As jobless total hits 1.9 m

SCRAP MISSILES NOT JOBS

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

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

- In the West Midlands, 36,000 jobs have disappeared since January alone;
- In South Wales, 6,000 pitworkers jobs are to go besides the 11,000 in steel;
- In the North West, 290,000 jobless are chasing 14,000 vacancies.

ACCIDENT?

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

CONT. BACK PAGE

Protests Rock Racist Regime

by Pete Marais

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

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

The bulk of the more than 100,000 student protestors are from that section of the Black population classified by the government as Coloured (of mixed ancestry), although African and Indian students in some cities have joined in.

UPSURGE

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

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

After that, spread as far afield as the Stilfontein gold mine, where 4,500 downed tools, the Goodyear Tyre Factory at Uitenhage and Cape Town where more than 6,000 meat and clothing workers walked out. The strike by the meat workers was particularly popular - a consumer boycott of red meat was organised by the Black townships in solidarity.

GENERAL STRIKE

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

Humphrey Tyler, in the Christ-

CLAMPDOWN

As it has done during previous periods of Black resistance, the apartheid regime has sought mainly to clamp down the bud through
SOCIALISM STARTS NOW!

Bob Swart
(Streaming CLP)

PEACE, JOBS, FREEDOM

Callaghan - and his right-wing cronies - got a rough ride at the special one-day Labour Party conference last May. Owen was booted when he called for the retention of Cruise Missiles and Healy mounted the platform to cries of "Out! Out!"
Moreover, they were also served notice that if the party activists and delegates want to run democracy, they're going to have to take on the old Labour leaders. Concentrating of delegates at the next conference was not to be played with. The Rank-and-File Mobilising Committee - at its last meeting - argued the need to deepen them still further, particularly around PlP accountability.

SHIFT

The fact that the right-wing came in for such a drubbing clearly reflects the shift left among party rank-and-file since the Tories came to power. There is a growing understanding that it is impossible to take on the Tories under the banner of the old leadership which lost Labour the election.

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

And yet despite the radical talk and the obvious feeling for clear alternative policies - the mass of delegates left the conference hall empty-handed. What could have been a real chance to discuss how to mobilise action against the Tories became a talking shop used by the NEC in its spinning match with the right-wing.

WEAKNESS

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

By opposing the programme of a future "democratic" Labour government to the march the Tories are now creating is not enough. Just how will the programme of a Labour government in 4 years time stop being jobs being sold today, the social services being slashed, or the attacks on women and Black people?

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

AWAKE

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

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

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

STEP FORWARD

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

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

By Mike Rodney answers an article on the 'Labour Left against Thatcher' in the June issue of Socialist Review.

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

DEMONSTRATION

In an important move to extend the gains on party democracy - begun at the last conference - another initiative has been launched by the Rank-and-File Mobilising Committee.
Launched at the Socialist Action conference last June, the committee is supported by seven organisations including: the SCLV (Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory), Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Hillsborough Coordinating Committee and National organisation of Labour Students (NOLS).

The Mobilising Committee is organised around 5 basic policies. These are:
1. Mandatory re-selection of MPs
2. NEC to decide the manifesto
3. Change the structure of the NEC
4. The party must decide the machinery of government
5. The PLP accountable.

While some of the points are "obvious" - particularly the NEC - the PLP's accountability is a major step forward in uniting the left in the fight for party democracy and should be supported by all trade union and PL activists.

Dave McLeod (TGWU)

Since the Labour leaders were unceremoniously thrown out of office at the last election, the debate about policies and direction in the Labour Party has hotted up. For socialists, such a debate is crucial because it is within the Labour Party that is being hammered out exactly what opposition must be mounted against the Tories and what government must replace Thatcher when she is finally removed?

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

WRANGLE

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

It is clearly true, as Birchall says, that there are severe limitations on the oppositional "groundswell" building up. The Bennite left, despite their rhetoric, have done very little to mobilise union ranks against the Tory offensive.

Moreover, despite the calls for democracy, they have not yet sought to challenge the leadership by putting forward a vote for the removal of Callaghan and others who refuse to abide by the decisions of conference.

POINT?

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

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

LESSONS

Perhaps, in this respect, it might be useful for Birchall and other SWP's to brush up a little on their history. They might find that the Labour Party was born out of the struggles of the unions at the turn of the century and that - for all its faults - it remains the political arm of the trade union movement. What is needed under their belt, they might take another step forward and realise that this is why 10 years from now they should be voting Labour every year and will continue to do so for some time to come.

