

Socialist Action



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Labour Leaders Must Launch MASS ACTION AGAINST CUTS



Demonstration against closure of hospitals in East London

Photo: I McIntosh (IFL)

By **TIM ROBINSON**
(NALGO Rep)

The cuts in social services announced by Geoffrey Howe last year were only the first spicy dish to emerge from the Tory kitchen. The latest one – the Tory White Paper for the coming year – is spicier yet. Over 3½ billion is going to be lopped off public spending this time.

What this means in concrete terms, of course, is only too clear. Hospitals will be run down to boost “private medicine”. Schools will be closed – and teachers sacked – to allow the rich greater “freedom of choice”. Local authority spending on Old People’s Homes, housing and other social services will be axed.

While the rich live it up on

Howe’s tax concessions, 1980 will be a pretty bleak year for the young, the old, the sick – and working people generally – who will be expected to foot the bill.

JOBS

These savage inroads into the welfare state will not only mean, however, longer hospital and housing queues stretching into the

next decade. They’ll have a drastic effect on jobs. What will happen to the teachers and nurses as hospitals and schools close? What will happen to the local authority direct labour force as building programmes grind to a halt?

They’ll be forced out onto the dole queues which the Tories themselves expect – at a conservative figure – to reach 1.65 million by the end of the year.

And that’s not all. The Thatcher government has already announced that any pay increases in the public sector have to be “self-financing”. What this means is that local government employees will be expected to pay for their own wage rises by butchering their own jobs. A taste of what is to come can already be seen in Thatcher’s decision to freeze all recruitment into the Civil Service.

REACTION

Thatcher’s callous attack has, of course, sparked off vigorous protests from the Shadow Cabinet to the TUC which has condemned the cuts as vicious and uncalled-for. They are no doubt aware of the groundswell of opinion mounting among the rank-and-file which has led to the setting up of committees and campaigns up and down the country to prevent the cuts from being steamrollered through.

Teachers in London launched a 10,000 strong demonstration against the cuts in education last

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Issues in Steel Strike

- * A decent living standard. British steel workers were offered a humiliating 4% at a time when inflation is running at 17% (and estimated to reach 20% by the end of the year). To accept the offer would mean a cut in real wages.
- * The right to Work. At the same time as the humiliating offer was made, Villiers (BSC Chairman) announced that almost 60,000 jobs would have to go to make the industry ‘profitable’. To accept the offer would mean allowing the bosses to solve their crisis by throwing thousands on the dole.
- * Democratic rights. The steelworkers have defended their case by picketing private steel companies and drawing in the support of dockers, miners and railwaymen. This ‘secondary picketing’ (as it is called) is in direct defiance of the Tories attempts to muzzle the unions.

...AND HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT IT

- * Stop steel moving. Make the strike solid in the private sector, get dockers and railwaymen to refuse to touch it.
- * Organise a meeting in your workplace to raise donations for the steel strike.
- * Pass resolutions in your union/Labour Party branch supporting the steel strike and calling on the Labour leaders to give it their full backing.

ABORTION~THE FIGHT GOES ON

Sabina Roberts (Streatham CLP)

On Feb 5th, John Corrie’s anti-abortion Bill has its third and final reading. Backed by a strong Tory majority, the Bill – if passed – will set the clock back on women’s rights with a vengeance.

Not only does it cut down the ‘time limit’ for abortions (from 28 to 20 weeks) and make abortions virtually impossible unless there is a ‘severe risk’ to a woman’s physical health. It also –

- * toughens up on the ‘conscience clause’ to allow doctors to opt out;
- * places a ban on advertising;
- * prevents abortion counsell-

ing services referring women for abortions;

- * makes it virtually impossible to get information about the charitable abortion clinics.

As Corrie himself admits, the net result of these measures will be to cut back the number of legal abortions per year by two thirds. This means, in simple terms, that thousands of women will be driven once again either to have a child they don’t want (& cannot afford) or return to the horrors of the back-streets.

FIRST STEP

Corrie’s Bill – the third attempt by the anti-abortion lobby to

erode the 1967 Act – will not just, however, take women’s abortion rights back to the stone age. It will also be used to cut into women’s rights in all those areas which depend on fertility control.

Employment is one example. The Tories will doubtless use the climate whipped up by the Act to push ahead with their plans for mass unemployment. Seeking to pit men against women in the scramble for jobs that will open up, they will throw thousands of women out of the workforce into the home (where they ‘belong’ bringing up children.

Other examples will follow. The Bill will also be used to

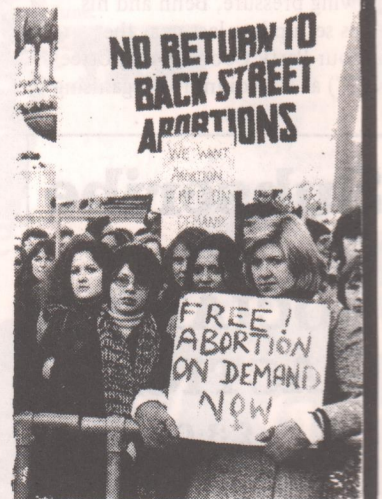
‘justify’ cutting back on women’s equal rights to pay and promotion since – it will be argued – a woman is prey to ‘unplanned pregnancies’ and therefore more unreliable than a man.

TUC ACTION

This is why the TUC’s support for the mass demonstration last October – which mobilised over 60,000 – was so important. It was a recognition that the fight against Corrie is not just of concern to women – who were, and are, in the front line.

It was also a recognition that it is in the interests of *all* working people to oppose measures which

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Labour Lefts Organise

A.D. Scott

On November 16th — at the mass anti-cuts rally in Central London — Jim Callaghan was almost booed off the platform. He was booed simply because thousands of trade unionists realise that he has no intention of fighting the cuts or any of the other anti-working class policies Thatcher is pursuing.

This groundswell among the union rank-and-file has already begun to percolate into the Labour Party where activists increasingly feel the need to challenge the right-wing policies which lost Labour the last election and which restrict the Tory fight to Parliamentary 'shadow-boxing'.

This was shown most clearly at the last Labour Party conference where Callaghan — despite vigorous backing from the Tory press — came in for stringent criticism. Significant was the fact that, unable to rely on the block votes of the unions, shifting left under Thatcher's attacks, decisive victories were chalked up against him on the question of party democracy.

this growing opposition to the Callaghan right-wing. Gaining support from a number of Constituency Labour Parties and trade union branches, the LCC has held a number of regional conferences to open up a debate on those policies which should constitute an opposition platform.

LIMITED?

There can be no doubt — as many on the left have spelled out — that the formation of the LCC is a clear response to the growing anti-Tory feeling building up among Labour rank-and-file and their frustration with the right-wing Callaghan leadership.

There can equally be no doubt that many of its leaders — who refused to oppose Callaghan's policies when in office — see the LCC as channelling this frustration into paths useful to them in the inter-parliamentary feuds that are now opening up. Figures now opposing the Tory cut-backs kept very quiet when Jim Callaghan rammed through similar measures in 1976!

developing against the Tories on issues as diverse as the steel strike to defence of abortion rights.

That certain strands inside the LCC are aware of this can be seen most clearly from Peter Hain's comments at the Manchester LCC meeting in December when he said: "The party is far too committed to parliamentarianism, so avoiding creating a mass movement outside capable of exerting sufficient power to make social change feasible . . .".

Hain's comments mark a welcome change from the past where left-wing opposition in the Labour Party was considered a matter of pious resolution-passing and not participation in the living struggles. It is this attitude — which sees the need of Labour activists identifying with and helping to build the anti-cuts struggle, the fight against racist and anti-abortion laws — which will offer the LCC a real potential for growth in the years ahead.

MASS PARTY?

One of the main concerns to come out of the LCC meetings — particularly the Manchester con-



policies. It also involves a serious fight for democracy to ensure that there can be a free and frank exchange of views within the party on the way forward.

The LCC already has a good record on this question, many of its supporters helping the fight at the last Labour Party conference to loosen the right wing's undemocratic grip over the party and forcing through re-selection of MPs and the right of the NEC to determine election manifesto.

Such gains have to be maintained and extended against right-wing pressure so that the Parliamentary Labour Party as a whole becomes accountable to the conference. As part of this offensive, the LCC should stand forcibly against any attempts by the right wing — backed up, of course, by their allies in the Tory press — to launch witch-hunts in the party and to revamp the bans and proscriptions measures. All tendencies should have the right to put their point of view in a free and democratic debate.

