions in the coming period.



FRAGMENTATION

Firstly, growing co-ordination has to be developed between all various anti-racist groups in order that concerted action can be achieved. This will involve more than simply directing the campaign's attention to union branches and anti-racist committees which often have few links with the Black or Asian communities.

It is the latter groups which bear the brunt of the racist and anti-democratic nature of the immigration laws and it is for this reason that it is vital that they are encouraged to play a central role in building a mass campaign.

Such participation must not simply exist at the level of coordinating pickets etc but also involve a continuous trading of experience with regard to the operation of the law and the 'spin off' problem. It is only through this that the campaign can effectively relate to the concrete problems of individuals who suffer the Act

THRUST

Secondly, it is essential that the campaign gets across to as many organisations as possible that the immigration laws are central to the issue of racism. This may sound easy to achieve but the contrary is true.

One has only to consider the ambivalent attitude historically taken by the trade union movement to the issue of immigration controls. The Tories' Industrial Relations Bill went through Parliament in the early '70s amidst a storm of protest. Creeping alongside it—and effectively eclipsed by it—was the passage of the 1971 Immigration Act.

Unlike the mobilisations around the IR Bill, no large-scale marches through London or elsewhere took place against the new racist laws. With the existence of an increasingly large campaign, pressure will have to be brought on the labour movement to take up the issue in a serious way.

ARGUMENTS

In winning support in the labour movement, CAIL will have to confront head-on arguments that Black and Asian people are a 'problem' and that racist curbs are necessary. This argument, accepted by most labour leaders, only allows white to be pitted against black, allows the labour movement to become divided and trade union gains to be destroyed.

In winning the labour movement to defend the democratic rights of Black people, one is also therefore fighting to overcome any racial divisions. This will become very relevant in the context of rapidly-rising unemployment which the Tory government is going to encourage in the coming period.

By highlighting the fundamentally anti-democratic nature of the racist laws, CAIL can also, as it develops, play a growing role in defending working class unity and gains.

* Campaign Against the Immigration Laws

BY MIKE RODNEY
(CAIL Ad Hoc Committee,
in a personal capacity)



Thatcher ran the election campaign on a clear racist ticket. Talk of the country being 'swamped' by an alien culture was carefully designed to prepare the way for yet further measures to tighten up on immigration curbs.

The measures the Tories have up their sleeves - leaked by Willie Whitelaw last year - are a racist's charter. They are not designed to curb immigration. They are designed specifically to curb Blacks from entering the country.

It is Blacks whose families will be kept out. It is Blacks whose wives and children will be forced onto a 'register'. It is Blacks who will be hounded by the police - under the new powers contained in Whitelaw's proposals - and it is Blacks who will be 'helped' to leave the country

CLIMAX

What the Tories propose is not, in itself, new. It is merely the climax of a whole series of such Acts which can be traced back from the 1971 Immigration Act to the Tories' original Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 which, for the first time, made entry into Britain dependent on a 'colour bar'.

Such Acts have not simply discriminated against Blacks coming into the country on the basis of colour. They have permeated the lives of all those who have squeezed past the immigration barriers, virtually turning them into second-class citizens.

HARASSMENT

If you are considered 'undesirable' or, as the 1971 Act puts it,

'a threat to the public good', you can be taken to a detention centre near Heathrow and deported overnight. There is no right of appeal.

If you are considered an illegal immigrant, you can be picked up off the streets, marched to a police station and asked to 'prove' you have a right to be in Britain. If you cannot prove it at once, you may be on your way to deportation or sent to Pentonville where you may be kept for months while 'investigations' are made.

Of course, there are a hundred variations of police harassment of this sort. You may be dragged out of your bed at night, picked up in a club or arrested at your place of work. The fact that such intimidation is legal explains the constant terror and suspicion that surrounds the Black communities in places like Bradford or Southall.

CLIMATE

The importance of these Acts cannot be overstressed. Once it is accepted that Blacks can be denied entry on the grounds of colour - and denied democratic rights in Britain on the same grounds - then racism has received official sanction. All the Race Relations Acts in the world won't change that.

It is the climate of racism fostered by these Acts - which the Tories are now talking of taking further with voluntary repatriation - which ultra-right groups like the National Front breed off.

CAPITULATION

Unfortunately, the labour leaders cannot be relied upon to champion the rights of Black people

against the Tories' new proposals. On the contrary, far from fighting the racism implicit in past Acts, they have capitulated before them and actually attempted to out-do the Tories in introducing harsher curbs.

It was Wilson's 1965 White Paper which restricted Black entry to a mere 8500 a year and Callaghan's 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act that was introduced with the boast that it would do more to keep Blacks out than any piece of Tory legislation.

By capitulating to racist moods, the Labour leaders have created a situation in which white workers could—in the years ahead—fall victim to the demagogy of the ultra-right and see Blacks not as allies but as a threat to jobs and wages.

STRUGGLE

It is because of this threat, which would pit white workers against Black, that socialists and anti-racists have a clear duty to launch a real struggle to repeal the 1971 Immigration Act and oppose any further proposals the Tories have in store to strengthen their racist provisions.

The Campaign Against the Immigration Law (CAIL), launched a year ago, has already begun to win support in this direction. It has begun to attract wide layers of the Black movement, trade union and Labour Party branches to the concrete objective of fighting to repeal an Act which legalises racism in Britain.

The importance of such a campaign lies not only in its attempt to win for Black people elementary rights. It also lies in tackling head on, the passive 'acceptance' of racism by the Labour leaders which can only encourage a right-wing back-lash tomorrow.

CAMPAIGN

Such a campaign can grow very rapidly if the Labour Party - whose 1976 conference passed a motion calling for the repeal of the racist 1971 Act - can begin to move into action.

First steps could be for trade union and Labour Party branches to invite a speaker from CAIL, affiliate to the campaign and support its activities. In the difficult years ahead, building such a campaign - and challenging the right of labour leaders to implement racist laws in our name - can be decisive in curbing the growth of racism.

IMMIGRATION LAWS - how the screw was tightened

1 Commonwealth Immigration Act

Introduced by the Tories in 1962 in response to pockets of racist feeling in the Midlands at the influx of Black people, over the previous years, to fill Britain's labour shortage. Limiting entry to workers holding 'vouchers', it was the first immigration law based on a 'colour bar'.

2 Immigration from the Commonwealth

Wilson's White Paper of 1965 tightened up still further on the 'voucher' system and brought in stricter controls on the entry of children. It also gave the Home Secretary powers to deport people considered to have flouted immigration regulations.

Coming at a time of major debate on Black immigrants, the Labour government conceded every point to the racist arguments since it effectively said that Black immigration was a 'problem' and limiting numbers would be conducive to 'race relations'. This shifted the debate to the right and racist laws had gained respectability—even in the labour movement.

3 Commonwealth Immigration Act

Introduced by Labour government in 1968, this Act deprived British passport holders of the right to reside in the country of their citizenship unless they had a grandfather or parent born in the UK.

4 Immigration Act

Introduced by the Tories in 1971—and enforced by the last Callaghan government—this Act consists of even more rigorous curbs on Black people. It divides the world population into 'patrials' and 'non-patrials'. Patrials are those with a British-born grandparent who can enter the country freely to work or settle. Non-patrials have no right to enter the UK. White Commonwealth immigrants fall into the first category and Blacks into the second.

5 Nationality Act and further curbs?

Although the Tories haven't yet disclosed precisely what new measures they will implement, Willie Whitelaw last year gave a list of the points they have on their agenda. The include:

- A new nationality act
- Stopping husbands and male finances residing in Britain
- Introduction of an across-the-board quota
- A register of dependents
- An intensification of 'counter measures' against illegal immigrants
- More provisions for repatriation

Labour & Democracy

JUST BEFORE THE ELECTION last April, the Labour Party NEC and cabinet met to discuss the election manifesto. Despite NEC objections, the campaign Callaghan ran virtually ignored every major conference decision for the past five years.

There was, of course, nothing unexpected in this. Callaghan's whole period in office was a continual slap in the face for the Party's six and a half million members who voted and campaigned to put him there. From decisions to 'tighten up' immigration

to bend the knee before instead of representing those who put them into power?

In a society dominated by the banks and the giant monopolies, the 'national' interest is obviously what serves to bolster their interests and increase their profits. The 'national interest' is, in this sense, a fraud, a cover-up for promoting the aims and investments of the big corporations.

When Wilson introduced In Place of Strife in 1968, just whose interest was that in? When Callaghan introduced a wage freeze of

government was mandated by conference, it would only alienate large sections of the 'middle ground' frightened by the 'left-wing extremists' in the Party branches.

Such an argument is slightly ridiculous. After five years of Callaghan's government—during which time, in defiance of the NEC, he pursued a firm right-wing course—the Labour share of the vote last April was the lowest in the post-war period. Only nine and a half million bothered to vote Labour. How on earth can



controls to the imposition of the 5% wage freeze, used against the low-paid public sector unions, the Labour government's policies flew in the face of conference decisions.

CONTEMPT

This contempt with which Labour leaders regard conference decisions cannot be limited to Callaghan. It can be traced back through Harold Wilson's assertion that 'no one is going to dictate to the Labour government' to the early founders of the Party at the turn of the century.

The logic behind the right-wing's position was spelt out sharply by Shirley Williams a few years ago during the 'Reg Prentice affair'. A Labour government, she pointed out, cannot be bound by conference decisions since its role is to rule in the 'national interest' and not in the interests merely of a section of society.

Needless to say, such an attitude has always won the resounding applause of the Tory media who are also dead set on muffling the voice of labour. During the Prentice affair, they were only too willing to band behind the Labour right in witch hunting the Newham North East members simply for demanding that Prentice... support the Labour Party manifesto. All in the interests of 'democracy' and the 'national interest', of course.

WHAT INTEREST?

But just what is this 'national interest' Labour MPs are supposed to protect as opposed to the interests of working people who voted them into office? Just what is this idol Labour MPs are supposed

5% earlier last year, just whose interest was that in? Was it in the interests of working people or the giant monopolies who wanted the unions' rights curtailed and their wages controlled so that they could increase their profit margins?

DEMOCRACY

When the Labour right argue for the 'freedom' of the government from conference decisions, they are arguing for its freedom to collaborate with the IMF, Tory-inspired Civil Servants and big bankers to attack working people.

This is why they let out a shrill voice of protest whenever the issue of the government 'obeying' conference resolutions is raised. They know that conference, representing over six and a half million members, is in direct conflict with the needs and interests of big business. If they were bound by conference decisions, after all, they couldn't be free to create one and a half million jobless, slash the social services and freeze wages.

In defence of their 'right' to pursue such policies, they actually have the nerve to invoke 'democracy'. It is, you see, 'undemocratic' for 300-odd MPs to actually implement the wishes of six million workers. It is so much more democratic for these 300-odd MPs—collaborating with unelected civil servants, bankers and monopolists—to ride roughshod over the decisions of the millions who put them in there in the first place.

PUT OFF

Of course, the Labour 'right' have also argued that if a Labour

socialist policies lose votes when Callaghan's pro-capitalist ones have driven away and demoralised so many Labour supporters?

The point is that if Labour's right-wing are so convinced that a democratically-decided manifesto is wrong, they should not be in the Labour Party. If they run as Labour members, if they are financed and voted in by Labour supporters, they should abide by conference decisions. It's a 'free country'. They can always leave.