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

TWOPRONGED

That struggle, which is developing at present, will take two prongs. The first will be an attempt to make the party adopt policies in the interests of working people. The fact that it was the Labour Party which launched the mass anti-cuts demonstration last year, which has pioneered the anti-nuclear fightback and which gave serious support to the fight against Thatcher's racist immigration policies shows that this is already beginning to happen.

Secondly, the fight will also take place at the organisational level to force the Labour leaders, once in office, to implement these policies. The big debate that is now opening up over mandatory re-selection, election of the leader of the party and conference decisions being binding on the government are clear examples of this.

SIDELINES

All socialists, if they are serious about getting involved in the way forward for the Labour movement and for the working class, should be in the Labour Party arguing for a clear perspective.

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

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

MEDECINE

Strangely enough, in a truly paradoxical way, the end of Birchall's article spells out the basic weakness of the SWP's position. He writes: "Tribune has devoted many articles to Thatcher's policies on wages and antisocial laws: some of them are interest- ing and well-informed. But all are characterised by a sense of looking at trade union move- ment from the standpoint of the NEC's policies and predict- ing its achievements, but not at any price fighting for a line inside that movement."

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

NEW PAMPHLET

The Labour Party Which Way?
Stop these racist attacks!
by Mike Rodney (CARL Steer, Ctte)

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

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

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

NATIONALITY

The contents of the government's proposed Nationality Bill are not yet known in any detail. It is likely, however, that they will be based upon the Green Paper produced by a Select Ctte in 1977 of which Timmy Rainey was a member.

The Green Paper suggested two classes of citizen - the British and the British Overseas Citizen (BOC). It need hardly be stated that most BOCs will be white and BOCs Black.

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

RAIDS

Less than a month ago, for example, over 50 immigration officers and police swooped on nine 'Black settlements' in the genteel fashion appropriate. In a totally arbitrary way, they seized over 30 people and locked them up for between five and ten hours.

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

ISOLATED?

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

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

NATIONALITY

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

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

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

According to expectations, it may drastically effect the civil rights of victims of the Act and propounding on the need to build a mass movement against it.

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

MEETING

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

South London CARL - uniting preparations for the meeting contact: SL CARL, c/o Lambsbury House, 41 Cambewell Grove, London SE5.

Discussion Forums

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

We will send you further details of our current programmes of forums.
PEOPLE BEFORE BOMBS

Last month's mass demonstration against nuclear missiles and a major re-surge of the anti-nuclear movement in Britain. It was in direct response to Tony Defence Secretary Francis Pym's announcement that 160 missiles were about to be sited over here. 2,000 US Air Force personnel will, it seems, accompany the missiles which will be guarded by 220 British soldiers. Pym justified the new import on the grounds that it will 'balance' Russia's deadly $200 long-range missile. He also went on to assure us that the weapons will only be used by joint agreement between Britain and the USA. What he was less keen to admit was that there will be no 'dual-key' system and that the button will operate on Carter's orders alone.

CUTS

The cruise missiles - which form part of our commitment to NATO - cost us $300 million. Tony plans to replace the ageing Polaris submarines do not. Massive increases in defence spending are already underway at a time when Thatcher is only too keen to slash health, education and housing to the bone.

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

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

CAUSE.

But why have Carter & Thatcher plunged so suddenly into the arms race at a time of growing recession? Why are the so-called limited resources to be spent on nuclear death-traps rather than on social need? The answer - at least from them - are predictable.

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

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

RED ARMY

In order to justify this position, figures about the Soviet Union's 'heavier-stocked military arsenal' are deliberately exaggerated. CND's journal, Saneity, for example suggests that figures on the actual size of the Red Army differ by as much as one million. It also notes that the supposed superior tank force of the Warsaw Pact is made up entirely of T54/ T55 tanks which first saw service as long ago as 1949. Others, it claims, are even older.

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

IRAN

So what is the build-up really about? If the imperialists already outdistance the Warsaw Pact, why do they pour in yet more money into arms? The West's change in mood began

MONDY PYTHON'S NUCLEAR GAMES

Did you know that with a few home-made props you & your family can survive a nuclear war? No? Then read Protect & Survive, just published by the government. Or wait for one to be pushed through your door when the country is faced with an immediate nuclear attack.

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

FALLOUT ROOM

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

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

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

INNER REFUGE

Here are some ideas for the 'inner refuge':

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

* Put sandbags on the stairs and live in the cupboard under the stair.