In order to struggle for the democratisation of the party, the LCC must itself be vigorously democratic. While it has shown itself open to different ideas at conferences held to date, at the Manchester meeting it decided that elections to the Executive of the LCC would be by postal ballot and that the Executive would have the right to exclude anyone it wished without right of appeal. Such positions run counter to its otherwise open nature and could — if extended — mar its ability to become a broad, open tendency drawing in wide support.

STEP FORWARD

The LCC was born out of the mass discontent of the labour movement with the right-wing policies of the Labour leaders. As such, it can become a major step forward which socialists should support and help build. No doubt there will be differences on the way forward but these could be discussed out in a comradely way.

If, as a broad current, it can begin to link up with the struggles underway — and maintain a scrupulous democracy which allows a genuine exchange of views — then it could become a serious challenge to the Labour right-wing and a major step forward in the fight for socialist policies in the labour movement.

SCLV which way

The National conference of the SCLV in December last year had, as a major thread running through it, the question of its relation to the newly-formed Labour Coordinating Committee.

Quite different attitudes were put forward. Some comrades clearly wanted to "ghettoise" themselves from this new formation which is beginning to draw support around the country. Such was the position of those comrades around *Workers Action* who tended to stress the shortcomings of the LCC rather than its potential for growth. While wanting to work with it, they supported the idea of maintaining a "hard left" in opposition to it.

Other comrades saw the LCC as an important step forward which SCLV members should be a part of in order to participate in an ongoing debate. Comrades from *Socialist Challenge* — who were denied the right to pose a resolution on this point — advocated this position.

Clearly, the growth of the LCC poses a serious problem for the SCLV at the present time. The SCLV is not a grouping but an alliance of various strands around a limited programme. While winning some support, it clearly does not have the potential of the LCC in terms of a base in the CLPs or — more important — in the trade unions.

In our opinion, the comrades from *Socialist Challenge* were quite correct to imply that maintaining the SCLV as a "counter" current to the LCC would be a serious error. To compete with the LCC around the country in forming support groups inside the Labour Party would be a disservice to creating a united struggle by the left in the period ahead.

Far from opposing the LCC, the SCLV members should seek to join it, to enter into dialogue with it and to form joint committees with it (where an SCLV group exists). The aim should not be to have oneself off into corners but to attempt to build a joint left in which different currents can function and argue for their position in a democratic atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the SCLV conference rejected this orientation and voted to continue to build itself in opposition to the LCC. We would hope that, as time develops, the comrades will rethink this course.

P.B.



NEW FORMATION

This growing challenge to the right-wing leaders has been headed most clearly by the lefts around Tony Benn. Taking their distance from the Shadow Cabinet, it has been Benn and his allies who have moved in behind the democracy issue and who have begun to identify with the growing anti-Tory struggles erupting around the country.

It was, after all, the Labour Party NEC which launched the mass anti-cuts rally late last year. It was Benn and his supporters who identified with (and spoke at) the demonstration against the Tory immigration proposals led by CARL in late November and the anti-Corrie lobby slightly earlier.

Partly in response to this growing pressure, Benn and his allies set up late last year the Labour Party Coordinating Cttee (LCC) as a medium for organising

POTENTIAL

While all these criticisms are valid, however, that is by no means the end of the matter. Whatever its leaders may feel, for thousands of activists, the LCC represents a means of seeking a coherent alternative to the policies of the present Labour leaders. Many labour and trade union members view the LCC as a real forum for hammering out a new programme that will be capable of rallying the labour movement in opposition to the Tory threat.

How far the LCC will go down this road is, of course, too early to say. It is still in an embryonic stage. The openness of its meetings so far, however, to exchange ideas and learn from common experience would seem to suggest it is not a 'closed-in' formation with 'rigid ideas'.

The fact that Benn himself has been willing to co-sponsor a mass conference in March to debate out with left groups (outside the Labour Labour Party) the way forward for socialism in the years ahead is indicative of an open-minded approach which is to be welcomed. Certainly, it compares well with the dogmatic and inward-looking approach of others.

OUTWARD-GOING

Clearly, the test of the LCC — its ability to sink roots and grow — will depend in large measure on its ability to link up with and reflect the real struggles that are now

ference last month — was how to "revivify" the Labour Party, how to turn it once again into a "mass party". Considering the decline in Labour Party membership over the past decades, such a question is hardly unimportant.

Building the Labour Party, however, is not an organisational question. It is deeply linked with the ability of the "left", in the coming years, to identify with and promote those campaigns working people are forced into to defend their rights and living standards against the Tories.

It is only by being seen as a party fighting in the interests of working people that it will draw back into its ranks those thousands who have drifted out under the Wilson/Callaghan leadership. Moreover, it is only by drawing in these forces that a real fight can be launched to remove the Callaghan leadership. The only way to ensure a removal of the right-wing is by the left gaining a widening base — particularly in the trade unions — through its class-struggle methods.

As Hain again correctly pointed out in Manchester: "It is a question of campaigning for, and linking up with, struggles outside and creating the conditions whereby an alternative left leadership emerges with roots firmly based inside".

DEMOCRACY

The struggle for an alternative leadership in the Labour Party is not just, however, a struggle over

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CAIL NEWS

CAIL News is the journal of the Campaign Against the Immigration Laws which has been in existence now for over a year. It contains all the latest up-to-date information on the effects of the 1971 Act, abuses under it, the Tory proposals and news of anti-racist activities around the country. If you would like to take out a sub — or order a bulk order for your Labour Party/trade union branch — please write to: CAIL c/o Lansbury Hs. 41 Camberwell Gve, London SE5

TORIES UNWRAP RACIST PROPOSALS



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

The Tories ran the last election campaign on a clear racist ticket. Thatcher spoke of the country being "swamped by an alien culture" and Willie Whitelaw — the Tory "softie" — openly explained the need to slam the door on Black immigration. All in the interests of "racial harmony", of course.

The meaning of the Tory "hard line" on immigration is already being felt by Black families up and

down the country. Evidence is already leaking out that twice the number of families are being harassed and deported today as under the previous Labour government.

The case of Sanjesh, Jayesh and Diptesh Patel — taken away from their mother and deported back to India because of an "improper" entry clearance — is an example of the vicious harassment being used against the Black community.

TORTUOUS

But the Tory government is not just content with giving the police the "green light" to victimise Black families. What they really mean by "slamming the door" was revealed last month in their White Paper on Immigration. Within the pages of this tortuously-worded document lies an attempt to render the 1971 Immigration Act even more viciously racist & sexist in character.

The psychology behind it can be seen most clearly by examining some of the proposals that has hit the press headlines — the one banning women bringing their husbands or fiancés into the country. When Whitelaw originally made this proposal, there was an outcry among Tory backbenchers that white women — employed in the diplomatic service or in multi-national firms — might be discriminated against.

Under such pressure, Whitelaw

duly amended it to bring out the real victims of these new curbs. Only the fiancés or husbands of non-British (i.e. Black) women settled here would be penalised. Couldn't be clearer, could it? The aim of the amendments is not to tighten up on immigration, as such, but on Black immigration.

"FIRMER ACTION"

The other proposals the Tories have introduced in this White Paper are aimed at curbing immigration explicitly to stem the small trickle of Black people who can still gain entry. These include a ban on arranged marriages — aimed at the Asian community — and a virtual ban on relatives being allowed to join their family already settled here. The concept of the Tory government for the "family" (obviously doesn't) extend to Black families.

Other provisions are aimed at reducing still further the rights of those Black people who do manage to slip through the immigration net. These include increasing the power of "officials" and taking "firmer action" against so-called illegal immigrants and those "overstaying" their visas.

Since the police already have, under the 1971 Act, the power to arrest suspected "illegal immigrants" without warrant and deport those considered "undesirable" without right of appeal, it is a mystery exactly what "firmer action" means.

Presumably, it is a nod and wink to the police to escalate their harassment already being dealt out to the Black community.

CLIMAX

When these proposals were put to Parliament, ex-Home Secretary Merlyn Rees denounced them as "racist, sexist and discriminatory". Fine words. What Rees didn't explain was that they form merely the climax of a whole string of equally racist acts which Labour — as well as Tory — governments have introduced over the years.

Ever since the Tories brought in the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962 — making entry into Britain dependent on a colour bar — successive governments have tumbled indecently over each other in tightening the screws on Black entry. Wilson's 1965 White Paper and Callaghan's 1968 Immigration Act were part of this whole shift to the right.