CONFERENCE

As we move towards the next Labour Party conference, the issue of Party democracy will become increasingly central. Already, over the past few years, it has become a major debating point raised by Labour activists sick and tired at seeing the wishes of the movement overturned by a few unrepresentative MPs.

At the last conference, motions were moved both for the mandatory re-selection of MPs, for the right of conference—and not the Parliamentary Labour Party alone—to elect the leader and for the government to abide by the democratic wishes of the members.

If, in the next period, Labour is to win back thousands of activists, if it is to win the support of trade unionists and its allies among women, Blacks and youth fighting the Tories, then it has to show them that it will pioneer their interests in office as well as out. It is no use passing motions which will immediately be shelved for another five years by an incoming Labour government.

BY BOB SWART
(Streatham Labour Party)

Resolutions pour in

In the run up to the coming Labour Party Conference, the NEC has received over 24 resolutions exploring the need for greater democracy in the Party. These centre around the need for mandatory re-selection of MPs, the need for conference to elect the leader of the Party—and not just MPs—and the need to remove the 'three-year rule' which can forbid an issue being debated out for three years if it has been raised and rejected at a given conference.

Such motions obviously show that labour activists are not prepared to continue to debate and decide policy merely to see Labour governments ride rough-shod over democratic decisions.

BENN What game is he playing ?

Late last month, Tony Benn and Eric Heffer - who also refused to stand for the Shadow Cabinet - delivered what the press called a political 'time-bomb' to Jim Callaghan. They submitted an 8-point proposal calling for greater democracy in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Their 8-point proposal would, if accepted, cut away the arbitrary and undemocratic patronage system of the Labour leader - who can appoint and dismiss members of the cabinet at whim - and replace it with democratic elections. The points include:

- * the party meeting to become the main forum for debate & the final authority on policy;
- * the front-bench spokespeople to be elected by open ballot;
- * the subject groups in the PLP to have the right to nominate Labour's members on the Commons Committees;
- * no names to be put forward on the part of the Labour Party for peerages;
- * these arrangements, if agreed, to 'remain in force when a Labour government is in office'.

SHIFT?

The proposals, as they stand, clearly reflect the growing feeling within the Labour Party on the need for greater internal democracy and for making its representatives more accountable.

Benn himself has been at great pains to identify with this feeling. Speaking recently at the annual conference of ASLEF, he stressed that 'The Labour movement has always been against unaccountable power, whether in the House of Lords or by multi-national companies, world bankers or in the secrecy surrounding the operations of the government machine.'

The Benn proposals would appear to cut away this 'secrecy' and instil more open government. The cabinet - elected by the broad body of Labour MPs and not appointed at the whim of the Prime Minister - would, ostensibly, be under the control of the Parliamentary Labour Party which would have the final say on matters of policy.

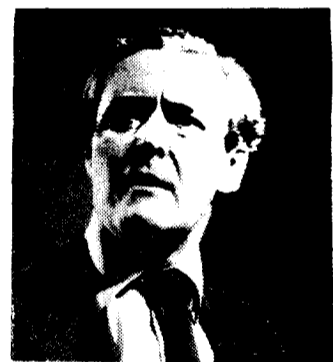
CONFERENCE

There is, however, a serious danger implicit in Benn's proposals which the *Guardian* was quick to spot. 'The proposals provide the Parliamentary Labour Party with an enormously greater auth-

ority', they write, 'at a time when pressure is building up for the reinforcement of the powers of the party conference & executive committee in matters of policy.'

The point is well-taken. At this stage in Benn's proposals there is any mention of the rights of party conference or of the need for MPs to become more accountable to the labour movement as a whole. Instead of the conference becoming the 'final authority on policy' - which is the growing sentiment taking place in party branches - Benn substitutes the Parliamentary Labour Party.

No-one would deny, certainly, the need to push firmly for the cabinet to become accountable to the PLP. But it is much more important that the PLP should, itself, become accountable to the party conference which represents the broad labour movement where policies are democratically thrashed out.



DIVERSION?

The Benn proposals can be of use only insofar as they complement the general feeling growing in the party to make its MPs - who are financed by the party and who run on the Labour Party ticket - responsible to conference.

If, on the contrary, they are used as a substitute - if they are used to try to keep power within the hands of a few hundred MPs by creating a facelift in the parliamentary machinery - then they will become a diversion away from the attempt to create greater democracy in the party as a whole.

The main proposals coming up at this year's annual conference will be: are MPs going to be open to mandatory re-selection? Is the leader of the Labour Party going to be elected by conference as a whole or by a group of unrepresentative MPs? Who decides policy—the party conference or the PLP? *Benn and Heffer have to be asked: where do you stand on these vital questions? Do you accept that MPs are accountable to the labour movement or not?*

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Oil Crisis - A Phony

"Petrol at £1 a gallon" ran the Observer's headline last month. Speculating on future trends, the paper went on to gloomily predict the £1.10 or £1.20 gallon towards the end of the year as oil companies jack-up prices still further.

Such rises, as the article points out, will not just hit motorists' pockets. They will ripple through the economy, having a 'chain effect' on most consumer items and services. One major increase already in the pipeline is British Rail fares estimated to soar by 20 per cent in the autumn to cover increased diesel fuel costs.

Bearing the brunt of spiralling prices will, of course, be working people. As the profits of Mobil, Esso, BP and Exxon hit an all-time bonanza, it is working people who will have to cut back on petrol, fork out higher fares and do without heating.

SHORTAGE?

And just what is the cause of this 'rip-off' at the petrol pumps? According to the oil companies, the problem lies in a 'natural shortage' sparked off by the cut-backs in Iranian crude oil last year and the refusal of other OPEC countries to make good the difference.

Shortages in oil supplies—which US Energy Secretary Schlesinger described as having a "devastating effect on Western economies"—are apparently not short-term. "It would be absolutely wrong", declared Continental Oil's A. Alan Cope, "to give signals that the worst is over and that consumers can relax".

It is a message widely echoed by Western governments who have raised the ghost of a growing 'oil crisis' since, as the *Guardian* put it "free world consumption of oil is running faster than production". On May 22nd, the International Energy Agency urgently recommended 'energy saving measures' and increasing use of coal, natural gas and nuclear power. As Carter so eloquently put it: "Each of us is going to have to use less oil and pay more for it."

SKEPTICISM

But is the 'shortage' argument credible? According to the *New*

York Times, over 60% of American people—the hardest hit—are convinced it is a rip-off engineered by the oil monopolies. And there are excellent reasons for this response since, over the past few years, there has been not a shortage but a glut of oil.



York Times, over 60% of American people—the hardest hit—are convinced it is a rip-off engineered by the oil monopolies. And there are excellent reasons for this response since, over the past few years, there has been not a shortage but a glut of oil.

Despite attempts by big business media to blame the 'shortage' on OPEC countries, there is not a shred of proof for this claim. According to Dr Arnold Saver of the Irving Trust Institute "by the end of the year, OPEC will have an excess capacity of 12 million barrels a day, some 25% of the world's consumption."

To this 'excess' must be added newer discoveries. As the *New York Times* pointed out early last year: "Today, there is anything but a shortage as the rush of new oil from Alaska, the North Sea and Mexico reaches world markets. Although experts expect the pre-

RIP-OFF

How is it that a widely-recognised surplus of oil can suddenly become transformed into a world shortage? The answer is, of course, that it hasn't. There is no natural shortage of oil today. There is a highly contrived one—one contrived by the giant oil companies to hold the world to ransom to jack up prices.

One of the major 'problems' facing oil companies over the past few years, despite the 1973-4 price rises, has been precisely this oil 'glut'. A plentiful supply of oil, coupled with a decline in the value of the dollar and pound, has meant that profit margins have been whittled down. As oil expert Walter Levy admits: "The present situation is one of oil surplus, stagnating OPEC production and declining real prices for oil."

There is real cause to believe

that the oil cut-backs in Iran were merely 'used' by the oil barons to proclaim a 'shortage' which would enable them to jack up prices once again. Certainly, the US Federal Trade Commission was prompted to consider whether "... the Iranian 'shortfall' was being used. ... as an excuse for recently decreased allocations of gasoline."

EVIDENCE

All the evidence points that way. While the oil companies have complained of a downturn in oil production, the facts belie them. In the USA alone, this year, there was an increase in crude oil imports of 4.3% at a time when demand was increasingly by only about 2% (*Washington Post*).

Moreover, oil company spokesmen have themselves leaked the truth. Robert Baldwin, President of Gulf Oil, admitted in the *May Christian Science Monitor* that the present crisis "stems from a lack of refining capacity, not a shortage of crude oil". Perhaps this explains the reason why existing refineries are operating at only 80 to 85% of their capacity when normal levels are nearer 90%.

Even the *Guardian*, which has helped spin this myth of an 'oil shortage', was forced to admit that it was "... largely the result of the bitter winter, pressure on oil companies. ... to have these stocks rebuilt, and the diversion of crude oil from petrol refining to central heating oil".

LIES AND DISTORTIONS

All the facts point to the conclusion that the oil barons are deliberately stock-piling oil—and refusing to run their refineries at normal capacity—until their 'hold-up tactics' work. They have already had considerable success. Exxon's profits so far this year have leapt from 198% to 398%.

It would, of course, be utopian to expect the Thatcher government to curb the oil companies' blackmail. The Tories believe in 'market forces'. What this means is that, while the oil barons reap in the profits, working people must foot the bill. It is they who will have to queue for petrol and pay escalating prices. It is they

Scrap SUS laws

RUDI BRIGHT (PECKHAM YS)

THE 'SCRAP SUS' CAMPAIGN was started by a group of Black parents worried about what was happening to their children in the near-hysterical, openly racist climate of the last few years. The media has seen to it that the whole of Black youth was labelled 'mugger' and certain sections of the police force did their best to make sure the label stuck.

The figures given in the table provided by the Home Office show the total proportion of "persons arrested for being suspected of frequenting a public place with the intent to commit an arrestable offence". They refer to the Metropolitan Police District in 1977.

The table shows that Black people are arrested 11 times more often than can be expected when you consider the proportion of

Black people that live in London.

The Labour Party YS, both nationally and locally, give wholehearted support to the Scrap SUS Campaign. Peckham YS invited a speaker from the Campaign and after hearing her passed a motion demanding the repeal of the 1824 Vagrancy Act, which was later passed by the GMC of the Party.

The YS Regional Committee, in conjunction with the British

Section of the Peoples' National Party (Jamaica) youth wing, called a demonstration on April 7th from Camberwell to Brixton. Peckham YS members played an active part in the build-up to the demonstration, leafleting estates and advertising the event.

The response among the Black community was very enthusiastic, with many relating their experiences of police harassment generally to the leafletters. The march itself was very lively and had a good turn out of about 350.

The Young Socialists do not believe this is an issue the Labour Party can duck for much longer.

The election of a Tory government on a strong 'law and order' ticket will only eventually increase the massive hostility building up against the use of the SUS law.

We believe if our demands are not met, what will hit the streets in a few years' time will be far more devastating than anything experienced in the Notting Hill riots. We demand.

- The immediate abolition of the SUS laws
- No more frame-ups
- End police victimisation of working people.

Old Moore

The TUC may not know it yet, but Old Moore's Almanach is prophesying a terrible year for 1980.