* Live under the table surrounded by suitcases, crates of darts, and other radiation-proof items lying around.

You will need a fortnight's supply of food until normal services are resumed. Also, buy hundreds of other things including a 'loo' basket and a calendar to tick off the days.

ATTACK WARNING

Then you hear the sirens. If you are not at home, then get there in 'a couple of minutes'.

'If you are out in the open, go to the nearest building'.

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

FALLOUT

After the nuclear attack you get up and attend to any essential tasks before the fallout descends. If the house is on fire, you put it out. "If there is structural damage from the attack, you may have some time before the fallout warning to do minor jobs to keep out the radioactive dust'.

'If you are not out of doors, keep out the fallout, at least you can keep your garden'.

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

It's all very simple, really. What I can't understand is why - if it is this easy - all the government effort is being put into massive underground shelters.

NEC backs anti-nuclear demo

By Phil Dent (NUT)

Following the major anti-Cruise Missiles demonstration last month, the Labour Party NEC has decided to support another march - called by the CND - for October 26th.

Joyce Gould and Jenny Little have been chosen to represent the party on the steering committee organising the march. The decision created a major uproar on the NEC as, indeed, did the press party demonstration. Jim Callaghan warned that supporting a march against nuclear weapons was tantamount to accepting a policy of 'unilateral disarmament'.

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

By Terry Vince (Croydon CLP)

As always, let's keep the pressure on, from the grassroots to the top. We can win, if we don't give up.

OPPOSITION

The task, however, is to begin by terrify the government into thinking that it is in itself its decision to support the CND demonstration this October. Continued action must now be mounted to achieve the objective of agreeing to abandon any British 'deterrant' and to get out of NATO now!
Cuts: THATCHER TURNS SCREW

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

The only way they can put capitali¬

ism back on its feet is by cutting workers’ wages either directly (by an incomes policy) or indirectly (by cut-backs in the welfare state).

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

* HOUSING

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

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

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

* EDUCATION

Carlisle’s decision to drop 10% off education by 1983/4 reveals the same depressing story. State educ¬

ation, as we know it, is being destroyed before our eyes.

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

For Carlisle and its ilk, of course, this is hardly important. The children who ‘matter’ can be sent to fee-paying schools where they will not be affected by such prob¬

lems.

* HEALTH

At the last budget, to show how concerned they are with ordinary people, the Tories announced a 5% increase in health care by 1983/4.

In fact, when the inflation rate is taken into account, health will have suffered a massive cut.

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

DEFENCE

The result of these cut-backs will not only be desperate housing, out¬

date schools and inadequate health care stretching into the next decade, but a massive increase in the jobless total.

In education alone, for example, it was recently leaked that the government will be figuring cut¬

backs that would lead to a decrease of over 100,000 employees (50% of which would be teachers).

Just by Tim Robinson (NALGO) has been occupied.

It was undoubtedly this pres¬

sure which forced the Labour lead¬

ers to call for a national day of action against the cuts last year. But, while they have been willing to stand up and mount one-day protests, they have refused to turn this mounting anger into an ongoing anti-cuts campaign.

WARNINGS

On the contrary, figures such as Jim Callaghan are warning that the attic protests with weak-kneed appeals to ‘wait’ for the return of a Labour government in 4 years.

This is not exactly surprising. After all, when he was in office, didn’t he slash social expenditure by a quarter? How can he be expected to defend the Tory government when he has done nothing for the policies it is pursuing?

FIGHT-BACK

The Labour leaders cannot be allowed, however, to get away with their toothless threats against the Tories combined with a masterful inactivity.

They have to be forced now - as Ted Knight explained in the recent one-day conference - to lead a real fighting campaign to change things.

Such a campaign could begin by drawing together the various struggles (that have resulted from the break-up of ILEA, against cut-backs in nursery provisions, against hos¬

pital closures - into a national fight to halt the Tories in their tracks.

This wouldn’t mean that these campaigns would lose their ‘independ¬

ence’ but that a real working relation between them could be developed on a common objective, stop the cuts going through.

RESPONSE

Thatcher’s attack has, of course, sparked off a vigorous protest from the Shadow Cabinet which has condemned it as ‘vicious’ and ‘uncalled for’. They are no doubt aware of the groundswell of opp¬

osition rising among the rank-and¬

file which - nationwide - has led to the setting up of committees and campaigns to stop the cuts being steamrollered through.