And didn't Merlyn Rees himself, when in office, enforce without any scruples the 1971 Immigration Act, despite the fact that the Labour Party conference had denounced it as racist and called for its immediate repeal?

LEGAL RACISM

It is no doubt a step forward for Rees to denounce the latest proposals in the Tory White Paper. That cannot cover up for the fact, however, that by accepting the racist logic of these Acts for so long, Labour governments have helped to create a climate of legalised racism in Britain.

What else can you call it? Once it is accepted that Black people can be denied entry on grounds of colour — and denied democratic rights on the same grounds — then racism has received official approval. All the Race Relations Acts in the world won't change that!

It is this climate of legalised racism fostered by these Acts which the Tories now want to take still further — that creates a highly explosive situation. Unless it is challenged now, white workers could begin to fall victim to the demagoguery of the ultra-right and see Black people not as allies but as a threat to the jobs and wages scramble that will open up.

FIGHT-BACK

Fortunately, despite the Labour

WHITELAW'S RACIST CHARTER

The 1971 Immigration Act already makes it virtually impossible for Blacks to enter the country. Only those who have grandparents here can come in freely — and that, of course, means whites. Blacks (or 'non-patrials' as the Act calls them) have no right of entry.

In order to close the few remaining 'loopholes' — and reduce those Blacks already here to second-class citizens — Whitelaw's proposals include:

- * *A ban on arranged marriages.* Obviously directed against the Asian community to curb the trickle of fiancés coming in.
- * *A ban on husbands & fiancées.* White foreign-born women, settled here, will be free to bring in their husbands/fiancées. Only Black women will be affected.
- * *A ban on parents, grandparents & children under 18.* Virtually everyone seeking entry to join their family will be excluded under the new conditions. Who cares about the suffering caused?
- * *Work Permit Restrictions.* Aimed at cutting still further the minuscule number of Blacks allowed in under the quota scheme.
- * *Curbs on foreign students.* Greater powers are envisaged to deport foreign students deemed to be prolonging their stay "unnecessarily" or failing to attend courses on a regular basis.
- * *Internal Controls.* 'Firmer action' is considered necessary against illegal immigrants and 'help' for those genuinely wishing to leave the country. Such proposals will give immigration officers & police the green light to 'up' their harassment of Black communities. Already, under the Thatcher regime, the number of Blacks being deported has doubled.

S. London CARL

By JENNY HILL

On January 11th, representatives from a number of South London Labour Parties, the Communist Party and other left groups met in Brixton to set up a local CARL group.

As well as building support against the 1971 Act (and the Tories' proposals), the committee discussed taking up specific individual issues in the area, such as the threat of deportations, police harassment etc.

The first concrete step was to call for a public meeting on March 5th to gain wide support for these aims. If you would like information about the group, please contact CARL c/o Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London E5.

Particularly welcome on it was support from the labour movement which is beginning to realise that it cannot stand idly by while the Tories whip up racist moods designed to divide and split working people.

NEXT STEP

CARL's next step is obviously to build on this positive turn-out by drawing ever-wider forces into opposition to the Tory offensive. At a steering cttee meeting following the demonstration, it was agreed to go ahead with certain initiatives that had already been planned.

These include sponsoring a march from Bradford to London — mainly by the Bradford Asian Youth Organisation — and helping to build regional demonstrations against the immigration laws. Such

steps are clearly important in continuing the pressure against the government.

Most important, however, it was agreed to hold a national conference in the Spring of all of CARL's supporters. Obviously key to such a conference must be mapping out a series of national actions and setting up a democratic structure capable of winning the widest layers into the campaign.

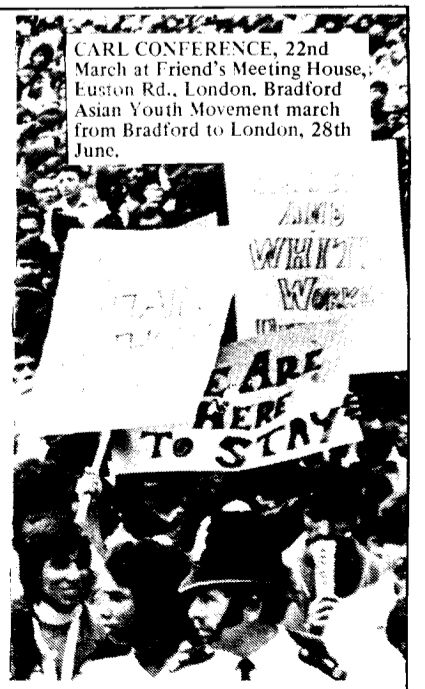
CENTRAL

The ability of CARL to build on the positive response it has met with so far should not be under-valued. The Tories' racist measures are not accidental. They are central to whipping up racist moods which — it is hoped — will divide and confuse working people in the years ahead as inflation & unemployment grow.

It is only by building a strong campaign now against these measures that it will be possible to offset such a development in the future. This means, in particular, taking CARL into trade union and Labour Party branches and gaining mass support for the campaign.

The fact that the demonstration on Nov. 25th was backed by over 30 Labour MPs and by the Labour Party NEC is a positive step in this direction. That step must now be used to convince ever-wider layers that defending the rights of Black people today is the best way of defending the whole labour movement tomorrow.

- * If you would like to set up a CARL group locally — or find out more about the campaign — write to: CARL, PO Box 151, London WC2.



CARL CONFERENCE, 22nd March at Friend's Meeting House, Euston Rd., London. Bradford Asian Youth Movement march from Bradford to London, 28th June.

CARL NEXT STEPS

Sunday November 25th saw the biggest demonstration yet against racist immigration curbs. Organised by the Campaign Against Racist Laws (CARL), over 10,000 marched through London demanding the repeal of the 1971 Act and the Tories' new measures.

Not only was the size of the demonstration impressive but also the broad forces that came together to build it. Present on it were not only the major ethnic groups — who took the initiative in forming CARL — but also Labour MPs, Labour and trade union branches and anti-racist groups.

Editorial: ZIMBABWE

Last month, Lord Soames flew to Rhodesia to 'supervise' the elections agreed to by Patriotic Front leaders, Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, in London. Clearly such an agreement was met by the Thatcher government with a clear sigh of relief.

It represented the last attempt to contain the mounting struggle for Black majority rule and independence that neither the Smith regime nor the puppet-Muzorewe government had proved able to control.

The concessions made by the Patriotic Front leaders were not won, however, by Carrington's brilliant diplomacy. They were gained by the stepped-up bombing, by Rhodesian forces, of neighbouring Black regimes offering sanctuary to the liberation forces.

CONCESSIONS

The agreement itself provides for the establishment of a new, 'independent' Black government but with built-in advantages for the white minority. These include a disproportionate representation in Parliament and a tight grip over the police, army, civil service and courts.

Moreover, in the build-up to the elections, the dice have been firmly loaded against the Patriotic Front. Not only has the election time been cut short to give them an inadequate time to prepare. The cease-fire stipulates that the 1700 Patriotic Front guerrillas report to 16 'assembly points' to be confined for the duration of the elections.

This was quite clearly aimed at isolating them from their base of support in the villages and leaving them 'vulnerable' to British, South African and Rhodesian troops.

NEUTRAL?

The Thatcher government claims that Lord Soames - and his Commonwealth 'monitoring' force - are there to play a neutral role. But the real intentions of the Tories to disarm and demobilise the liberation struggle has been revealed very clearly in Soames' acts as governor.

While the Patriotic Front guerrillas have been rounded up & installed in 'confinement' camps, their opponents - supporters of the Muzorewe regime - have been given full freedom of action. This has not only led to the breaking up of peaceful demonstrations by ZAPU or ZANU supporters or police raids on ZAPU offices in Salisbury. It has led to the cold-blooded murder of Patriotic Front members.

The seven guerrillas who were killed near Lupane last month were murdered without them firing a shot. They merely refused to lay down their arms and, for this, they were gunned down where they stood.

SOUTH AFRICA

The broader aims of the Thatcher government can also be seen in the decision by Lord Soames to retain the services of up to 2,000 South African troops (working alongside the Rhodesian army).

The fact that this is in defiance of the London agreement - as has been pointed out by Mugabe - clearly does not worry Thatcher's representative in Salisbury. Renewing links with the white racists in Pretoria is clearly seen as important by the Tories in helping contain the upsurge for independence and Black majority rule and stabilising Southern Africa in the interests of Imperialism.