Anyone planning a holiday that year would be well advised to choose May. Old Moore says of that month: 'Britain will be shaken by shock events and a major upheaval that could strike to the very roots of the British way of life'.

It goes on: 'The House of Commons could be in uproar with major government set-backs. There is a danger of great violence, of fires, explosions and even assassination attempts. transport communications and the motor industry could suffer a wave of strikes'.

What with Mrs Thatcher's budget proposals and the cries of doom coming from the Treasury, who said that Astrology was Bunk? TUC take note.

who will have to fork out higher bus and train fares and they who will have to cut down on home heating.

The response of the Labour leaders is equally inadequate. Labour shadow minister Howell has called for the 'rationing' of existing stocks. Such a position accepts the lies and distortions presented by the oil monopolies at face value when even the *Wall Street Journal* points out that these facts the industry presents are often "self-serving".

OPEN THE BOOKS!

Far from accepting the cooked-up facts of the oil barons, the main thrust of the labour movement should be to find out what the facts really are. How much oil is really in the ground? What is the real capacity for refineries in operation? What are the real profits the industry is making?

Under the code of capitalist secrecy, working people are expected to take the word of these companies as gospel truth. It is time labour led a campaign to make the books of the energy corporations open to public scrutiny. Let's place every aspect of their operation under a magnifying glass!

To make sure the oil barons don't hold anything back, workers in the energy industries should be called on to secure the records and supervise the functioning of the industry. They are in the best position to know if supplies are being held back, if refineries are being run properly, if newly-discovered fuel sources are being exploited or not.

It is only by opening the books of the oil companies—and taking them into public ownership that we can overcome their lies and distortions and stop them holding the country to ransom. It is only on the basis of the facts that a rational energy programme can be created which will put people and not profits first.

- Open the secret records of the energy industry!
- Continued surveillance by workers in the industry!
- Nationalise the oil companies!

ANNE WILLIAMS (T&GWU)

Women & The Tories

by DRU BENSON (CPSA)

During the election build-up, the press made much of the fact that Margaret Thatcher could become the first woman Prime Minister. In a deliberate attempt to swing the woman's vote behind her, she was photographed in supermarkets discussing the price of a tin of peas or carrots to show she understood women's 'problems'.

While the press made much of Thatcher's gender, however, they made no effort to seriously analyse Tory policies on women. That is no accident. Behind all the gimmicks, Thatcher's government represents a major attempt to turn back the clock on women's rights.

CUT-BACKS

Geoffrey Howe's budget, last month, will hit all working people. But it will hit women hardest. As inflation zooms to an estimated 17% by the autumn, who will have to deal directly with price increases in the shops? Women.

As the cut-backs in government expenditure bite, whose jobs will be first on the line? Those in which women predominate—teachers, social workers, librarians, cleaners, cooks. Cutting back on women's jobs will not only lower family income—something the Tories were supposedly so concerned about—but will particularly hit single-parent families.

As services are cut back by local councils, who will increasingly be effected? Women. Day nurseries, on which many working mothers depend, will be the first to be axed as will be hospital facilities which will make the possibility of abortions on the NHS even more difficult than now.

VALUES

As women are pushed into the home through redundancies or cut-backs in nursery facilities, the Tories will, of course, escalate their talk about 're-affirming' the values of family life. In the pre-election build-up, both Thatcher

and Callaghan put great store on 'preserving' the traditions of the family.



'Preserving the family', however, is merely intended to justify pushing women out of the workplace and back into the often stultifying atmosphere of the 'home'.

The 'family' the Tories want to preserve is one in which women are reduced to the second-class status of man-server and baby-minder, without any rights or independent life of their own.

And what type of family do the Tories wish to preserve? The family life of people crowded ten to a room in the Liverpool or Glasgow slums? The family life of child-battering or wife-beating?

REACTION

The Tory ideology is very convenient at a time of rapidly-rising unemployment. It can help reinforce prejudices in the workplace that, when jobs are at stake,

it is the woman's that should be axed because her place is really 'in the home'.

But the Tories 're-affirming' of family life goes a little further than this. It is also an attempt to

clamp down on young people generally who increasingly reject the image of 'domestic bliss' held out to them. Behind the Tory government stand other reactionary forces such as SPUC or Mary Whitehouse's Viewers and Listeners Association who have tried to clamp down on 'permissiveness' through the courts.

Key among these forces attempting to bolster the family at the expense of women is SPUC, which has deep roots among the Tory back-benchers. With a new and sympathetic government in office, they are already pushing ahead with their attempt to erode the limited abortion rights women have won under the 1967 Act.

Over the past decade, they have led a consistent campaign on this issue, often mobilising up to 80,000 behind their reactionary banners. They have managed, by such pressure, to get two Private Members Bills into the Commons

which were only stopped by the mass counter-offensive NAC* launched. It is almost certain that, in the coming months, Corrie's Private Member's Bill to curb the time-limit on abortions will be put forward.

FIGHT-BACK

The Tories will, however, have a difficult task trying to push ahead with their offensive. Over the past decade, more and more women have come to reject their passive role merely as wives and mothers and have demanded the right to participate in society in their own right.

They have defeated reactionary moves to curb abortion rights, they have joined in unions in ever-greater numbers, have led battles for jobs and higher pay and have forced the Labour government to pass legislation in their interests. While relatively toothless, the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act at least acknowledge the injustices that exist.

CAMPAIGNS

To combat the Tory offensive, however, we cannot rest on our laurels. If we are to maintain the rights we have—and win further ones—we have to continually be on our guard.

Women in the public sector will have to play a major role in the fight-back against the cuts that is being developed. They have a vested interest in forcing the leadership to mount a real campaign to defend jobs and social services.

Women in the labour force have not only got to defend jobs and conditions however. They also have to fight to win the unions—and Labour Party—to support campaigns such as NAC to protect the rights of all women in society against the Tories reactionary attempts to turn the clock back.

* National Abortion Campaign.

Labour Women Plan Action

The National Conference of Labour Women on June 17th met under an ominous cloud. As delegates pointed out, with inflation estimated to reach over 17% by the autumn, women—the majority of the low paid workers—were bound to be hit hardest.

A resolution calling for a national minimum wage of £70 for a 35-hour week was there-fore unanimously greeted as was one designed to curb the 'differences' between men and women's earnings. Despite the introduction of the Equal Pay Act, this difference has not decreased but actually increased. Conference therefore passed a motion designed to bring women's earnings into line with men's by establishing a minimum basic hourly wage (based on 2/3rds of national average earnings).

SLIDING SCALE

In order to safeguard wages against the ravages of inflation in the period to come, conference also passed a motion calling for a sliding scale of wages. The scale would be linked to a cost of living index worked out by trade unionists and women's committees.

Although pioneered by women, this demand is obviously of concern to the whole trade union movement. Creating united action around such a demand to protect living standards could unite wide layers of the unions in a common struggle against the divisions that necessarily develop when the 'strong' win and 'weaker' unions go to the wall.

JOBS

As one delegate, Mrs Kate Dallas pointed out, it was not just low pay that women were concerned with. The Tories' savage social expenditure cuts would fall on them hardest pushing thousands out of a job.

Conference passed a motion calling on the wider trade union movement both to protect women's jobs and to help organise those layers which were still not in a union and thus vulnerable to employers' attacks.

FIGHT

These demands, while key if women's jobs and wages are to be protected, will not be won without a fight however. Women in the unions and Labour Party have to fight to win the broader labour movement to take up their special demands and help them in the struggle for decent employment and wages.

K. Finch

Reed's work, spanning 30 years, was a major contribution both to women and the marxist movement. Her understanding of the oppression of women—and her determination to fight it—characterised her whole life. Long before others, she began the task of writing women back into history, of explaining the social roots of their oppression and charting a course for liberation within the framework of humanity's liberation from capitalism.

The best homage that can be paid her is to carry on the struggle where she left off.

EVELYN REED - A TRIBUTE



women's liberation to emerge in over half a century. Her main works *Problems of Women's Liberation* and *Women's Evolution* (the fruit of over 20 years' study) sold widely in the USA and Britain, and helped influence the thinking of thousands of young feminists.

So popular and influential were her views that, in the past few years of her life, she visited countries as far afield as Japan, Australia and Britain lecturing and discussing her work.

Reed's interest in the problems of women's oppression was not new. It stretched back to the late 40s when, due to the stifling hand of Stalinism, the issue had virtually been killed. It was then that she began to sketch out the broad outlines of her analysis in a series of essays later collected in *Problems of Women's Liberation*.

Her essays sharply criticised the myth that 'biology' has always been woman's destiny and that

nothing fundamental could be done about women's oppression since women will always be child-bearers. On the contrary, she showed that women's second-class status had nothing to do with 'biology' but with the social system that conditioned people into 'sex roles' and could, therefore, be changed by changing that system.

In those days, Reed was battling against the stream. It must have been a source of great satisfaction to her when, in the middle 60s, a new generation of young feminists arose to continue the fight against women's oppression. True to character, she plunged into that fight from the first and was particularly active in the struggle to win abortion rights.

Reed's writings were not only valuable in explaining to young feminists the social roots of their oppression but also in combatting incorrect ideas such as 'men are the enemy'. She always stressed that women's liberation was part

of a much wider liberation of humanity that can only be won by uprooting capitalism.

Reed's latest work *Women's Evolution* was by far her most serious contribution to marxist literature. Basing herself on Engels, she showed in more detail how pre-class society was a matriarchy in which women played the predominant social role which was only whittled away by the development of early class society.

Her work—which won international acclaim—stands in the tradition of the early materialist anthropologists such as Engels, Morgan and Briffault. It directly challenged the non-historical approach of latter-day 'gurus' such as Levi-Strauss who affirm there are no recognisable 'stages' in human evolution. Towards the end of her life, Reed was particularly interested in exposing the dead-end of modern anthropology and re-setting it in a materialist framework.

BY SABINA ROBERTS

ON MARCH 22ND THIS YEAR, well-known marxist anthropologist and fighter for women's rights, Evelyn Reed, died. She was 73.

Evelyn Reed was one of the foremost marxist writers on

what we stand for

AFTER FIVE YEARS of the Callaghan government, it has become ever more clear that the leaders of the labour movement offer policies not in the interests of working people but capitalism.

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

Such a left-wing should be committed not only to fighting for policies in the interests of working people but also labour's allies among the youth, women, Blacks 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 viable 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 massive public works programme for the 1½ million 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 wage or threatening redundancies. Nationalise all those that put profit before people.
- * End all cuts in social services. (Tax the rich not the poor!) For social expenditure to be tied to rises in the cost of living.
- * For women's rights. For the right of all women to free abortion on demand, free nursery facilities, equal pay and opportunities.
- * Fight racism! Repeal all racist immigration laws. Defend the right of Blacks to defend themselves against racist attacks and to organise within the 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. Oppose capitalism's attempts to poison life and the environment, in its pursuit of profit. End nuclear reactors and base an energystategy on coal! Explore alternative energy sources.

Socialist Action does not see the fight for these demands as a 'paper' issue. On the contrary, it is only by labour activists fighting to mobilise thousands on the streets and in the factories around such questions that they can begin to offer a serious opposition to the Tories' reactionary moves.

It is also only by labour becoming identified with such struggles that it will begin to regain the support it lost under five years of Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies, in a real attempt to build an alternative to the present reactionary leadership.