Regional ‘days of action’ have been called; individual unions have taken strike action; campa¬

igns - such as that against the break-up of ILEA - have been set up and individual hospital have

Parents protest ILEA break-up

by Sally Bowdrey (Stratham CLP)

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

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

Stirling with WASP, similar organisations have been set up elsewhere as in Lambeth where, once again, LAMP is involved.

SINGLE ISSUE

Since its formation, LAMP has held public meetings, leaf¬

lettngs and organised letter to the Lady Young Committee. It has gathered a wide response and, at present, has a represen¬

tative in all of the borough’s 123 schools.

The ability of LAMP to draw in such wide support - from left-wing Labour activists to parents representing the ten Catholic schools in the area - is no accident. It stems from the fact that it is willing to unite all organisations & indivi¬

duals - whatever their other views - on the concrete task at hand: defending ILEA.

ADVANTAGES

Although many of us in LAMP recognise the Tory attac¬

k on ILEA is just part of their general thrust, limiting the campaign to a single issue with precise objectives has a distinct advantage.

First, it enables us to build the widest opposition to the Tory attack - and that, after all, is the only way that ILEA will be saved. And, secondly, it allows many people to come through a concrete struggle with the government all the more prepared to deal with the worst aspects of its policies.

BUILDING THE WIDEST POSSIBLE ALLIANCE IS KEY SINCE - ALTHOUGH THE BAKER REPORT DROPPED THE YOUNG CITEE WILL SOON BE DELIVERING A NEW ONE, PROB¬

ABLY THIS SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER.

The very fact that the Commit¬

tee has refused to include teachers, parents or members of the ILEA on it - i.e, anyone concerned with education - gives a clue as to what it may come out with. Even though it might - in the future - recommend the retention of ILEA, it could still do so with such reforms as to make its disolution by another name.

In this sense, contributing to build the campaign on along-term basis remains the only viable perspective.

A CUT IS A CUT...

Council leader Knight: ‘Fight to raise the rate’

up to play, that is to be an in¬

dependent political voice of the class - and not to retain power of this council or that council at the expense of forcing any real defence of our basic rights and living standards.

Socialist Action is quite right to make its demand on this is¬

sue - ‘No cuts, no rate increase’. Is a Cumbrell
WOMEN IN

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialist Action sees as its central aim building, within the labour movement, a left-wing faction of women, the left-wing faction of the Labour Party. Such a faction should support not only policies in the interests of working people but also their allies among the youth, Blacks, women and oppressed national minorities. It is only by showing that Labour champions the rights of all the oppressed and exploited and that a really unified offensive can be organised against the Tories (and their majority government) that the left-wing faction of the Labour Party can be launched.

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

- Ends off the union! No curbs on the right to strike or picket!
- For the 35-hour week! End unemployment by work-sharing (with no loss of pay) and introduce a mass public works programme for those already on the dole.
- Oppose all wage curbs. For wage increases tied to the cost of living to offset inflation.
- Open the books of all companies charging inability to pay a decent living wage or threatening redundancies. Nationalize those that put profit before people.
- For the rich, against the poor! No cuts in the social services – for social spending to be tied to increases in the cost of living.
- For women’s rights. For the right of all women to abortion on demand, free of charge. Fight the march of support for the National Abortion Campaign.
- For the right of Black people to organise in their own community.
- For the right of all oppressed nations to determine their own future – Get the troops out of Ireland now!
- For a safe environment. End nuclear reactors and base an energy strategy on coal. Explore alternative energy resources.

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

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

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

UNITY

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

It is clear that, if the government’s offensive is going to be halted, then serious struggles will have to be waged. Women will need to seek the widest unity among themselves and the most powerful allies they can.

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

NAC

This was dramatically shown on the most NAC demonstration last year against the Corte Bill. A number of women – chanting “Not the unions, not the state, women must decide their fate” – clearly opposed the TUC presence on the march. Such a mood was apparent at the National Child Care Care

Confidence Resolution:

“This conference, recognizing that a comprehensive child care service is essential for women’s equality, agrees to set up a national child care campaign, its overall aim to build a mass national campaign around the demand for comprehensive, flexible and free child care facilities provided by the state.”

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

LABOUR

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

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

The campaign should clearly see its focal point in forcing the Labour Party to pledge, in its manifesto, to halt all cuts in
NAC conference shortly later where some feminists argued strongly for the campaign to be limited to women only (thereby cutting it off from the labour movement in terms of membership and affiliation). Such an attitude is not only unfortunate, it is dangerous. Do these feminists seriously believe that unions are a threat to women’s rights? Do they seriously believe that the TUC – which was fighting for abortion rights – can be placed in the same category as the government which was trying to curb them?