Only last December, Thatcher herself stated that the cease-fire in Rhodesia would make it possible to end ".....the isolation of South Africa in world affairs";

TROOPS OUT NOW

It is quite clear that the London agreement has limited the room for manoeuvre of the liberation forces in Rhodesia & given Imperialism new openings for intervention. The fight for national liberation, for land, for trade union rights and decent wages by Zimbabwean workers and peasants is being trapped in the repressive arrangements worked out in London, Salisbury and Pretoria.

Despite this set-back, however, Thatcher is finding it difficult to stem the mass resistance that exists. Even before the accords had been signed, mass demonstrations by ZAPU and ZANU supporters - reaching over 60,000 - took place in Salisbury.

Moreover, during the election period, the forces of the Patriotic Front have held mass rallies to air the social and political grievances of the masses - such as the popular demand for land reform.

If we in Britain are to help this struggle - and ensure it is not demobilised by the Tories and their backers in South Africa - then we have to expose the hypocrisy of Britain's 'neutral' role in Rhodesia and campaign actively in the labour movement for the withdrawal of British troops.

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SUPPORT THE STEEL

On Jan 28th, thousands of workers will respond to the Welsh TUC's call for a one-day protest strike in support of the steelworkers. The fact that the strike was called is, itself, a sign of the mass opposition building up in labour ranks against the Tory plans to cut plants.

For, if the steel plants are closed, it will not be just steelworkers who will be thrown on the scrap-heap. South Wales will begin to look like an industrial cemetery as cuts are also made in rail transport, road haulage and mining. According to the Welsh TUC, a cut-back in steel production would lead to 21 pits being folded up and 21,000 miners' jobs being axed.

HUMILIATING

The Tory government, of course, has always maintained that it has nothing to do with the steel strike. It's a dispute "between the management and workers". This is a lie. It was Sir Keith Joseph himself, who, last year, told Sir Charles Villiers that he would have to 'balance the books' and make the 'necessary cuts'.

It was the Tories who were behind Villiers' insulting pay offer to the ISTC (only recently) of 4% at a time when inflation is raging at over 17%. And it was the Tories who were behind the announcement - in the same week - that steel plants all over the country would have to be closed down to remove over 52,000 jobs.

Workers from Shotton to Teeside, from Corby to Clydeside were expected to bail out the British Steel Corporation by taking virtually a cut in wages and allowing thousands of members to be sacked.

RAM THROUGH

The Tories no doubt thought that pushing such a 'deal' through



DETERMINATION

in the steel industry would not provoke much opposition. After all, the union leadership had shown its weak-kneed spirit on a number of occasions in the past, agreeing to plant closures and erosion of working conditions that had already led to a drastic cut in the workforce.

Where better than in steel to implement their industrial strategy of making workers pay for the massive 'rationalisation' plans they have to bail ailing British firms out of crisis? Fearful of taking on the miners, they no doubt hoped that a weak and vacillating union leadership - combined with a demoralised workforce - would be easy meat.

Having implemented a drastic defeat on the steelworkers, they also no doubt hoped that this would serve as a clear precedent for other workers who will also feel the Tory axe in the years to come.

But they miscalculated. Far from rolling meekly over, the reaction among steelworkers up and down the country was so strong that they forced even their vacillating leaders into action. As steelworker Ray Davies from Llanwern put it: "We've given management massive co-operation, even to losing 40,000 jobs, but we're not going down on our knees to grovel".

Far from grovelling, before the Tory attack, the steelworkers have organised. Strike action has been 100% solid. Mass picketing - as at Talbot in South Wales - has blocked steel production in private firms. Flying pickets have blockaded railyards and incoming steel at the docks.

Such determined action has brought forth howls of protest from the Tories and their press who no doubt see Margaret Thatcher's anti-union laws against



The British Steel Corporation is not alone in trying to recoup its losses by closing plants and throwing thousands on the dole. The same picture can be seen in most industrial countries as the international recession has bitten home and demand for steel has dropped.

This downturn has led to mass confrontations as, in one country after another, workers have fought to save their jobs and living standards. Last year, German steelworkers struck for 7 weeks for the 35-hour week and higher pay. Only slightly earlier, French steelworkers

Cut Hours -

led a hundred-thousand strong protest against plant closures.

In Britain, however, the effects of the recession on steel have been aggravated because of its outdated plant and equipment. Retaining the old-fashioned 'open hearth' method, BS's efficiency was so low that it has lost out to foreign competition not only on the world market but even on the national one.

'RATIONALISATION'

Over the years, successive governments have tried to "solve" the problem by cutting back on 'outdated plant' (to the scale of 40,000 jobs.) Now the Tories, blaming a 'lazy, overpaid workforce' for low productivity, want to launch an all-out attack.

They intend a massive 'restructuring' of the industry to serve sectors of British industry which would have to pay more for steel from abroad, and to provide basic steel for privately-owned specialist producers. Profitable sectors of the industry will, no doubt, be hived off to the private sector.

In order to ram through this 'rationalisation', 52,000 jobs will

have to go to the wall. Death sentences are hanging over the heads of Shotton (6,400 jobs to go), Llanwern (400), Clydeside (2,165), Ravenscraig (7,390), Port Talbot (2,100), Bilston (2,000), Corby (5,000) and Redcar (1,200).

BLINKERED

Far from challenging the mass attack on jobs, the leaders of the ISTC have meekly gone along with it. Allowing plants to be closed down one by one, the workforce has been picked off in isolation. The latest example of this was Corby where the ISTC leadership was quite willing for it to be closed down in exchange for a few 'golden handshakes'.

The reason for this, of course, is that they accept the arguments of the Tory government that the industry has to be made viable before it can be expanded. Having accepted this proposition, there is nothing more for them to do than to get the best deal possible in exchange for the mass redundancies that occur.

The only opposition that has been forthcoming - voiced more

L STRIKE !

BOB SWART
(T&GWU)



are only too aware that if the steel plants close, South Wales will be returned to the industrial desert it was in the 1930s when thousands were forced to move out to find jobs.

LEADERSHIP

There can be no doubt that if the steelworkers remain firm — and extend solidarity actions like these — then they can halt the Tory offensive in its tracks. Not only can they win a decent wage but also ensure that jobs are not lost through plant closures and the introduction of new machinery.

One of the key demands now being raised among militant steelworkers is precisely the need to shorten the work week through 'worksharing'. New technology can be used to better and not worsen working conditions and throw men out of a job. It is labour which creates the wealth, not capital, so why on earth should steelworkers accept any redundancies?

As Brian Molyneux (member of the Stocksbridge & Tinsley Park Strike Cttee) put it recently: "We are for 20% index-linked, with no productivity strings at national or local level, and no more redundancies. We've sent telegrams to the EC explaining this".

LEADERSHIP

The real problem with ensuring that both wages and jobs are safeguarded remains the leadership of the ISTC — and its allies in the TUC. In the past, Bill Sirs has been only too willing to accept redundancies as plants close and worse working conditions in exchange for a little extra cash.

In 1976, the union pledged itself to support an agreement which called for 'streamlining' manning levels, ending the guaranteed

working week and 'flexibility' of labour. It has been acceptance of these type of deals which has led to 40,000 steelworkers jobs going to the wall over the years.

One of the major concerns of rank and file steelworkers must be to ensure that Sirs is not allowed to come to a similar compromise with British Steel management, selling yet more jobs for a little extra cash on the table. He has to be told, in no uncertain terms, that the job of a union leader is not to help the Tories' 'rationalisation' schemes but to defend his members wages and jobs!
FOR 20% INDEX-LINKED!
NO REDUNDANCIES! WORK-SHARING WITH NO LOSS OF PAY!

DAY OF ACTION

The Welsh TUC has called for a mini general strike on Monday 28th January. The call stems from the mass threat to jobs in South Wales if government plans to cut back on steel plants go ahead.

Not only would thousands of steel jobs be lost, but it would lead to an estimated 21 pits being closed down and the loss of another 21,000 miners' jobs.

Originally, the Welsh TUC had planned for an indefinite strike on January 21st but - it seems - were persuaded to postpone it until March 10th. This was under the pressure of the British TUC which no doubt hopes that the steel strike will be settled long before that date and the determination of South Wales workers dissipated.