Such a struggle will, undoubtedly, also mean a fight to democratise the Labour Party to ensure conference decisions are binding on future Labour governments and MPs are mandated to carry out policies in the interests of labour and its allies.

Socialist Action supporters will seek the widest possible unity with all forces in the labour movement in fighting around concrete issues. We would also seek to develop, in the pages of the paper, a serious dialogue on the best way to go about implementing them. If you would like to find out more about Socialist Action—or contribute to it—please write to: Socialist Action, c/o 58 Auckland Road, London SE19.

Discussion Forums



Socialist Action

holds regular discussion forums on the problems facing the Labour, women's and Black movements together with the liberation struggles taking place internationally. If you are interested in attending these forums, please contact: SOCIALIST ACTION, c/o 58, Auckland Road, London, S.E. 19.

MAKE THE L

If anyone had any doubts about Thatcher's intentions, they should have been dispelled by the budget last month. Cuts in social services, 400,000 on the dole, lower living standards—these are the first spicy dish to emerge from the Tory kitchen.

If estimates of a world recession are accurate, then the next dish will be spicier yet. Inflation raging at around 17 per cent and over two million jobless could be served up by the end of the year. Is it any wonder even the City is jittery?

In order to ram home their anti-labour offensive, the Tories are also planning curbs on the unions and other measures to divide and weaken working people as the fight-back begins. Thatcher's anti-immigration stance is designed to whip up racist feelings as Corrie's anti-abortion bill—to be introduced soon—is calculated to create a climate for pushing women out of industry back into the home.

REACTION

The Shadow Cabinet's reaction to the budget was not unexpected. They heartily denounced it. But what exactly do the labour leaders intend doing about this attack on working people and their allies that is bound to lead to explosive struggles in the period ahead? Nothing.

Worse than that, at a meeting of Labour Women in June, Callaghan used the platform to denounce any idea that trade unionists should use their 'industrial power' to defend jobs and living standards. "The Conservative government was elected through the ballot box and it must be removed from office by the same method" he declared.

Callaghan's statement, designed to counter the militant speeches about 'bringing down the Tories' from figures such as McGaughy, mean one thing. Working people should meekly accept the wholesale offensive on their rights and living standards cooked up by the Tories and their big business backers.

FIGHT-BACK

Callaghan will find it difficult, however, to keep a lid on things. The TUC has already delivered a warning to Thatcher that they might not be able to contain the groundswell of opposition to her policies building up in the unions and have—half-heartedly—declared a 'concerted campaign of action' against the 'cuts'.

As this pressure begins to percolate into the Labour Party, it will lead to a growing conflict with Callaghan's 'do nothing' approach and attempts to subordinate any fight-back to chummy parliamentary debates.

As trade unionists and their allies demand that their party support their struggles for decent wages, the right to a job and trade union principles, the tension and conflicts between the conference and the Cabinet leaders will lead to sharp clashes as took place, a few years back, over the question of entry into the EEC.

TREND

An indication of this trend can already be seen in Benn's decision to 'distance' himself from the Shadow Cabinet and call for greater 'democratic' control in the

party. Many more—sensing the pressures building up—will doubtless follow suit. But will the Tribune left, which dominates the NEC, be able to develop a fighting alternative to Callaghan in the eyes of millions of workers? Experience does not encourage hope.

Writing on the elections to the Shadow Cabinet—just after the defeat at the polls—Tribune openly opposed opposition to Callaghan in the belief that 'unity' was required in the party to fight against the Tories. And, true to their word, they unanimously reelected as Shadow leader the man whose five years in office and pro-capitalist policies had lost labour the election and got it the smallest share of the poll since 1931.

This talk of 'unity'—even after the election defeat—was a sham. It merely covered Tribune's submission to the right and its unwillingness to campaign within the labour movement against the leaders' pro-capitalist policies. It was precisely this 'unity' that lost Labour the election. Millions of workers, unable to see an alternative to Callaghan in the party, looked outside.

CONTAIN

The readiness of Tribune to 'boost' Callaghan even after the election—and for figures like Orme to sit inside the Shadow Cabinet—does not inspire much confidence in their ability to build a fighting alternative to him in the coming years.

This is not, of course, new. One of the traditional weaknesses of the Tribune left—which explains its tendency to 'back down' be-



to campaign for 'capitalism with a human face'.

Isn't this what it demands to increase public spending and give bigger loans to ailing firms, through the NEC, is all about? Ignoring the call for nationalisation of such firms, they propose propping up private enterprise at tax-payers' expense. Such a move, it might be added, can only increase unemployment since state 'loans' for 'modernisation' is only used—as at Chrysler in 1976—to axe the labour force.

Likewise, its call for 'import controls' and leaving the EEC contain no antidote to growing jobless totals. Not only do such demands callously 'export' unemployment to workers in other countries. By keeping out cheap imports to protect British goods—which are more expensive—they will only create unemployment in other areas of the economy as people are forced to buy less.

These 'seige economy' positions—which will probably grow in the years ahead—are not only ineffective but highly dangerous. Boosting the idea of a 'national' solution to the present crisis, they

A FIGHT

fore the right—is its constant refusal to mobilise grass roots support in favour of its policies. At no stage, for example, did they encourage and help build mass opposition in the labour movement to Callaghan's policies.

Containing their 'opposition' to Parliamentary barking, they were thus forced to accept cuts in social expenditure, the 5% norm and tighter immigration curbs. There would seem little doubt that, on this record, the struggles that emerge will be seen by them merely as affording a little more 'elbow room' in dealing with the right.

PROGRAMME

The second major weakness of the Tribune grouping is that its programme can provide no real solution to the problems facing working people and their allies. Far from fighting for social answers to the present crisis, its main thrust is



Mass action is the only effective way

LABOUR PARTY

Ireland: TORIES UP REPRESSION



can foster a nationalist mood among working people which right-wing demagogues will use to their advantage.

CLASS STRUGGLE

What is needed in the coming years is not an opposition which attempts to 'prop up' ailing British capitalism or is limited to genteel parliamentary manoeuvres. What is needed is an opposition that can begin to turn the Labour Party—the party founded by the trade unions to defend its interests—into a fighting party, a campaigning party.

If the Labour Party is to grow in the years ahead, if it is to win back thousands of those disillusioned by Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies, then it must be seen to champion the real struggles working people and their allies are engaged in as they try to combat Thatcher's offensive.

Socialism can no longer be confined to abstract rhetoric at party conference. The Labour Party has to show itself as relevant to working people as they begin to defend their hard-won gains. Labour Party wards—often inward-looking

and dormant—have to begin to turn outwards, to get involved in and pioneer the demands raised by wide layers as they begin to go into action

It is by supporting these struggles that thousands of people will be won to Labour in the years ahead as a fighting party which pioneers their interests. In the course of this, they will add their voice to that of the left in opposing the Callaghan clique and attempting to build an alternative leadership.

DEMANDS

Labour Party members in the unions have to become centrally involved in the fight-back only just underway against Thatcher's plans to cut the social services and escalate the jobless total. The demands raised by wider layers of trade unions—'For the 35-hour Week', 'No Cuts in the Social Services', 'For Wages tied to the Cost of Living—have to be supported and fought for by the Labour Party

It is not just demands in the interests of working people, however, that Labour must take a

stand on. It also has to support and champion the struggles of Labour's allies against the Tories' reactionary moves. Supporting the mobilisation of NAC against anti-abortion moves or those of CAIL against racist immigration curbs, these positions must become the positions of Labour itself.

SCLV

The formation of the SCLV (Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory) a year ago represents an important step in building such a class-struggle left-wing in the labour movement. Already it has grouped around it a number of Labour activists who are looking for a real fighting alternative to Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies.

The limitations of the SCLV, however, is that while its policies are often correct, they are still only 'paper policies'. While supporting the struggle against women's oppression or Black oppression, they have not yet affiliated to NAC or CAIL which are leading active struggles against the Tories' reactionary moves.

Unless SCLV can begin to concretely apply its demands in the years ahead—as thousands move into struggle against the Tories—then it runs the risk of remaining merely a 'talk-shop' among the 'converted', unrelated to the real struggles taking place on the streets or in the factories outside. One of the major tasks of SCLV supporters should be to try and turn the paper proposals into concrete support for struggles as they emerge. In the short term, this means helping to build NAC, CAIL, or the anti-cuts struggle and pioneering these demands in the party itself.

DEMOCRACY

There can be no doubt that the development of a real class-struggle left-wing, rooted in the action of masses outside, will come into direct conflict with the right-wing

who will use every undemocratic trick in the book to prevent Labour becoming a fighting party of working people.

The question of 'democracy'—which is already an important one—will assume even greater importance in this sense, since the Labour movement will increasingly demand that its interests be recognised and that its leaders be called to account if they refuse to support them. Concretely this means fighting for conference decisions to be binding on Labour MPs; for MPs to be subject to mandatory reselection and for the leader of the Party to be elected by the party and not by a few unrepresentative MPs

BY A. D. SCOTT

THE LABOUR PARTY - WHICH WAY? 50p

(a new pamphlet available from 58 Auckland Rd, SE 19).

The recent re-arming of the RUC with American weapons - including powerful handguns - is a sure sign of future Tory policy in N. Ireland. It fits in with their attempt to reduce direct control from Westminster and devolve power to 'regional or local councils' under the guise of increasing democracy at the grassroots.

What the Tories are obviously trying to do is to re-introduce Stormont by the back door and give power back to the bigoted Orange politicians who recently did so well in the elections.

For the oppressed minority, of course, the Tory moves will mean growing repression and even less rights for the prisoners of war hounded and picked up in the Catholic ghettos.

REPRESSION

With the Tories obviously planning, in alliance with the Paisleyite thugs, a major repression against the oppressed minority in the period ahead, the responsibility upon the labour movement is posed more sharply than ever before.

It is increasingly obvious that the real problem in N. Ireland is not the 'terrorism' of the IRA but the British government's support for the bigoted Ulster unionists who, for over 50 years, have denied the oppressed minority elementary democratic rights.



LABOUR COMPLIANCE

Unfortunately, far from raising this clearly and openly before the British people, the Labour leaders have shamefully gone along with the Tories, seeing the main problem as 'defeating terrorism'.

It was Callaghan himself who sent the troops into Ireland in 1969 to prop up the bigoted Stormont regime and it was his protégé, Merlyn Rees, who introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act which infringes the democratic rights of all working people.

The attitude of the Labour leaders has not been challenged in the labour movement for years. Partly, of course, this is due to the censorship that exists on most reporting on Ireland—the facts don't get out. Partly it is due to the tacit agreement between Callaghan and the Tory leaders—as in the election—to play the Irish situation down. And partly, of

course, it is due to the Prevention of Terrorism Act itself which makes raising—and campaigning—on the issue difficult, as in the case of Pat Arrowsmith who ran in Callaghan's Cardiff constituency.

IMPORTANT?

Despite the difficulties, however, socialists in the labour movement have a duty to combat this 'conspiracy of silence'. It is only too obvious that if the Tories are successful in crushing the right of the Irish people to determine their own future, that will strengthen their hand in the offensive they are already beginning to launch against working people here. It could also create the 'precedent' for the use of troops for strike-breaking and other anti-labour activities.