SHORT-SIGHTED

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

This doesn’t mean, of course, that unions – or the Labour Party – will ‘spontaneously’ defend women’s rights.

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

POTENTIAL

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

Anne Williams (NUT)

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

The outcome will decide whether Nicaragua will run in the interest of the majority, or for the profit of a few.

A victory for the masses will see the establishment of a government which would create the conditions for a victory over illiteracy, hunger, rampant disease, and unemployment – as did the Cuban socialist revolution 31 years ago.

Nicaragua started down the road of the Cuban revolution when, in July 1977, a mass uprising of workers and peasants overthrew the brutal dictators Somoza, who for the defense of the revolution from its enemies both at home and abroad, the film has now launched volunteer militias in the workplaces and countryside.

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

The 1980 Plan for Economic Re-activation, now announced sets aside 62% of the budget for health, education and housing, compared to the 7.5% set aside in Somoza’s 1978 budget.

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

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

AID NEEDED

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

Cuba, also a poor country, has responded generously. It has pledged $100 million in aid and sent hundreds of doctors and teachers to Nicaragua. Trade and aid agreements were signed with the Soviet Union in March.

If, however, the United States continues to threaten Nicaragua with military action, millions of the poor in Nicaragua will fall back on the back of the Nicaraguan people. The US Congress froze $35 million in loan aid yesterday.

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

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

Campagne Launched

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

If you are interested in affiliating to the NCC - or finding out more about it, contact: NCC, Surrey Docks Child Care Project, Dockland Settlement, Redriff Rd, London SE 16. Affiliation: £2.50 (indiv), £5 (local groups), £15 (national organisations).

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PATHFINDER

“We represent the immense majority of humanity.”

Fidel Castro at the UN
Last month, Socialist Action supporters in London held a public meeting to discuss the way forward for the Labour Party. Young Socialists, Addressed by George Hold and Graham Weight, the meeting was attended by over 30 people and a lively discussion followed the main speeches. Both speakers touched on the ways in which the Tory attack was affecting young people today. What with Thatcher’s policies, George Hold argued, “the only foreseeable future for thousands of young people leaving school is the dole.”

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

DEAD—END

All young people are affected by these policies, George went on, but certain sections are hit doubly hard. “If you’re black, the situation is doubly hard since unemployment is made more intense by the racist attitudes of employers and police alike.”

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

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

CAMPAIGNS

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

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

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

WAY FORWARD

The key task before the YS was, he ended, to turn it into a real campaigning organisation in which young people can find a voice and a role—an organisation that wins young people around clear issues. It should be taking part in all the struggles against the cuts—particularly around issues like the break-up of ILEA—and against sexual discrimination and for black rights. An acid test was also the need to inscribe on its banners ‘Troops Out of Ireland’, on which the YS so far has a dismal record.

Equally important, he said, was the need to expand their role of young workers to fight for training schemes, for apprentices’ rights and for proper union representation.

DEBATE

The debate following the speeches was lively, with a member of Militant—the majority tendency in the YS—arguing against the memory of the party’s past actions and arguing for a more ‘propagandist’ line.

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

by Liz Eason (NUS)

by George Hold (Peckham YS)

Prior to last year’s general election, the Tories’ advertising machine—engineered by Saatchi and Saatchi—was campaigning vigorously with giant-aced posters proclaiming ‘Labour Isn’t Working.’

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

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

HARDEST HIT

The section of society that will inevitably bear the brunt of this 10% increase is that which is already the hardest hit: young workers and those who are leaving school this summer. Among school-leavers, unemployment increased by 137,509 to 186,926. This is expected to rise still further this month, with the bulk of school-leavers coming onto a shrinking labour market.

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

TACTICS

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

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

Moreover, they can exploit the very divisions they have created—fostering the illusion that ‘young people today’ are ‘scroungers’ or ‘flacks’. And, coming straight from school without any experience of a workplace, young people are isolated and less aware of the need for an organised struggle along the lines of trade union action etc.

CO:C:METRIC

But what of the ‘Youth Opportunities Programme’? Is this perhaps a step in the right direction? It is not. First of all, the YOP is designed to create that youth can use it to escape from the dead-end of the dole scarpheap, by getting an apprenticeship style training for a skilled career.

In reality, however, the YOP is no more than a cosmetic measure to keep off official unemployment figures particularly as costs of providing many cases amounting to providing cheap labour—a state-financed £23.35 per week—to capitalist firms or to public sector projects which can conveniently help displace the cuts.