Despite this set-back, however, the January 28th action should be seriously built for as a stepping stone for an ongoing campaign for the right to work in South Wales. The TUC may be trying to hold back the struggle but they musn't be let off the hook.

A mass turn-out of January 28th will be the surest way of telling our leaders that they cannot avoid taking up a real struggle against the Tories' anti-working class policies.

picketing being thrown in the dustbin even before they are introduced.

SOLIDARITY

Equally important, the determined action by the steelworkers has proved a rallying call to thousands of other workers who know only too well that if the Tories win this one, their necks will soon be on the block.

Railway workers have refused to transport steel and dockers to handle it. Miners have 'instructed' the NCB not to buy steel during the dispute and have (in S. Yorkshire) held pit-head collections. Carworkers in Rotherham have blocked steel entering the plants and nurses at Stocksbridge have visited the picket lines with tea and sandwiches.

The climax to this mounting solidarity was clearly the mini-general strike called by the Welsh TUC on January 28th. They

'BRAIN-WASHED'

Over the past month or so, Carter has tried to fire up hatred of Iran by claiming that "innocent Americans" were being "abused" by the Iranian students holding the US Embassy. Ignoring the students' claim that the Embassy was a hotbed for CIA activities, the news media has tried to portray the US personnel as normal men and women caught by the Iranian "fanatics".

Below Allen Myers, writer for *Direct Action* (an Australian socialist paper) analyses the situation.

The Americans being held hostage in the Tehran Embassy have been brainwashed, according to Carter's Press Secretary Jody Powell. Powell said the hostages had been "subjected to very sophisticated and very subtle techniques . . .".

If this is true, then the Iranian students occupying the Embassy have clearly made a breakthrough. After all, the CIA, as is well known, have spent millions and millions of dollars over the past 20 to 30 years trying — without success — to come up with a reliable brainwashing technique. And now Iranian students have done it, apparently without spending a cent. No wonder Carter is so mad at them.

TOUCHY

US Presidents have grown increasingly touchy about brainwashing over the years as the evidence has mounted that the "enemies of freedom" have mastered the art while America lags behind.

In the early 1950s, for example, the Chinese Communist Party brainwashed hundreds of millions of peasants and thus forced them to overthrow capitalism in direct defiance of Washington's better judgement. Not long afterwards, Castro did the same thing to the Cuban people so thoroughly that not even the Bay of Pigs and the opportunity to buy Coca Cola again could unwash their brains.

The same thing happened in Vietnam, and today the US government is certain that the Vietnamese are brainwashing the Kampuchians to dislike Pol Pot. From Angola to Nicaragua, from Ethiopia to Mozambique, the evidence mounts. Hundreds of millions of people are being brainwashed into an irrational fear of poverty and the governments Washington has appointed to look after their welfare.

GALLING

The brainwashing now going on in Iran is particularly galling, for Iran was the scene of one of Washington's most ambitious anti-



The Ayatollah: brain-washer in chief?

brainwashing campaigns.

Beginning in 1953, when it discovered a Communist plot to brainwash the Iranian people into disliking their amiable Shah, the CIA went all out to unwash Iranian brains. After removing one of the dirtiest washers — Mohammed Mossedegah, who had brainwashed many Iranians into accepting the absurd notion that Iranians should own Iranian oil — the CIA helped the Shah set up a vast anti-brainwashing operation.

The CIA experts had discovered that the first step of brainwashers was often to get people to dislike extreme poverty. They therefore advised the Shah to teach the Iranian people to love poverty, which could be done, of course, only if they had the opportunity to experience it. This is why the Shah found it necessary to deposit most of the proceeds from Iran's oil in overseas banks.

SAVAK

But the central feature of the CIA's campaign to save the Iranian people from brainwashing was the creation of SAVAK. Under the direct control of the Shah, SAVAK set out to counter the "sophisticated and subtle" brainwashing techniques mentioned by Powell.

Obviously, the most effective opposition to such techniques could only be unsophisticated and unsubtle. Borrowing heavily from the pioneering anti-brainwashing techniques of the Nazis, the CIA helped SAVAK perfect its methods. These included electric shock, rape, pulling out nails and burning. A particularly effective means of dealing with washed skulls proved to be crushing the skull in a vice. On the theory that it was best to get to people before they had been brainwashed, these techniques were often used on children.

But, despite these humanitarian

efforts, the brainwashers won out and the Shah was deposed. Now, to add insult to injury, Americans are being brainwashed too. How else can you explain some of the hostages saying that the Shah should be extradited to Iran to stand trial?

DILEMMA

Jimmy Carter now faces a real dilemma. He would, of course, be fully justified in a military attack on the Iranian people who have repaid Washington's 25 years of devotion to their welfare by allowing themselves to be brainwashed.

The problem is that large numbers of Americans are also susceptible to brainwashing — as shown by a recent US poll in which nobody said they loved the Shah enough to die for him. There is therefore a real danger that brainwashers could use subtle and unsophisticated techniques to play on this sentiment if, for example, the Marines were sent to Iran.

Thus Carter is in a "no-win" situation. Around the world, and even in the US itself, Washington's every effort only seems to result in still more washed brains.

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Not Jobs !

recently by the Secretary of the Welsh TUC, George Wright, — is that import controls could be adopted to keep out foreign steel.

DIVISIVE

Such a proposition — accepted by wide layers of the union leadership — is equally utopian. In the first place, it merely ties more strongly the interests of British steelworkers with that of the company instead of seeing that the only way they can really protect jobs is by fighting against it.

In the second place, it is divisive. Calling for 'import controls' to protect steelworkers jobs is at the expense of workers in other countries. It merely exports unemployment. What this will lead to, in practice, is workers in different countries competing with each other instead of uniting in a common struggle against the steel barons.

Far from competing with each other, British steelworkers should be trying to find links with workers — particularly in Europe — to mount a common defence of jobs and wages in the period ahead.

SHORTER-WORKWEEK

The first step of such a defence must be an understanding that steelworkers did not create the present crisis and should not be made to pay for it. Why should steelworkers jobs be put on the line because of growing inter-capitalist competition as recession looms?

This does not mean that steelworkers are against the introduction of new plant and machinery. On the contrary, it is to be welcomed if it benefits the workforce — who produce all the wealth — and does not worsen working conditions and throw thousands out on the dole.

If machinery is to be brought in and plants 'rationalised', then the answer of steelworkers in Britain should be the same as steelworkers in France and Germany. Bring in the shorter work-week, share the work out among existing steelworkers without loss of pay! It is only by a consistent fight along these lines that jobs today will not be slashed tomorrow.

PAUL PHILLIPS

ARE RATE INCREASES THE ANSWER ?

by DAVE MCLEOD (T&GWU)

The Tory government decision to lop 5% off subsidies to local authorities has placed many Labour councils in a dilemma. Wanting to fight back – yet worried about going bankrupt in April – many of them have turned to rate increases as a “solution”.

This has been the case with many councils such as Islington, Hackney and Lambeth which has projected rate rises for the coming year of over 56%. Speaking at a public meeting in December, councillor Kotz (Deputy leader of Hackney Council) explained that ‘Slogans are alright, but we have to live in the real world’.

HEROICS?

The pressure on local councils has been so great that even layers of the socialist left have been drawn into backing these “solutions.” Bernard Misrahi, for example, in a recent article in *Socialist Organiser*, argues that rate increases should be seen as a “temporary measure to give us more time” to build an effective anti-cuts campaign.

Misrahi backs up his arguments by saying that rate increases affect businessmen more than working people and that, anyway, “. . . a rate increase might mean a few less pounds in the bank – but cuts mean less day nurseries and an even longer wait for council house repairs”.

Misrahi’s arguments, reflecting a minority view inside the SCLV, emphasise the need to keep Labour councils in power (without any undue “heroics”) until a major campaign is underway to confront the Tories. “Refusal to raise enough money to meet expenditure”, he writes, “will almost certainly result in the Tories sending in commissioners who will gleefully savage those services which have the greatest ideological significance...”.

WRONG PREMISE

Misrahi’s arguments miss the point. Just what are the cuts about? They’re an attempt by the Tories to make working people pay for the current crisis. Tax concessions for the rich – to boost investment and profit – are to be paid for by working people in less hospitals, schools and social services.