Secondly, Ireland has been used by successive governments as an excuse for introducing laws—such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act—which curb the democratic rights of all working people in Britain. If they are allowed to get away with such moves, then it will make it easier for them to introduce even more anti-democratic acts in the future.

UTOM

It is because Ireland does have importance for trade unionists in Britain that socialists have the duty to raise it openly and clearly and to win support against the Labour leaders. The key slogan socialists should raise is for the troops to be pulled out of Ireland now—let the Irish people decide their own future! It is a democratic principle the Labour movement has long supported.

Concretely, we should fight to win affiliation from trade union and Labour Party branches to UTOM (United Troops Out Movement) which has begun to launch a serious campaign on the issue. At a conference in South London recently, and in Oxford, a modest beginning was made in this direction. It is a fight that has to continue.

Obviously, considering the prejudice that exists on Ireland, fighting to build UTOM will not be easy and it will not be built overnight. If we are clear, however, that what is at stake is the question of defending democracy both in Ireland and in Britain, then the potential is there.

MICHAEL HAWLEY (UTOM)

...TING PARTY



fight the cuts

ALL OUT AUGUST 12th

To mark the 10th anniversary of British troops being sent into Ireland, August 12th has been announced as the date of a major demonstration in London.

An impressive list of sponsors has been assembled from the labour movement such as Stan Orme, Ernie Roberts and Joan Maynard, as well as organisations such as the Campaign for Democracy in Ireland and the National League of Young Liberals.

The demonstration, which could mobilise wide support, should be publicised as widely as possible in the labour, student and women's movements. For further details, write to: Steven Dawe, Youth Organiser, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1.

NO! To Nuclear Power



Over the past month, the Tories have been rushing headlong, to expand Britain's nuclear energy programme. Worried by the so-called 'drain' on oil reserves, they have made no secret of their interest in the nuclear death-traps already underway in France, W. Germany and the USA.

Apparently the near-catastrophe that shook the U.S.A. last month doesn't worry them. A bubble of explosive gases formed inside a reactor near Harrisberg, Pennsylvania, blocking the cooling system and threatening a 'melt-down'.

Thousands fled in panic and an alert was given that a forced evacuation might be needed.

As the US Atomic Energy Commission pointed out back in 1957, if the explosion had occurred:

- * 50,000 people would have been stricken by radiation sickness;

- * 4,000 would have died on the spot; and

- * increasing incidence of cancer would have developed over the next 10 years, leading to another 45,000 deaths.

Safety?

Perhaps the 'safety levels' are higher in Britain? Not on your life. Accidents of the Harrisberg type are not confined to the USA. At Windscale, for example, there have been at least 11 accidents - the 'reported' ones that is - since the fire in 1957. These include 6 leaks of radioactive waste, 2 more fires and high levels of radiation

release.

It is not just the horrendous possibility of a 'melt-down' that makes reactors like Windscale a potential time-bomb. Scientists have admitted that radiation leaks cannot be completely eliminated and that the incidence rate of cancer among the workforce will therefore be high. A report by Dr. Alice Stewart at the Hanford Atomic Energy Works, in the USA, confirms this. She discovered a 26% increase in cancer among the workforce there.

Moreover, there are the dangers of 'atomic waste'. As scientists at the Windscale Enquiry revealed, the waste from a nuclear reactor with a lifespan of thirty years lasts, in its deadly effects, for 30,000 years. Where is it going to be contained? In lead-lined canisters buried in the ocean or the bowels of the earth, as in Scotland? But what guarantees are there that the canisters will remain intact for 30,000 years - or that natural accidents won't burst them asunder?

Question

The obvious question is - why

BY TERRY VINEY

should the Thatcher government be rushing into building reactors which, as experience shows, are a potential time-bomb? Perhaps developments in W. Germany can give us a few clues.

Before the 1974 recession, plans were afoot to launch a massive industrial complex around the Upper Rhine, an area close to other industrial regions and well-served by motorways. Oil, as an energy source, was ruled out both because of the rise in OPEC prices and the political 'instability' of the Middle East which made supplies 'insecure'.

Instead, Germany - Switzerland & France - rapidly invested in nuclear energy which was seen as both more 'secure' than oil and which offered massive returns on capital.

The Tories' 'venture' into the nuclear energy field is, obviously, motivated by the same considerations. Health and safety? What do they matter? The Tories' disregard for them can be seen from the fact that they are even replacing the 'safer' air-cooled reactors of the Harrisberg type by the more profitable water-cooled reactors.

Spineless

Unfortunately, far from challenging the mad gamble with death nuclear plants represent, both the previous Labour government and the TUC gave it an almost unqualified stamp of approval. It was, after all, Energy Secretary Tony Benn who pioneered the nuclear energy programme and his allies in the TUC who backed him up to the hilt.

The TUC's spineless position - spelt out in its Energy Report of last year - rests on seeing nuclear power as a major factor in promoting economic growth and providing extra jobs. A similar position has been adopted by other unions involved in the nuclear industry (T&GWU, AUEW, GMWU etc) with the proviso that "...safety precautions should be looked at more closely".

Such attitudes have an almost callous disregard for the health & safety of their own members. It should not have to be pointed out that, at present, the technology does not exist for 'safe' nuclear power stations. As long as these

reactors are allowed to go on turning there will be a continual menace from radiation leaks.... nuclear 'waste'....fires and, worst of all, 'melt-downs'. Talk of improving safety precautions is nonsense.

Short-Sighted

Not only do nuclear reactors threaten lives but they also are a threat to jobs, despite the claims by the TUC to the contrary. One job in the Nuclear Energy Industry costs £1 million in investment as compared to as little as £150,000 for a similar job in coal or electricity. Moreover, the building of these stations - as the one planned for Torness - means cutting out thousands more jobs in coal and electricity stations which will be doomed to closure.

Not content with seeing thousands of jobs go to the wall, TUC leaders also seem prepared to let hard-won trade union rights be whittled away as well. Workers employed in nuclear power stations can be denied all protection under the Health and Safety Act. They can be denied the right to Free Speech under the Official Secrets Act and - most serious of all - they can be denied the elementary right to strike.

It is little known, for example, that when the Windscale workers struck in 1978, the then Energy Secretary Tony Benn threatened to break the picket lines with police and to take the strike leaders to court.

International

The implications of the expansion of nuclear energy has already mobilised wide-spread opposition in countries from the USA - where over 125,000 demonstrated at the Harrisberg 'incident' - to Japan & W. Germany. In the last two countries, the governments were temporarily forced to halt their programmes by the deep opposition that was thrown up.

These mobilisations have opened up the potential of a major international movement on the scale of the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations of the late 1960s. The call for a Day of Protest on June 2nd-3rd was the first step on this path.

Unfortunately, however, the movement in Britain has not taken

International Protest

The June 2-3rd International Day of Protest against Nuclear Power brought out thousands of demonstrators in W. Europe, Japan, the USA and Canada. The numerous rallies were the first internationally co-ordinated anti-nuclear actions ever held.

Among the biggest protests were a rally of over 25,000 in Gasselts, Holland, against government plans to store nuclear waste near the town. A rally of 15,000 was held in Plogoff, France, against the Giscard regime's plans to build reactors in Brittany, and over 15,000 turned out at Shoreham, New York.

Other large actions were held at Kalkat, West Germany (8,000); Doel, Belgium (10,000); Graban, Switzerland (4,000).

The response to the call in many parts of the world shows the potential for future efforts to make the fight against nuclear power an international one.

off in the same dynamic way as in many other countries around the world....Much smaller demonstrations - like the one at Torness last May - have carried far less impact. This has largely been due to the apathy of the labour leaders or to their active support for the Tories suicidal nuclear ambitions under the illusion that they will stimulate growth and jobs.

Campaign

What is needed in the coming period is a major campaign against the Tory nuclear programme in the labour movement. Opposition already exists, at a minimal level, in certain unions. The Yorkshire area of the NUM has already come out against the nuclear energy strategy and offered an alternative based on coal production. Branches of ASTMS have raised the issue at annual conference and NALGO posed an amendment to the TUC Energy Report which called for a halt to nuclear expansion.

Such opposition has to be co-ordinated and carried into other unions & the Labour Party against those, such as Chappel of the ETU, who proclaim there is no alternative to nuclear power. Nuclear power, it has to be stressed, is a threat to life, jobs and democratic rights. There is easily enough coal to provide the basis for energy needs for hundreds of years yet, during which time research could be developed into alternative sources such as solar power.

It is not enough, however, just to pass resolutions calling on the Labour leaders to take a firm position against the Tories' nuclear programme. What is needed is a mass opposition on the streets against Thatcher's plans to turn Britain into a nuclear time-bomb.

Trade union branches and Labour Party wards should affiliate to the Anti-Nuclear Campaign and take an active part in mobilising such actions. Nuclear power is not just a danger to workers in the energy industry. It is a danger to everyone in the country.

* NO NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS

* FOR AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY BASED ON COAL

NEW READERS

If this is the first time you have bought Socialist Action, then welcome. As its masthead proclaims, Socialist Action is a paper within the labour movement that campaigns for working people. We are also committed to the struggle against racism and the oppression women and others suffer under the capitalist system.

Socialist Action would not be a living paper, however, without the contributions of its readers, and we invite every one of you to send us material that can be used in its pages. It may be your opinion on something of general concern, or it may be a news story on a struggle you have participated in, or a report on a meeting

you attended. Above all, we would like your opinions on Socialist Action and the articles in it.

Socialist Action's staff is small, but the network of readers, and therefore potential contributors, is very large indeed.

If we can cover all the important events in the struggles of working people, if we can contribute to the debate going on inside the Labour Party as to the way forward, then Socialist Action will grow into a paper no class-conscious worker will be able to do without. It can become a powerful weapon in the fight for socialist policies in the labour movement.

The Editor

IRAN - For a Constituent Assembly

Last month, Iran's new government - headed by Dr Barzagan - cancelled its plans for a democratically elected Constituent Assembly. Instead, it proposed to set up an 'appointed body' of 40 people to discuss the draft of a new constitution to be submitted, later, to popular debate.

The decision to drop plans for democratic elections clearly represents an attack by the Islamic leaders on the gains won by the Iranian people in their struggle against the Shah. The reason behind it is quite clear: they fear that their version of an 'Islamic Republic' is increasingly being questioned by the masses and they want to clamp down on any discussion of 'alternatives'.

CONFLICT

Their fear is well-justified. During the lead-up to the Shah's overthrow, there was a general consensus among the people who marched together under the label 'Khomeini's people'. The uprising was, itself, the climax of escalating actions in which it seemed that the whole nation was involved in a common fight.

Now that the Shah has been toppled, however, there exists no agreement as to the development of the revolution or the type of society to emerge from it. On the contrary, it is clear that growing divisions have emerged amongst the once-united forces on clear class lines.

The tasks of the Bazargan government—appointed by the Ayatollah—have been to establish a stable capitalist rule by calling on the masses to give up their arms, abandon their self-elected

Socialists Arrested

On May 30th and June 1st, nine socialists from the Hezb-e Kargaran-e Sosialist were arrested by government forces. The arrest took place during the massive round-up of Arab protestors, oil workers, steelworkers and others in Khuzestan Province.

The Bazargan government sent in troops to crush this opposition which poses the most serious challenge to the capitalist system to date.