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**TAFF VALE**

The impact of these struggles on the consciousness of the labour movement—particularly newly-unionised sectors who lacked the conservative approach of the older craft unions—should not be minimised. They gave birth to the thoughts that led to a growing awareness among more militant layers of a common interest of the labour movement that had to be uncompromisingly defended. Up to that point in time, as Fillingham was to point out, there had been little concept of 'labour' in a distinct class in the community, and there was often intense hostility between the semi-skilled and older craft unions. The offensive launched by the employers, initially centred on the creation of Employer's Federation, slowly began to overcome 'craft' and 'sectional' differences. The unions increasingly identified together around the need to defend the class of labour.

**LIBERALS**

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

Up to that point in time, the majority of the unions—particularly the craft unions—were called to bind the Liberals in much the same way as today's labour movement in the interests of the Democratic Party. The unions advocated support for the Liberals in exchange for the latter's policy of free trade (which guaranteed cheaper clothes and a less antagonistic attitude towards the labour movement). The offensive launched by the employers, however, cemented in the labour movement a growing awareness of mutual interests and pushed growing layers inside the unions to break from the alliance with Liberalism and seek an independent political voice.

Even though this process was most obvious in the initial stages during the early 1900s, it gradually spread to the more craft-conscious unions whose interests were clearly endangered by attacks upon trade union autonomy which reached a climax in the Taff Vale judgement of 1901. This 'judgement', forcing the railmen to pay the employers' damages for all losses incurred in strike action, was seen to have even wider implications.

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

**CYNCAL**

Thatcher hoped that the nurses 'fires in their hearts to be well pleased'. In other words, she was giving notice that the Tories know that they need support from somewhere—nurses representatives were told at 10, Downing Street, that the nurses could have 14% and 'not a penny more'.

In spite of the pitance which nurses are paid, the government can't be expected, therefore, to offer as much as in recent years. In some areas, health authorities are considering rent increases of up to 100% for nurses' accommodation.

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

**MOBILISE**

Trade union and Labour Party branches should express their support for the nurses' claim on mobilise for demonstrations and public meetings. The NEC must be shown that the nurses—or any other section of the working class—will not bear the brunt of the bosses' crisis.

By Sylvia Brookes

**ASTMS: New Militancy**

The advent of the Tory government has clearly begun to affect ASTMS members, as well as the militant mood at conference this year. The NEC's compromissive line was challenged a number of times and, on certain significant items, defeated. The mood of the conference was registering at the beginning of the week when the NEC's vague motion of opposition to the Employment Bill—pledging no real action—was challenged by an amendment from the floor. The amendment implied the need to break the law to defend members' interests and piled solidarity with other unions under attack. While the NEC rejected the day, its position was challenged by a large minority.

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

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

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

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**LABOUR PARTY**

A similarly militant mood was apparent on the question of the Labour Party. Several motions were put endorsing the position of the NEC on the conference—(mandating of MPS), election of the NEC and NEC control over the Manifest- ation). What now remains to be seen is the conference is on the question of the Labour Party. Several motions were put endorsing the position of the NEC on the conference. An important motion which conference has adopted. Certainly, the NEC didn't have it all their own way, however. Its position of support for the Edw- wardes Plan—axing 25,000 jobs at British Leyland—was challenged by a large majority.

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**EVALUATING THE CURES!**

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**STRUGGLING TO EVALUATE THE CURES!**

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Afghanistan - behind the press lies

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

Operating in numerous small bands, the insurgents stage hit-and-run actions from Afghanistan's rugged mountain regions or seek to create disturbances in the cities. Moscow is helping to arm and supply Afghan and Soviet military units, burn schools, destroy hospitals and dabbles in murder and murder supporters of the revolution.

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

BACKING

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

In mid-February, a White House aide revealed that the Central Intelligence Agency had begun training some of the insurgents through Pakistan. New York Times correspondent David Rieber called it the CIA's first 

FAC T

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

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

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

FIGHTING

Nevertheless, there has been serious fighting. Pravda, the Soviet Communist Party daily, reported last month on a PDPA offensive, stating: 'The struggle against the bands in the mountains is no easy matter.'

Kabul radio reported on June 8 that during the previous two months, 1,400 prisoners had been killed during clashes in Kabul. Thirty schools were reported to have been destroyed, as well as one hospital. The radio report accused 'criminals' backed by Washington and the Chinese regime of being behind the disturbances.