Does putting up the rates challenge this basic assumption that

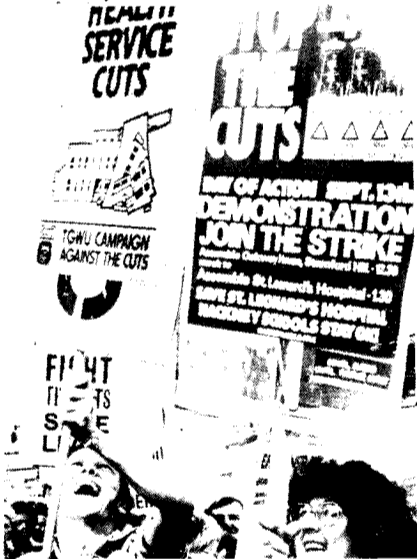
working people should shoulder the burden of the present crisis? On the contrary, it merely passes it on to them in a disguised way. Tax concessions for the rich are to be paid not in cuts but in taking money directly out of working people’s pockets. There’s a real “distribution of wealth” for you! From the poor to the rich.

As for Misrahi’s argument that rate increases will fall mainly on businessmen, this is equally incorrect. In boroughs such as Lambeth or Camden, for example, it is working people who will have to pay through the nose and, for them, rate increases are no different from rent increases.

LESSER EVIL

But won’t the temporary evil of rate rises at least allow Labour councils a chance of hanging on? As Pete Rowlands – arguing a similar case to Misrahi at a recent SCLV conference – put it: “Better to have a Labour council in Lambeth, even if it has to raise rates, than to have the commissioners sent in by the Tories”.

Such an argument is not new. It is exactly the same used by Callaghan, when in office, to justify his attacks on the social services. The only alternative to the Labour



“scalpel” was, he explained, the Tory “axe”. Unfortunately, as Callaghan discovered in the “winter of discontent”, working people have no loyalty to a government – even a “lesser evil” Labour one – which acts against their interests.

If Labour councils carry out the cuts – or the disguised form of cuts rate increases represent – then they will get a similar response. And rightly so.



IMPRACTICAL

Misrahi’s position violates a basic socialist premise: that working people did not create the crisis, are not responsible for it and should not have to pay for it. No doubt such a position will be termed “unrealistic” by those whose main concern is maintaining a Labour Council in power. But, in reality, it is their position which is unrealistic.

Massive rate increases this year might be able to offset the cuts the Tories are imposing. But what will happen next year, and the year after, when the economic crisis deteriorates and the Tories make even more swingeing cuts? Rate increases will not be able to offset the cuts and the result will be – once the path has been taken – of combining rate increases with cuts!

Such a policy will not only delay an inevitable confrontation with the Tories but will ensure that it takes place on the most disadvantageous terms: i.e. after councils have effectively demoralised and alienated the grass-roots of Labour supporters by conning them into thinking a struggle can be avoided.

TEMPORARY

It may be argued, as Misrahi does, that increasing the rates should be seen merely as a temporary solution until a wider campaign against the cuts has been built. But this is certainly not how it is being seen. Those councils which have opted for rate rises have done so as an alternative to mobilising mass action against the cuts.

Such a change is no accident. It is impossible to mobilise working people against the Tories when councils start by cutting their living standards. It is as unrealistic as a trade union leader mobilising action against redundancies after agreeing to the “sack” for half the workforce.

This is the major error at the root of the argument of those who support rate increases. They see the solution to the Tory offensive not in mobilising working people against the attacks but in “juggling” with “figures”.

Anti-cuts Round-up

Middlesbrough: Backed by the TUC’s Northern Regional Council, thousands of nurses, council workers, clothing workers and the Fire Brigades Union will be launching a mass anti-cuts demonstration on Feb 9th.

South Yorks: On February 18th, the South Yorks Association of Trades Councils will be launching a 24-hour strike against the cuts and Thatcher’s economic policies. Backed by the 60,000 strong NUM and AUEW, all the main unions in S. Yorkshire are taking part.

Lancaster: Lancaster and Morecombe Action Committee has called for a rally against the Tory cuts and other policies on Jan. 19th. The rally has been backed by local Labour Parties, the Trades Council and the student union.

I.L.E.A. caves in

By DAVE PICTON (NUT)

On December 4th, the Inner London Education Authority voted for a cut of £21,590,000 or 4.19%. Accusing supporters of a no-cuts policy of living in “cloud-cuckoo land”, ILEA leader Ashley Brammal blithely announced that such cuts would do no serious damage to education.

It is difficult to know just who is living in cloud-cuckoo land. If these cuts are confirmed at the budget meeting on February 5th, they will mean a loss of something like 1,000 teaching jobs and a reduction in finance, transport, maintenance and in-service training for all ILEA schools.

And they haven’t stopped here. So hasty, it seems, are Labour members of ILEA to support the Tory axe that they have even decided to up school meal prices from 30 to 35p. No doubt they are anticipating the Tory Education Bill (proposed for this spring) which intends removing from LEAs the obligation to provide a schools meal service and leaves them free to charge their own prices.

ACCOUNTABLE?

What is worse, this cave-in before the Tory government was made in the teeth of fierce resistance from those whom ILEA Labour members are supposed to represent. Only two Labour councillors actually voted against all cuts – Ken Livingstone and Charlie Rossi. The others who voted for them did so even though they had been urged, by constituency Labour Parties, to vote against.

One example of this is Elsie Horsted, chief whip of the Labour group on Lambeth Council, who was actually mandated by the Labour councillors she represents on ILEA to vote against. The Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party had even taken the unprecedented step of lobbying the Labour members of ILEA to express their almost unanimous opposition to the cuts.

The same disregard for democracy was shown by NUT representatives on the ILEA education committee. These two “interpreted” the NUT instruction not to take part in any discussion around cuts by . . . abstaining! Since the vote in



favour was only narrowly passed – by 29 to 28 – they are now, quite understandably, coming under considerable pressure to resign.

GENERAL

This situation is not, of course, unique to the ILEA. Up and down the country, Labour councils are acting as if the cuts imposed by the present Tory government are if not actually desirable, at least inevitable.

Acceptance of Tory measures can be traced back to the last Labour government agreeing to IMF loans on the condition that social spending be drastically reduced. That decision legitimised the idea in Labour ranks that cuts in social services were economically necessary and thus prepared the ground for the massive Thatcher offensive.

Ashley Brammal – like other Labour councillors – may talk of the need to be “realistic”. Realism, in this context, means however merely offloading the burden for the present crisis onto working people by eroding living standards and butchering jobs.

ACTION

Such backdowns have not gone unchallenged however. Opposition to the cuts is mounting among rank and file trade unionists, community organisations and – in the case of education – among parents and schoolchildren who will be the first to suffer.

The first signs of it was the mass lobby of the ILEA organised by the Inner London Teachers Association on December 4th which brought over 10,000 London teachers – and students – onto the streets. It is actions such as these which will put growing pressure on Labour councillors and trade union officials to stand up to the Tory offensive – or, at least, make way for those that will.

Already, under the opposition building up to Brammal’s wielding of the axe, the Executive Committee of the London Labour Party has denounced the ILEA decision and has pledged its support for those ILEA Labour members who opposed the cuts.

CLARITY

If this opposition is to grow, however, there is an urgent need to develop a clear alternative to the ideological offensive which the Tories have so effectively waged through the mass media. It has to be clearly argued that the job of Labour leaders is not to do the Tories’ dirty work – either by imposing cuts or increasing the rates – but to defend their members’ interests.

It is only by fighting for this position within the trade unions and Labour Party that a serious political alternative can emerge against the capitulatory line of the present leaders.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

Such a left-wing should support not only policies in the interests of working people but also their allies among the youth, women, Blacks and oppressed national minorities. It is only by showing that Labour champions the rights of all the oppressed & 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 real-left-wing should be built around the following demands:

- * Hands off the Unions! No curbs on the right to strike or Picket!
- * For the 35 hour week. End unemployment by work-sharing (with no loss of pay) and introduce a mass public works programme for those already on the dole.
- * Oppose all wage curbs! For wage increases to be tied to the cost of living to offset inflation.
- * Open the books of all those companies claiming inability to pay a

decent wage or threatening redundancies. Nationalise all those that put profit before people.

- * Tax the rich not the poor. No cuts in the social services. For social expenditure to be tied to increases in the cost of living.
- * For women’s rights. For the right of all women to free abortion on demand, free nurseries, equal pay and opportunity. Support NAC.
- * Fight racism. Repeal all racist immigration laws! Defend the right of Blacks to defend themselves as they see fit against racist attacks.
- * 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 sources.