Further HKS militants were picked up on June 1st by Inman Committee guards. Their books, other political literature and clothing were confiscated. The Inman's Committee has refused to disclose where they are being held or to allow lawyers to see them.

This crackdown on the HKS comes in the context of the government's increasing inability to establish a stable capitalist rule in Iran. It has been forced more and more to employ repressive measures against workers, women and oppressed national minorities fighting for their rights.

The HKS have organised a national campaign for the release of their members, and there can be no doubt that the case can become a major test for democratic rights in Iran.

Emergency protests demanding the immediate release of the HKS militants should be sent to: Prime Minister Mehdi Barzagan, Office of the Prime Minister, Tehran, Iran. Protests should also be directed to the Iranian Embassy.



committees in the army and in industry and meekly return to work.

OPPOSITION

This attempt to clamp down on the democratic rights of the Iranian people has, inevitably, brought the Bazargan government into head-on conflict with the masses in three main areas:

* Workers, who made the February revolution possible by their general strike, are not prepared to accept the mass unemployment meted out to them. Mass demonstrations have taken place—as on April 17—calling for 'action not words' and others have gone even further in calling for the right to strike, nationalisation of all foreign companies and workers control.

* Women, who fought in the front ranks of the anti-Shah struggle, are not prepared to accept the 'Islamic Republic's' view of themselves under the veil and thrust back into the home. Mass demonstrations protesting the Ayatollah's reactionary positions have taken place and have been attacked by Islamic committee thugs.

* Oppressed national minorities, who were among the fiercest opponents of the Shah, are not prepared to accept the 'Islamic Republic' and have called mass mobilisations in support of their right to self-determination. Beginning with the Kurds, this has spread to the Turkomans and the Arabs.

ILLUSIONS

It would be wrong, of course, to assume that the Khomeini leadership has already lost its enormous prestige won in the anti-Shah battles. Enormous illusions still exist among the masses. But its clamp-down on democratic rights, bringing it into conflict with wide layers of the Iranian people, has begun to create a changing mood. There is less enthusiasm than before for the 'Islamic Republic' and much more willingness to consider alternatives.

One recent example of this change in mood can be seen in

the left's victory over Khomeini on the issue of press freedom. The government attempted to close down the leftist daily paper

Ayandegan by calling for a boycott. Newspaper sellers were threatened by Islamic thugs and the papers' offices were attacked in a number of towns.

Mass support for the paper, however, meant that within a fortnight it was able to restart publication and it immediately became the country's most popular journal with a circulation of nearly one million. In contrast, the sales of *Kayhan* have dropped sharply ever since pro-Khomeini journalists staged a coup and removed from the editorial board all 'leftist' journalists.

CLAMP-DOWN

It is this growing willingness to consider other views which explains why the Bazargan government has decided to postpone the elections to a Constituent Assembly. It realises only too well that they could become a national focal point for the discontent building up among wide layers with the idea of an 'Islamic Republic'. They would mean public debate and discussion in which socialist organisations—which are at present not 'legal'—would be able to participate and present their views.

By appointing instead a 40-person committee followed by a referendum, Khomeini hopes to preserve a 'semblance' of democracy while actually reducing democratic debate around the future course of the country to a bare minimum. He hopes to avoid the development of a crystallised opposition which, pioneering the growing discontent, might pose a socialist solution to the people's problems.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Opposition to the clamp-down is growing, however. All the left and liberal organisations—with the possible exception of the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party and pro-Peking Sazman Enghelabi—have launched a vigorous campaign against the Khomeini proposals.

They have already begun to receive wide backing in the labour movement and among the oppressed nationalities, particularly the Kurds who have threatened them-

selves to set up a Kurdish national assembly.

The fight for a democratically-elected Constituent Assembly is going to be a crucial one in the development of the Iranian revolution. Around the struggle the oppressed masses—workers, oppressed nationalities, peasants and women—can begin to unite to say 'no' to any attempts by the

religious hierarchy or anyone else to determine their future for them.

The Iranian socialists in the Hezb Karegaran Socialist have consistently made the call for a free elected Constituent Assembly one of their central slogans from the start. Its enormous importance is now becoming clear.

By MIKE STRANGE

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

(Below, PETE MARAIS takes up many of the questions socialists have to come to grips with in their day-to-day struggles in the unions, etc. Contributions to the column will be gratefully received.)

"If you're so keen on the Soviet Union, why don't you go and live there?" Most socialists have come across this reply when trying to convince others of the need for socialism. And it doesn't come just from died-in-the-wool Tories either. Many trade unionists are confused and suspicious about 'socialism' because of the grotesque model held out by the Soviet Union.

The reply is quite valid, particularly when you consider some of the crimes committed by the Kremlin leaders in the name of socialism. There's no need to go back to the purge trials of Stalin's day. You have only to consider the persecution, today, of Soviet dissidents like Grigorenko, the general muzzling of free speech and cynical 'deals' with the West.

The situation is much the same in China which is equally lacking in internal democracy. Just consider the bureaucratic 'ousting' of the vilified 'gang of four'. This abrupt switch in the central leadership of the Chinese government was accomplished without the slightest consultation of the Chinese people.

PARALLEL

With such totalitarian rule, what is there for socialists to defend? Not to change the subject, let's discuss a parallel situation. Considering the enormous sell-outs by trade union leaders, how can one support the unions against the bosses? How can one support the TUC against the Tories when the same TUC, last year, sold out the firemen's strike and earlier this year that of the NUPE workers fighting for a decent living wage?

For thinking trade unionists, the answer is not difficult. Long experience has shown that the worst union is better than no union at all. No class-conscious unionist would argue that defending the unions against the Tories—defending, for example, the right to picket—means defending the bureaucrats who live off the unions. Generally speaking, it's the best fighters against the bosses who see most clearly the need to get rid of the bureaucrats.

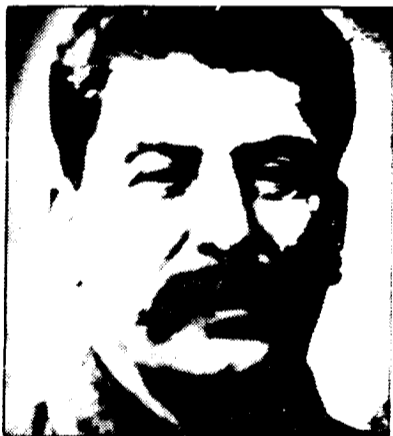
For such unionists, the fight to remove the bureaucrats in the TUC is a key part of the fight against the bosses. But they keep their priorities straight. They

know that the fight against the bosses comes first. A socialist attitude towards the unions is much the same as one towards the USSR or China.

DEMOCRACY

Socialists support the USSR against the capitalist West because 50 years ago, the Soviet people abolished capitalism, nationalised industry and introduced a planned economy for use and not profit. Today, the Soviet people—still living in a hostile capitalist circle—continue to do without many material things. But their standard of living is still vastly better than before the revolution.

A similar case can be made for China. Before its revolution, it was—like India—engulfed by seemingly insoluble problems. But while India remains a cesspool of misery, post-capitalist China has



made major steps forward despite the often ruinous policies of Mao and his heirs. A striking thing about the planned economies of these countries is their ability to provide jobs for all who need them. Contrast that to the West where unemployment is endemic as we move ever deeper into a slump.

Such economic conquests are worth defending by socialists just as a union—despite its leaders—is worth defending against any attempts by the bosses to curb its rights. Such defence doesn't mean, however, any support at all for the cynical cliques who run these countries and who daily crush the democratic rights of the Soviet or Chinese people.

While defending these economies, socialists support each and every struggle towards true socialist democracy. Such a task is the task of the Soviet and Chinese people themselves—aided by the world labour movement. Leaving it up to the likes of 'human rights' Carter is like leaving it up to Fords or British Leyland to get rid of the bureaucrats in the T&GWU or the AUEW.

The National SCLV - Anti-Cuts Conference

Road to ~ ~ ~

If the EEC elections have done little else, they have at least highlighted the dead-end policies of the European Communist Parties. With 7-8 million unemployed, the only path that can protect working people in Europe from wage freezes, lay-offs and austerity programmes is one that unites them in international solidarity against the capitalist system.

But instead of using the elections to put forward policies that can unite workers, the CPs have waged campaigns that are a far cry from the internationalism of the October revolution. Their main concern has been to devise electoral programmes which 'tie' the working class, in their different countries, to the apron strings of their own ruling class. This explains the often widely divergent positions adopted, for example, between the Italian and French parties.

'HISTORIC COMPROMISE'

Since the beginnings of the sixties, the Italian 'road to socialism' has been based on a strong pro-European orientation. The party stands not only for the enlargement of the EEC and the election of a European Parliament but also for the transfer of powers from the national to the European parliament.

It goes even further in that it accepts the framework of military alliances in Europe, NATO in particular. As CP leader Berlinguer put it in the 1976 Italian election, he felt more 'secure' in the NATO camp than the Warsaw Pact when it came to developing his experiment of 'progress towards socialism.'

In fact, of course, this pro-European stance has nothing to do with 'internationalism'. It merely represents a further step in their support for the aims of their own ruling class. Just as the CP is willing to participate in 'austerity programmes' at home with the Christian Democrats, so it is also willing to participate in European 'austerity programmes' in alliance with European capital. As Pajetta, the Italian CP's Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs said last September: "I do not think that the socialist transformation of Europe is on the agenda."

NATIONALIST POISON

The French CP, on the other hand, has waged a fiercely nationalist campaign, in defence of the 'French nation'. Conjuring up the old fears of the abandonment of the 'French heritage' to German dominance, the party has done its best to encourage nationalist poison among working people.

Communist mayors have already proclaimed the need to limit the number of immigrants in their towns, an attitude clearly designed to pave the way for racist moods. In fact, the CP hasn't hesitated to use the ideas and terminology of the far 'right'. Comments such as "France is dictated to by foreigners" and France is becoming the 'doormat of German imperialism' are typical of their stance on the EEC.

These chauvinist outbursts are part of a tradition in the party. Back in the fifties and sixties, it led virulent campaigns against European integration, always in the name of defending the 'French national interest'.



FRENCH CP LEADER MARCHAIS

AIMS

The CP's anti-market stance shouldn't, however, be confused with an anti-capitalist position. Calls for the 'repatriation' of French capital to France are designed not to provide solutions for working people but to bolster French capital. Its narrow nationalism, like much of that manifested in the anti-common market campaigns led by the Labour 'lefts' in Britain, covers up its acceptance of the capitalist system in its own country.

At the same time, of course, the CP's position is partly designed to make inroads into the Socialist Party of Mitterand which is strongly pro-European and which has been making gains from the CP recently. Its nationalist thrust aims to offer a 'solution'—albeit in capitalist terms—to the problems faced by French workers by placing the blame on Germany or Italy.

NATIONAL ROADS

These different positions adopted by the Italian and French CPs reflect the national conditions existing in their own separate countries. In both cases, the differences are determined not by the needs of the French or Italian workers but by the needs of French or Italian capital.

There is, of course, nothing new in this. The trends towards 'national roads' to socialism proclaimed by the Communist Parties represents, essentially, a growing adaptation to the needs and interests of their own ruling class. The positions adopted on the EEC brought this out perhaps more starkly than at any other time.