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

Overtures

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

Specifically, Kabul demanded a 'clearly expressed commitment' by Washington 'not to carry out any subversive activities against Afghanistan, including activities from the territories of third world countries'. A similar commitment was asked of the Paki

ti regime. With an end to outside interference, the statement continued, a withdrawal of Soviet troops could then be considered.

Both Washington and the Paki

ti regime spurned the offer, refusing to give the kind of pub

cic commitments that were asked for.

Defence Committees

In response to Washington's hard

tine stance, the Afghan regime has taken limited measures inside the country to stop up defence against the counterrevolution.

The Karzai government has est

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

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

class in Afghanistan is quite small - only about 330,000 industrial, transport and construction workers and peasants to a much greater extent than before. The Soviet intervention into Af

ghanistan was a clear aid to the rev

olutionary process. There was a firm rebuff to the guerrillas, and their Western allies, who were try

ing to destroy the real gains of the PDPA regime and take Afghanistan back to the feudal age.

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

Support the Musicians!

By Jason Hill

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

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

The musicians need support from other trade unionists in their fight against the Tory cuts. Trade union branches should pass motions instructing their members to not support cross MU picket lines.

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

No sackings of musicians!

No trade unionist to cross MU picket lines!

Victory to the musicians!
Whatever happened to the ANL?

by GRAHAM WEIGHT (Dubwich YS)

Last month, the NF marched under the banner ‘Kick out the Iranians and Lebanonise’. With 700-800 supporters stepping out from Hyde Park, it looked like one of the strongest protest the ultra-right have launched for some time.

But where was the opposition? Where was the ANL, which only 2½ years ago had been deserted for 12,000 strong in the streets?

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

STATE RACISM

The reason for this is not difficult to discover. While it was possible to pull thousands of young Black and white youths onto the streets, many of whom in time progress—began to realise that turning up once in a while to combat the NF wasn’t enough.

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

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

CARR

Far from getting involved at this stage with mindless “confrontations” with the NF, the Black community has become involved in more serious campaigns. One of these is the Scrap “sus” campaign and the other, and more far-reaching, is the campaign against the 1971 Immigration Act (CARL). This campaign—mainly with the help of the Indian Workers Associations—conducted a mass 1500 strong demonstration last November against the Tory proposals and local CARL groups are now beginning to develop around the country.

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

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

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

It was also agreed that TOM would organise a delegation of about 500 of its supporters to go to Belfast to picket an army station, and that TOM will support a demonstration being planned by Sinn Fhein to commemorate the start of internment. Plans were discussed for the expansion of activities such as the picketing of army installations, selling TOM’s pamphlet “Troops Out”, publishing a newsletter to keep in contact with other groups within the Labour Party, and TOM stalls at festivals. Another result of the conference is that TOM will be strengthened organisationally with a national Steering Committee elected by conference, and a head-quarter for the campaign, with full-time staff, held in Armagh, for the same objectives, since early February.

Whilst morale amongst the Republican prisoners is high, the inhuman treatment to which they are being subjected in response to the campaign could eventually lead to the death of a prisoner, an RAC speaker said. Should this occur, delegates were told they could be sure that “all hell will let loose”. The issue of the prisoners was a central theme at the conference and it became clear that much of TOM’s campaigning activity during the next six months will be centred around it.

A resolution which called for the “political status” demands—the right to refuse prison work, there is growing resentment within the Labour Party’s rank and file at the parliamentary leadership’s “bi-partisan” policy on Ireland—is refusing to challenge the ruling class’s repression.

TOM has launched a new pamphlet, entitled ‘No British Solution’, giving a detailed analysis of Britain’s involvement in the six counties since partition took place. It is available from Box TO 23 St Pauls Rd, London N1, price 50p plus postage.

POST BAG

Dear Socialist Action

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

As an old stager may I appeal to you all to consider the proposition that our socialist aspirations and our internims demands may be valid beyond question. Yet what is virtually certain is that a world nurturing a build-up of nuclear weapons will sooner or later burst asunder. There will almost inevitably be an unimaginable holocaust unless there is an early change of direction: our aspiration will then be of no account. Our demands will appear retrospectively futile and irrelevant, if we can still think before expiry. I am not suggesting for one moment that we should not have aspirations; nor that we should not make demands and strive to maintain jobs, hospitals, public transport and so on. But in heaven’s name let us not forget that we have to survive (not least of all our children) to make possible the achievement of a viable socialist system. Let us put right our priorities before it is too late!