Socialist Action supporters, while fighting for the above, will seek the widest possible unity with all forces in the labour movement around concrete issues. We would also seek, in our pages, to develop an ongoing debate over the best ways of building a socialist alternative.

If you would like to find out more about *Socialist Action* – or contribute to it – write to: *Socialist Action*, c/o 58, Auckland Road, London SE 19.

Which way for YS

by GRAHAM WEIGHT

In February, the Greater London LP young socialists will be meeting once again at our annual conference. The key debate will be, of course, how to draw thousands of young people into our ranks to help the anti-Tory struggle.

The opportunities for massive growth are clearly there. The past few years have seen an upsurge among young people and thousands have begun to get involved in politics for the first time.

Many of those who demonstrated last November for abortion rights were young women from the colleges and schools. Many more who supported the mass ANL carnivals — and the Scrap SUS campaign — were young Black and white workers. Even more have been involved in campaigns such as those against nuclear energy and against the cuts. The teachers' demo against the cuts was supported by hundreds of NUSS students, for example.

RESPONSE

It is clear that there is a real chance for the YS to move out boldly and draw thousands of young people into the YS in the months ahead. But will they respond to this challenge? Will it be able to adopt those policies necessary for it to grow and become the spearhead of a "Youth Against the Tories" campaign?

The prospects do not look so bright at the moment. Leaving aside a few YS branches around the country which have taken up these issues — and become involved in campaign politics — the YS as a whole does not seem able to respond in a positive way. As we meet, next month, the YS will actually be smaller than it was 10 years ago, despite the growing interest of young people in politics.

The reason for this stagnation can be laid most obviously at the doors of the tendency that dominates the YS nationally: Militant.

INWARD-LOOKING

While Militant fights for socialism, it doesn't seem able to move out and relate to young people on the issues they think are important. It tends to downplay issues such as women's or Black rights and ignores almost everything that isn't on the "economic level". Thus, despite requests, it refused to affiliate — or support — the big demonstrations against Corrie or the campaigns against racism led by the ANL and, more recently, CARL.

Militant seems to think these

issues are "unimportant" compared with questions like fighting unemployment or nationalising the giant monopolies. What Militant doesn't understand is that young women will not join an organisation that doesn't take women's rights seriously or fight for them. And Black youth will not join an organisation that talks of "equality" but doesn't actively fight racism today.

Whenever motions have come up at YS conferences trying to get the YS to support these campaigns — such as the Troops Out Movement — Militant has always tried to crush them. As long as the YS continues to adopt this sterile position, however — preaching at youth instead of being involved in action with them — the YS will continue to stagnate. Isn't it odd that all the struggles against the Tory government have been led by campaigns which the YS has refused to support?

CAMPAIGNING

Young people don't want to be



preached at. They want an organisation that is involved in real action which they can identify with and get involved in. What we should be doing at the coming conference is not "talking" about socialism — passing dull motions boring everyone to death — but drawing up plans for some serious campaigns the YS could lead in the years ahead.

It's no use talking about leading a campaign against the Tories by itself. What we need to do is draw up a series of campaigns we want to promote that can draw thousands of young people concretely into anti-Tory action. What sort of campaigns could we support and/or promote?

* **SUPPORT NAC.** One of our main thrusts could be for all YS branches to support their local

NAC groups and to try and draw young women in the schools and colleges into activity.

- * **SUPPORT CARL.** Another major question YS branches could relate to is supporting the campaign launched recently — with the support of the adult Labour Party — against racist laws that hit Black youth.
- * **TROOPS OUT NOW.** A third could be trying to build a local TOM branch in our area and to mobilise for national activities called by the UTOM.
- * **AGAINST THE CUTS.** A final area could be to support the mass anti-cuts campaign by winning over young people in the colleges and schools to see that they have a vested interest in supporting the unions' defence of health and education services.

UNITED ACTION

In building these campaigns, the YS should try and get unity with all forces on the left. Militant is often frightened of holding joint actions

with other groups and try to cut the YS off from them. This is a sectarian idea and also explains why the YS is stagnating.

If we are truly fighting for these campaigns, then we want to draw the maximum number of people into action. It is by showing ourselves as non-sectarian in this way, that we will persuade a lot of people who get involved to join the YS and to help us oppose the right-wing Labour leaders.

In fighting to make the YS a real, live organisation, no doubt we'll have to fight the "preaching" attitude of Militant which wants to turn the YS into a dead-end sect. Anyone interested, therefore, in trying to make the YS active in the way I've indicated, please write to: Socialist Action, c/o 58, Auckland Rd. London, SE19.

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS



It wasn't the UN that got troops out of Vietnam but mass action by working people

"The idea has often been raised of a United Nations 'peacekeeping' force being used in N. Ireland", writes Paul Shaw of Cambridge. "How should socialists view the UN? Does it have any progressive elements? I would like to read an analysis of its role".

"United Nations" was the name adopted on January 1, 1942, by the wartime alliance led by the US, British and Soviet governments. In October 1943, the foreign ministers of these governments — along with a representative of Chiang Kai-shek's regime in China — agreed that after the war "united action... will be continued for the organisation & maintenance of peace".

Fine words which did nothing to change the real aims of the powers involved. While making speeches about 'peace' in the UN, British troops continued to pour into Kenya or Malaysia to curb the liberation struggles there and France carried out its colonial wars in Algeria and Indochina.

Instead of opposing these aggressive acts and calling on Western powers to withdraw from the colonies, the UN backed them up to the hilt. The US invasion of Korea in 1949 was carried out under the UN flag, while UN 'peacekeeping' forces in the Congo in the early 1960s helped destroy the anti-imperialist upsurge there.

CHANGED ROLE?

That may have been true in the earlier years, it could be argued, but isn't the UN different today? Aren't the majority of countries that currently make it up workers' states or semi-colonial countries that won their independence after it was formed? Hasn't this altered its character?

Well, it is a fact that the General Assembly of the UN has sometimes served as a forum in which these countries have denounced the crimes of imperialism. This is what happened when the Cuban revolutionary government exposed the US 'Bay of Pigs' invasion.

While this is true however, it is also a fact that only the Security Council — made up of 5 countries each with the power of veto — can take action. If the General Assembly sometimes passes an anti-imperialist motion, such a motion is never transformed into action because of the veto used by Security Council members such as the US, Britain or France.

The clearest example of this is South Africa. While repeated motions have condemned the apartheid politics of the South African regime, they have never led to more than token action because of the opposition of imperialist countries.

COVER

In this sense, the UN still remains dominated by the Imperialist countries which either use it as an

effective tool to pursue their aims or who cynically disregard it, when it isn't useful to them. If it didn't serve their interests, they would simply split it wide open and withdraw their financial support.

It would be utopian to expect anything else. The drive for profits forces the Imperialist powers into an endless search for markets, sources of raw materials and areas for profitable investment. The need to maintain and expand these holdings leads to constant aggression against the colonial world and the workers' states (as happened with Vietnam).

The UN, because of its more independent image, actually affords them a chance of pursuing their aims while appearing before their own people as well-intentioned seekers after peace.

CONFLICT

But if this is true, it could be objected, why haven't conflicts between the imperialist countries and the Third World torn the UN apart? The answer is not so complex as it may appear. Most of the governments of the former colonial countries in the UN are capitalist.

While they may have taken actions aimed at establishing a degree of independence for their own capitalists, they are still dominated economically by imperialism. This is as true for a country like India as for Angola which recently won its independence from Portugal.

This is why these governments inevitably go along with solutions that uphold basic imperialist interests — whether in South Africa or Indochina — even though they may use the UN General Assembly sessions for anti-imperialist speeches that win popular support at home.

WORKERS STATES?

Unfortunately, the bureaucracies that rule the workers states in Moscow and Peking lend their support to the United Nations and uphold myths about its 'neutral' role. They have the power to expose its real nature, but to do so would cut across their desire to trade political support for capitalist regimes for economic and diplomatic deals.

Thus the Soviet bureaucracy was quite prepared to entertain Nixon to work out a trade deal with the US at the very time that US bombers were raining the equivalent of one atom bomb a day down upon the cities of North Vietnam.

This policy stands in marked contrast with the policy followed by the Bolsheviks towards the League of Nations, an earlier instrument of capitalist 'peace-making', that came into being after WW1 and died with the approach of WW2. Lenin described it as a 'thieves' kitchen'.