The way forward for workers in Europe, however, lies neither in supporting the chauvinist positions of the French CP or the 'European' perspective of the Italian. It lies in developing growing unity among themselves to fight for a Socialist United States of Europe.

TIM ROBINSON (NALGO)

BY DAVE MACLEOD

A conference on 'Labour and the Crisis of Local Government', organised by the Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory in June, suddenly lost its way in the final afternoon session.

Up to that point, the conference had been very successful. It was well attended by over 100 delegates from CLPs, trade unions and trades councils, with a similar number of visitors.

Opening speeches were given by Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council, who outlined the very serious effects of government cuts on local councils, and Mike Ward, ex-councillor from Wandsworth, who gave a thoughtful speech on the way Labour should respond to the cuts, emphasising the need for a coherent programme to be adopted.

WORKSHOPS

This was followed by a series of workshops, including ones on local democracy, housing, and the lessons of Poplar and Clay Cross. A lot of useful points were raised in the workshops, focusing particularly on how the labour movement should conduct an anti-cuts campaign and the ways to resolve the problems of Labour councils faced with the prospects of imposing cuts in services.

A particularly useful discussion was on how the labour movement

at a local level must reorganise itself into a campaigning organisation and intervene effectively in the local community. This was a theme which ran throughout the conference.

By the final session, it was clear that the conference was unanimous in its intention to set up local anti-cuts groups to be coordinated at an all-London conference in the autumn.

DEBATE

A heated debate ensued, however, around whether rate increases could be a way forward for Labour councils faced with cuts in the rate support grant, later this year.

Obviously they cannot. Increasing rates only accepts the Tory cuts by passing the burden onto working people. It was probably not correct, however, to have raised the issue so centrally at a

first meeting which should have been trying to gain as much unity as possible.

Partly as a result of some unorthodox chairing of the final session, and partly as a result of this last debate—conducted very 'abstractly'—many delegates and visitors left the conference with a feeling of anti-climax and disappointment.

FUTURE

Let's hope the experience of this conference will be an object lesson for the future on how not to kill a founding meeting dead in its tracks before it has even got off the ground. The wound was not fatal, however, and the enthusiasm of this conference will be part of a much wider response to build an anti-cuts campaign to fight against the class war declared by the Thatcher government.

Resolution Shows Perspective

1. Conference will campaign for all local Authorities to refuse to implement the cuts.
2. That the trade union and labour movement should mobilise in support of those councils resisting the cut-backs.
3. That in the fight against the Tory government's attacks on the public sector, the demand for a cut rather than an increase in military spending and for the finance released to be spent on Public Spending should be campaigned for in the trade union and labour movement.
4. That the conference will sponsor and support an all-London Labour Party and Trade Union delegate conference for later this year to organise the fight against the Tory cuts in public spending.

SOUTHWARK - Democracy at stake

BY CAROL TURNER
(Dulwich Labour Councillor)

The public outrage surrounding the proposed new town hall in Southwark reflects a deep controversy within Southwark Labour Party itself. Two of the three constituency Labour Parties have come out against the project and offered support to the expelled councillors who defied the whip to vote against it.

The arguments used against the £70-million scheme are clear. Degrading environment, a 10% unemployment rate, incomes well below the national average and local services falling far below local needs. Those in its favour are not (except perhaps to the inner circle of senior officers and Labour councillors who run the Council.)

No explanation has been forthcoming from them, for example, as to why the feasibility study on renovating existing buildings was only commissioned after the whip was on to support the new town hall. Why was the study carried out—in three weeks flat!—by the same architects who drew up plans for the new civic centre? Could it be the establishment realised too late their complacency was ill-founded?

OUT OF TOUCH

Feelings on both sides of the Labour group run deep since the original 11 were expelled in January. This is hardly surprising.



Ms Carol Turner (Lab)
Waverley Ward

The Labour establishment is led by Council Leader John O'Grady, a former vice-chairperson of the Social Democratic Alliance, an organisation which distinguished itself in recent elections by calling on voters not to support Labour candidates named on its 'Communist' blacklist. The same organisation spawned Reg Prentice.

Selling council houses, running down direct labour and distraint—using the bailiff against tenants in arrears—are just a few of the 'management techniques' of Southwark Council's leading socialists.

Inevitably, the image of the party is conveyed through such figures. Their out-of-touch arrogance has discouraged many local activists from membership. The party machine ground too slowly into action, unfortunately, to harness progressive elements in the campaign against a new

town hall—a campaign born before the issue was ever an item on any GMC agenda.

DEMOCRACY

The struggle in Southwark is not only about the bricks and mortar of an unwanted and unnecessary civic centre, but around the accountability of local representatives of the labour movement. It is quite clear that the bulldozing through of the Council's plans for a town hall was done in opposition to the local Labour Parties and Labour feeling generally in Southwark.

Paper resolutions opposing it, and abstract talk about 're-selection' are not enough. Local representatives have been subject to automatic re-selection for years and this in itself has not changed Southwark Council and others like it. The only way re-selection can become a living issue is by the greater involvement of the Labour movement in local affairs.

The potential for such involvement exists in the coming period as local Councils are called upon to implement the cut-backs recently passed in the Tory budget. It is only by mobilising local support and turning the councils like Southwark into real fighting bodies against Tory policies that the cut-backs can be challenged. Such a fight will also, necessarily, involve combatting those elements on the Council who are already implementing Tory policies.

Tories launch anti-union curbs

By P. Henning

The Tories' package of anti-union curbs was finally unwrapped in the Commons on July 9. Although no mention was made of the threat to reduce benefit to strikers' families, the proposals include attempts to:

- * erode the right to 'secondary picketing';
- * undermine the closed shop by demanding a two-thirds agreement among the workforce;
- * halve the statutory period of redundancy notice;
- * extend the qualifying period for claims of unfair dismissal.

Such proposals stand in a long line of similar anti-union legislation which can be traced back through Heath's ill-fated *Industrial Relations Act* to Wilson's 1969 *In Place of Strife* which also sought to cut back the right to strike.

AIM

The aim of such anti-democratic moves is crystal-clear. Faced with a growing economic crisis, the Tories and their big business backers are seeking to shift the burden of it onto the shoulders of working people through a growing jobless total and low wages.

In order to ram home this offensive, curbing the rights of trade unions to defend their members' interests becomes as central to them as it did, previously, to Ted Heath or even Harold Wilson.

Undermining the right to strike (by curbing pickets) or eroding the closed shop is a clear attempt to weaken trade union resistance to the heavy blows the Tories have in store for manning levels and living standards.

GAMBLE

The Tories are taking a gamble however. Previous attempts to ham-

string the unions were notoriously unsuccessful. Wilson's *In Place of Strife* had to be shame-facedly withdrawn under mass protest and Heath's *Industrial Relations Act* led to massive strikes which culminated, in 1974, in the miners' action which threw him out of office.

Whether or not the Tories are successful this time will depend, of course, on the resistance offered by the labour movement. Already there has been a lot of fighting talk. T&GWU leader Moss Evans, for example, has pledged 'maximum opposition' to the Tory proposals and has called on the TUC to give a strong lead in 'defence of basic trade union rights'.

It will need more than words, however, to force the Tories to withdraw their threat to democratic rights. What determined the defeat of the Heath government was not protests from union headquarters but the mass actions—notably that of the miners—in the streets. It is

such actions today that are needed and not the trips back and forth to Downing Street by the TUC in their harmless 'negotiations' with Jim Prior or Margaret Thatcher.

ACTION

Trade union and Labour militants should vigorously protest this 'dialogue' going on between TUC leaders and the Tory government about trade union rights. As far as we are concerned, none of our rights—won after years of long and bitter struggle—are 'negotiable'.

Rather than discussing with the Tories, what the trade union leaders should be doing is preparing massive resistance to the Tories' proposals. They should let them know that any attempt to tinker with union rights will meet mass opposition and that the entire movement will rally round if Thatcher's proposals are used against any section of trade unionists.



It is resolutions along these lines that should be pushed through trade union and Labour Party branches and which should also be raised at the coming TUC conference, in the autumn. If the Tories steamroller is to be stopped, priority must be given to organising a real fighting campaign to defend our democratic rights.

middle east fraud

The provisions of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty signed in March are being carried out on schedule. El Arish, the Sinai Peninsula's main town, was returned to Egyptian rule on May 25 after twelve years of Israeli occupation.

On the same day, negotiations over the future of the Israeli-occupied West Bank opened in Beersheba.

These events made page-one headlines in the big business press. But other moves, which are just as much a part of the Mideast deal worked out under President Carter's prodding, have not been played up in the same way. These include:

- * Approval by the US Senate of 4.8 billion dollars in additional armaments for the Israeli and Egyptian regimes;
- * Stepped-up attacks on the people of Lebanon by Israeli military forces;
- * A tightening of the Zionist grip on the occupied territories;
- * And finally, broad hints that US military forces might be stationed in the Sinai.

MURDER

Since April 10, well over 100 persons—the vast majority civilians—have been killed in Israeli air, naval, and artillery raids on Lebanese villages. Hundreds more have been wounded.

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin boasted in a May 7 speech that "we struck at the Palestinian murderers," and called for the expulsion of the 400,000 Palestinians in Lebanon. Begin declared that "there should be no difficulty" in resettling the Palestinians in other Arab countries.



Although there is nothing new about the Israeli regime perpetrating mass murder in Lebanon, the new treaty with Egypt has given the Zionists a freer hand.

AUTONOMY

Begin has also spelled out his proposal for Palestinian "autonomy", as promised in the treaty with Egypt. Under his plan:

- * Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would continue, as would Zionist colonisation.
- * Israel would retain control of more than a million acres of "state land" in the West Bank,
- * Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza would be subject only to Israeli law.
- * The 1.2 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza would be allowed to elect a local council—after the candidates were OK'd by Israeli authorities—but the council would not be allowed to pass legislation.

FRAUD

Israeli Minister of Agriculture, Ariel Sharon, outlined the government's view of Palestinian "self-rule" in an interview in the May 9 *Christian Science Monitor*.

"Our troops will have the right to go into the cashbah of Nablus [the largest West Bank town outside Jerusalem]. go in there are arrest people, search for weapons, and so on," Sharon declared.

He added, "Take it for granted—about our military presence and settlements there—that will be forever."

Even editors of the *Washington Post* had to admit on May 7 that "plainly, from the viewpoint of Palestinian self-determination, this plan is a fraud."

SOFT COP

These comments reflect the diplomatic stance of American imperialism. Just as it did in the years leading up to the deal between Begin and Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat, Washington is striving to play soft cop to the Zionist regime's hard cop.

Carter hopes that if the negotiations are drawn out long enough, and if Sadat manages to hang on to power in Egypt, there will be new opportunities to undermine Arab opposition to the treaty.

THREAT

But such a waiting game has its risks. What if Sadat's position is challenged by the Egyptian masses, or revolution threatens to triumph elsewhere in the Arab world?

"I would not rule out the use of force to defend our vital interests in the area," Secretary of Defense Harold Brown told *Newsweek*.

Such leaks by lower-level officials are used as trial balloons by the government, to try to accustom the American people to the idea of stationing US military forces in the area.

By DAVID FRANKEL

[taken from Intercontinental Press, June 11th, 1979]

1000 attend 'Defend our Union Conference

By DAVE MACLEOD

On June 23-24, over 1,000 delegates from a number of unions met in Manchester at a 'Defend Our Unions' conference organised by Rank-and-File.