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

Fraternal greetings
Frank Viney
Bromley, Kent

Dear Sir,

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

I agree with you, but I think the left really must learn to look facts in the eye. The turnout on May 14th was significant, was lower than almost everyone predicted. It’s no use trying to blow the situation up and, at the same time, blaming the trade union leaders for it not being bigger.

If the rank-and-file had really felt the need to tackle the Tories, they would have turned out despite their leaders, as the steelworkers did. The truth of the matter is that, while there is an active minority in the unions willing to fight, the vast majority are still apathetic and have not yet felt the pinch from the government’s policies.

It’s no use pretending otherwise to “keep up morale”.

Sandra Hill
London

Letter from H Block

They show you the excreta on the walls. And tell you how we have done it all. But they don’t tell you why.

Of taunting screams that made the soft ones cry. They taught us how to cope with dirt. They who have done it long before.

When they kicked our slops across the cell floor and bade us clean it or be beaten more.

Call me sir you rebel woman. And on the floor you must dine. A dinner topped with a dirt soup. And tea that smells of urine.

You are no longer to reflect our own shame. Than to lie down and take it issued with score.

They can perform cosmetic operations on British MPs. Who in turn make a cosmetic statement to put the enquiring population at ease. The propaganda that they spread is dirtier than our cell wall. But amidst the torture and the dirt the prisoner he walks tall.
Socialist Action

Who killed Richard Campbell?

by Sylvia Brook (NUT)

Richard "Cartoon" Campbell died in Ashford Remand Centre on March 31st. He is yet another number to add to the official list of 273 deaths in police custody. Three months have passed and still no explanation for his death has been given.

ARREST

Richard was arrested on 1 March, allegedly attempting to break into a sports shop in Brixton. He spent a week-end in Brixton police station and was remanded to Lewes prison on his appearance at Camberwell Magistrates Court.

A week later, he admitted attempted burglary and was sent to Ashford Remand Centre. Three weeks later he died in the hospital wing. From the time of his arrest to the time of his death - four weeks - none of his relatives were told where Richard was.

ILLNESS

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

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

CAMPAIGN

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

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

The family and friends of Richard have started a campaign to demand a public enquiry. For further information, contact: JOC, 196, Lavender Hill, London SW11 or phone 01-872-9643

JOBLESS TOTAL

Wales to the Mersey-side - are being turned into industrial deserts.

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

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

RESPONSE

What has been the response of the Labour leaders to the latest figures? Ian Callaghan cited a polite motion of "no confidence" in the government & announced that when returned to office in 4 years he would save jobs by introducing "selective import controls".

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

FIGHT-BACK

Last May, under mass pressure, the labour leaders were forced to hold a "day of action" against Tory policies. But one-off protests are not enough. What is needed is a real drive in trade union and Labour Party branches to force the leaders into a determined fight to remove the Thatcher government before it's too late.

A first step in this will be to stop the hold-out, the TUC this September around the demands 'For a 35-hour Week' and 'Fight to kick the Tories out now'.

by LEN VAGSTAFF (ASTMS)

(Continued)

can be measured not only in the numbers arrested or the threat - by Jaap Cilliers, top government official - to the South African trade unions. It can be seen, above all, in the fact that the South African army has for the first time ever been placed on a war footing within the country.

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

Mugabe denounces S. Africa

Earlier this month, Robert Mugabe - recently elected Zimbabwean PM - closed down the South African mission in Salisbury. Mugabe's reasons were clear and to the point. "South Africa", he said, "has a policy of destabilising our region, mounting attacks, organising sabotage and continuing to disrespect the principles of peaceful co-existence".

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

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

Mike Hopkins

SOUTH AFRICA (CONT.)

TOTTING

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

Maintaining stability in the area - and preserving their massive investments there - depends on a large degree on the strength of the racist regime which acts as a "police-keeping force". This is why the upsurge among the Black population - led by a determined Black working class - frightens them in their boots. Such an upsurge might not only topple apartheid but also take over their massive economic investments on behalf of the working population.

BACKING

This is why, despite the embarrassments placed against Iran or the hysteric whipping up over Afghanistantheir allies Carter or Thatcher have been well to denounce the mass repression against the Black population in South Africa.

But time is not on their side. Despite all its repressive techniques, the white minority regime is finding it is ever more difficult to hold back the struggle by 22 million blacks for democratic rights. It will be up to us in Britain to help them in this struggle by ensuring that the Tory government gives no aid to its racist allies.