The conference was unanimous in declaring what amounted to a declaration of war on Thatcher's government for its proposed anti-union legislation. Rejecting any idea of TUC talks with the Tories, delegates demanded an action programme calling for an end to all cuts, incomes policies and productivity deals, and for the 35-hour week.

To back up the call, conference decided to lobby the TUC on September 5 and to unite future activities with that of the Liaison Committees for the Defence of Trade Unions.

CODE OF PRACTICE

More important, delegate after delegate—basing themselves on the experience of recent disputes at Sandersons, Roneo Vickers (Kirkby), Dunlop Speke—supported the idea of a 'code of practice' to defend basic union principles in the period ahead. These included:

- 1 No crossing of picket lines;
- 2 For the defence of the 100% closed shop;
- 3 For full rank-and-file decision making by traditional democratic procedures—no enforced secret ballots;
- 4 Strikes to be run by elected strike committees;
- 5 All appeals for blacking and financial assistance for disputes to be carried out;
- 6 Support calls made by strike committees for mass sympathy strikes;
- 7 No settlement of disputes without full report-backs to, and decision-making by, the members concerned.

ALTERNATIVE

While declaring war on the Tories,

however, delegates showed little sympathy with the present Labour leaders. As Avtal Joul (Birmingham, Qualcass, Smethwick) put it: "In the course of this struggle we topple the Thatcher government, we should be prepared for that and organise so that the new government represents not just social democrats but the real workers of this country."

His feelings were shared by many other delegates who strongly attacked Callaghan for his warning against union members not to use their 'industrial power' against the Tories to defend living standards and jobs. No one wanted to replace Thatcher with another pro-capitalist Callaghan government.

While seeing the need to struggle for a new leadership in the labour movement, however—one based on the real needs and interests of working people—there was very little discussion on how this could concretely be achieved.

MANOEUVERS

The organisers of the conference, themselves unable to provide a clear way forward, helped stifle such a discussion by manoeuvring to prevent amendments to resolutions being put. These manoeuvres clearly worried a number of delegates who quite rightly associate such practices with the union bureaucrats they criticise.

While the conference decisions—if taken up in the labour movement—can be a basis for preparing to fight back against the Tory attacks, they still don't solve the 64,000 dollar question: how can we ensure that we don't have a simple re-run of the 1974-79 experience? How can we ensure that removing Thatcher will not merely saddle us with another pro-capitalist Labour government which will only serve to alienate thousands more Labour voters?

The only answer to that is, of course, being in the Labour Party and fighting there for socialist policies against the Callaghan clique.

fund drive

SOCIALIST ACTION, unlike the bourgeois press, has no vast funds to promote it. It relies purely on sales and on what readers and sympathisers can donate to it.

If you would like to make a donation—however small, it all helps—please send cheques or postal orders to:

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Socialist Action

Hands Off Zimbabwe



By M.B.

ON MAY 28th, the new 'black majority' government was installed in Zimbabwe. Bishop Muzorewa—the new Prime Minister—proclaimed it a "historic victory" after 88 years of white, colonial rule. In reality, of course, the 'victory' was not for Zimbabwe's five million Black majority but for Ian Smith and his white racist backers in Pretoria, London and Washington. That is, if he gets away with it.

The elections that gave birth to Muzorewa's puppet government represented a last-ditch attempt by Smith to block the struggle for the Black majority for true independence, majority rule and social progress. They were a fraud from beginning to end.

As the Report of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group put it: "The recent election in Rhodesia was nothing more than a gigantic confidence trick. . . . A high percentage poll was all that was deemed necessary to hoodwink the international community and secure recognition".

POWER

Based on a constitution in which the Black majority had no hand in drafting, the elections gave a disproportionately large influence to the white electorate, each of whose votes carried nine times the weight of a Black vote. Although whites are only 4% of the total population, they received 28% of the seats in Parliament and a similar number of cabinet seats.

Moreover, while Muzorewa's

government has a formal Black majority, the white minority has been careful to keep control of such key areas as police, army, civil service, judiciary and the economy.

COMPULSION

The previous government, as part of its drive to 'herd' Blacks to the voting booth, carefully avoided explaining these 'details' of the pact to Black voters. They also took extensive steps to ensure that Blacks suspicious of the elections would go along to the polls anyway.

Some 100,000 troops were mobilised throughout the country in a massive display of force designed to intimidate Blacks to vote. Shortly before voting began, the police in Bulawayo, for example, arrested more than 900 Blacks

because they tried to organise a campaign to get Blacks to spoil their ballot papers. The message was clear: anyone opposing the elections would face similar treatment.

ASSISTANCE

Undoubtedly, the Smith regime hopes that with this forced turnout of 64% of the electorate, they can claim the elections as 'free and fair' and thus gain credibility for the new puppet regime. Sheltering behind its facade, they hope to be able to both maintain their fingers on the levers of military and economic power and escalate the repression against the Black liberation fighters.

They have obvious backing in this from their white racist allies in South Africa. According to the *New York Times* (April 27), Pretoria has already offered the new Muzorewa government massive arms and financial assistance—including the possible use of South African troops—to combat the Patriotic Front.

COLLUSION

A correspondingly sympathetic attitude towards the puppet regime has also grown up in London and Washington more recently. Playing down the undemocratic

nature of the elections and the widespread use of force to make Blacks vote, both governments have leaned towards viewing the elections as 'free and fair'.

In Washington, the Senate passed a motion calling on Carter to drop sanctions against Zimbabwe and to recognise the new regime. In London, the new Tory government has accepted without question the phoney Boyd "report" which stated: "We are satisfied that the elections did, in fact, constitute a kind of referendum on the constitution."

CAUTION

While drifting towards support for the Muzorewa government, however, both capitals are moving cautiously. They are only too aware of the mass support the Patriotic Front still commands, in town and countryside, and the dangers to their own investment open support for Smith's racist manoeuvres would bring.

It is clear, however, that their deep fear of the impact of the Zimbabwean revolution on Southern Africa impels them to employ whatever forces are available to hold it back. If the Patriotic Front cannot be manoeuvred into any 'co-operative' acts, then they will be increasingly forced to support the puppet regime backed by the armed might of white supremacist South Africa.

SOLIDARITY

For socialists and anti-racists in the labour movement, a central task in the coming months will be to block any attempt by the Thatcher government to give her weight to the manoeuvres of the white racists. It is up to socialists to mount a campaign to win the labour movement to resolute opposition to such attempts—and to demonstrate such opposition on the streets.

Fighting against Thatcher's more overt support for white racist tactics does not mean, however, backing the previous Labour government's position of attempting to 'woo' sections of the Patriotic Front into a 'representative' government. Socialists should demand an end to any interference with the right of the Zimbabwean people to determine their own future. The key demand should be 'Hands off Zimbabwe!'

their main thrust will probably be to hold a few protest actions combined with a campaign to return a Labour government in five years time.

Moreover, their opposition to the Tories' proposals rests upon support for those same right-wing policies that lost Labour the election. Workers in the public sector will not exactly be attracted to a campaign which utters only token threats against the Tories in the hope of replacing it with a government which also believes in slashing social services and holding down wages of the low-paid.

THRUST

The Labour leaders must not be allowed, however, to get off the hook with uttering toothless threats to the Tories combined with propaganda for the return of a right-wing Labour government later. What they have to be forced into building is a real fighting campaign *now* to stop the Tories hack-

ing the social services to pieces and throwing thousands of teachers, civil servants and hospital workers on the dole.

No cut back in the Public Sector. No redundancies—for the 35-hour week. For a minimum living wage—tie wage increases to the cost of living to offset inflation. These are the demands that have to be taken up in a living campaign against the Tories.

Such demands have to be taken up in trade union branches, Labour Party wards and at the coming Labour Party conference. The Labour leaders have to be called on to mobilise a mass campaign against Tory policies and, if they won't, to step down for those who will. No group of workers should be allowed to go it alone as happened last year when NUPE was virtually isolated in the fight for a decent living wage.

The struggle against the Tory cut-backs concerns us all. It needs a united labour movement response to defeat it.

ABORTION

(Continued from p.1)

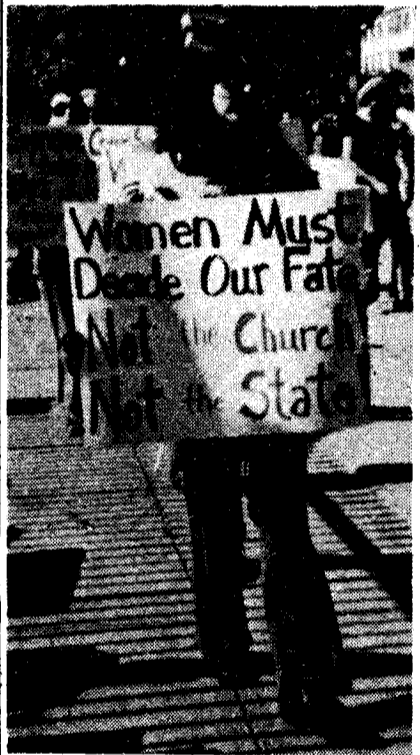
In 1976, under the threat of the Benyon Bill, both the TUC & Labour Party conferences went on record as supporting women's right to abortion on request.

Only last year, over 500 trade unionists - including NUPE leader Alan Fisher - attended a NAC conference to pledge support for any action against attempts to curb women's abortion rights.

PLEDGES

Now is the time to live up to those pledges. 'Paper' support is not sufficient to stop the anti-abortion moves the Tories have unleashed. Only by turning those paper pledges into mass support on the streets can the labour movement become a real ally of women in the fight to defend - and extend - their rights.

This means raising the issue openly both in trade union and Labour Party branches, getting them to affiliate to NAC and to support all the activities NAC



is calling for in the period ahead.

Equally important, it means fighting within the Labour Party to ensure that MPs are not allowed to wriggle round the issue by voting according to their 'conscience'. It means fighting to get them to carry on the struggle within Parliament by carrying out Labour Party conference decisions.

* National Abortion Campaign

What You Can Do

1. Pass resolutions through your trade union, Labour Party branches against the Corrie Bill;

2. Invite speakers down to your organisation from NAC to explain the situation in more detail;

3. Affiliate to your local NAC group - or, if one doesn't exist, set one up;

4. Demand your Labour MP oppose the Corrie Bill in Parliament;

Anti-Cuts Campaign

already announced an overtime ban against the recruitment 'freeze'.

The 64,000-strong NATFHE, for example, unanimously passed a resolution last month committing the union to campaign against education cuts in co-operation with other public sector unions. NALGO, at its conference in June, pledged backing for any branch fighting redundancies and supported the idea of a national offensive against Tory budget proposals.

It is quite clear that among a

wide layer of public sector unions—and in the labour movement as a whole—there is a growing understanding of the need to build a fighting campaign now to defend jobs and the welfare state.

TUC ACTION

But will the Labour leaders reflect these feelings and what will they concretely propose to combat the Tory drive? If Jim Callaghan has his way—nothing. Speaking at a Labour Women's conference last month, he issued a stern warning against the unions using any 'industrial power' to defend jobs and living standards.

The same weak-kneed response emerged from the TUC. As the *Guardian* astutely observed last week, while being strong in words, they "stopped short of letting the war wagons roll". While issuing token threats against the Tories,

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