Pete Marais

POST BAG

Dear Comrade,

"No! — to Nuclear Power", in the last issue of *Socialist Action*, showed clearly that the government's plans to extend the nuclear power industry are a threat to health, safety and democratic rights — and would mean a net loss of many jobs in the power industry as a whole.

Clearly, the struggle against nuclear power — which is beginning to emerge in this country — should not be regarded as a "job for the Liberals".

The article concludes with the demands "No Nuclear Power Stations — For an alternative energy strategy based on coal". To this should be added the demand: "No

redundancies — retraining programmes for all nuclear power workers". Such a demand lays the basis for overcoming divisions between workers in different energy industries.

Len Wagstaff
(London, SE11)

Dear Comrade,

The last issue of *Socialist Action* contained a number of articles on the question of democracy in the Labour Party. This was correct. There is no doubt that the issue is becoming increasingly relevant to more and more Labour activists as the last Labour Party conference proved.

While correct to raise it, however, I think your attitude towards Tony Benn — and the proposals he made — to be insensitive, to say the least. Whatever you may think of Benn's role in the last Labour government, the proposals he and Heffer made were a major step forward in democratising the Labour Party and should be supported for that reason.

Cutting the powers of the Labour PM and making policy decisions the province of the Parliamentary Labour Party — open to pressure from constituencies — would be a serious blow to the right wing.

Mike Strange (London, SW2)

INFLATION: Who's to blame?

Inflation is now running at 17% and is expected to top 20% by the end of the year. For the government, of course, the chief cause of inflation is "excessive wage demands" and public spending. "We have to live within our means", Thatcher says. But do wage demands cause inflation? Below, *Pete Marais* examines the real causes of inflation and how working people can safeguard themselves against it.

The inflation gripping Britain today — and most Western capitalist countries — stems from the end of the "post-war boom" period. Building on the ashes of the war, and using the complex technology developed during the war years, industry expanded.

More and more workers were hired. Wages increased and — in Britain — many workers were able to afford cars, houses and other consumer products considered a "luxury" in the pre-war years.

agenda in many European countries.

In order to prevent a recurrence of such dangerous trends, capitalist governments have resorted more and more to "deficit spending" to offset these recessions. What this means, in concrete terms, is that they spend more money than they take in in taxes.

INFLATION

Over the past 8 years, for example, government hand-outs to private industry have soared from a mere £21 millions a year to a colossal £8 billions. The deficit spending to "aid" ailing companies — and to promote arms manufacture — is financed by the creation of new money in a central bank.

As the government pours out money to keep alive "ailing" firms, new money is poured into the system by the banks. The end result is that even when companies have overproduced and find they can't

we consider, however, that inflation during that period has soared by a colossal 56%, we can see that in real purchasing terms our standard of living has actually declined by 3%.

CUTBACKS

Would it therefore be correct of workers in Britain to support the Thatcher government's decision to cut back the social services? Would it be correct to accept Thatcher's argument that the only way to stop inflation is by the government spending only what it receives in taxes and eliminating deficit spending?

To support Thatcher's deflationary policies would be suicidal. In the first place, the "fiscal" policies of the right-wing Tories will only lead to a mass destruction of workers' living standards as health, education and other social services are peeled away.

In the second case, they will lead to mass unemployment as thousands of workers employed in the public sector are pushed out onto the dole. Such a move, cutting back on demand, would only serve to slow down industry and lead to unemployment in other sectors of the economy as goods can't find customers.

For Thatcher — and all capitalist governments — the only two solutions they can offer working people are either inflation — which undermines living standards — or mass unemployment as part of a generalised recession.

ALTERNATIVE

The only way to offset this twin evil is by bold socialist policies. In order to help curb inflation, socialists should fight clearly for an end to arms expenditure which eats up a vast proportion of government revenue. Instead of cutting back on health and education, the labour movement should fight to slash the arms budget and pour the money into socially useful areas.

A bold public works programme — building houses, hospitals, schools and parks — would also provide jobs for the tens of thousands of skilled workers at present sitting idle.

At the same time, however, working people should fight to gain protection against inflation. Unions should campaign to have automatic increases to keep pace with the cost of living inbuilt into wage agreements. Since the Consumer Price index is "rigged", consumer price committees are needed to follow actual price increases in garages, supermarkets and shopping centres.

Moreover, cost of living clauses should cover not only wages but also Social Security pensions for the old, unemployed and sick.

sell their goods, instead of lowering prices to get rid of them, they tend to raise prices. They try to make up for slack sales with higher prices.

Government deficit spending and monopoly pricing consequently dovetail to unleash inflation, even when production is declining.

CREDIT EXPLOSION

This process was already well underway in Britain in the middle 1960s. Continued hand-outs to ailing British industry combined with money poured into the armaments industry created a deepening inflationary trend.

This gives the lie to the propaganda of successive governments that wage increases cause inflation. On the contrary, wage increases merely represent the attempt by working people to maintain their standards of living in the face of an inflationary spiral.

The average wage of working people in 1974 was £80 a week. Today that wage stands at £110. If



But capitalism cannot expand indefinitely without leading to a crisis. As each industry manufactures and sells more goods, markets inevitably become "saturated". There aren't enough customers. Industry slows down production. Workers are fired. In turn, their purchasing power declines, cutting sales back even more. The economy slumps into depression.

DEFICIT SPENDING

Inflation is a direct result of this over-production crisis of capitalism on a world scale. The 1930s taught the capitalist rulers that they cannot afford to let a world "downturn" reach its natural limits. They cannot afford to impose massive "trade barriers" which promote bankruptcies and growing lines of unemployed.

These crisis conditions only serve, they learnt to their cost, to provoke a mass working class upsurge as happened in the 30s when socialist revolution was on the

ABORTION — continued from page 1

erode democratic rights and which seek — by making women scapegoats for the Tory unemployment drive — to split and divide them.

The mass mobilisation on October 28th showed the Tories that there was a united resistance to their plans to ram through unemployment by taking away women's elementary rights.

PROTEST?

While a welcome step forward,

however, the TUC's support for CAC cannot be allowed to remain at the level of a one-off protest. If the Corrie Bill is to be defeated — on Feb 5th or later — then only continued mass action will do the job.

The previous anti-abortion Bills — both James White's and Bayon's — were only prevented from becoming law because of the vigorous action NAC launched against them. The only way to stop the Corrie Bill getting on

the statute books will be by similar mass action which will have to be that much more vigorous because of the strong Tory support for it in the House.

Opinion polls have already shown that the majority of people believe abortion should be a woman's right. The only way the Tories can be stopped in their tracks is by tapping this vast potential support in mass action.

ALL OUT FEB 5TH

This means fighting within the labour movement for a mass turn-out on Feb 5th (when the third reading occurs). Already,

Students against Corrie

By Liz Eastham (NUS)

(Below Liz Eastham, LSE student, describes how the College Women's Group mobilised for the mass CAC demonstration last year and is continuing the activities this year.)

On Monday Oct 8th, the LSE Women's Group met to decide how to give the fullest support to the TUC's call for a demonstration against Corrie on Oct 28th. As part of the LSE's Campaign Against Corrie, a sub-group was set up to consider the different actions to be taken leading up to the demo.

In the next few weeks, a stall was set up and people were asked to sign the CAC petition against Corrie. All public rooms in the school were flyposted and leafleted. There was a huge response to this aspect of the campaign, hundreds of people signing the petition and a great many useful and interesting discussions being held.

As part of the build up, two meetings were held, one featuring Glenys Cousins of *Women's Voice* and the other Dr Wendy Savage of NAC who explained to a packed meeting precisely how the Corrie Bill would affect women. Her wide professional experience and understanding of women seeking abortions allowed her to answer the wide-ranging questions raised by the audience. Many of the people attending came away far more aware of both the need for an abortion service and the implications of the Corrie restrictions.

SPUC

During this period, it was clear that SPUC was also trying to win support. A room had been booked at the college for Oct 27th. While there was a debate in the campaign as to whether or not the meeting should be allowed to go ahead, it was finally decided there were no grounds for cancelling it but that it should be picketed.

However, it was later discovered that SPUC had booked the room as a private meeting, attendance being limited only to those who had bought tickets. At this stage the campaign drew up a letter of objection to the meeting and it was agreed by the University authorities that, since the union had given its backing to the Campaign Against Corrie and since SPUC was infringing the LSE's own guidelines on letting rooms to outside bodies, the meeting should be cancelled.

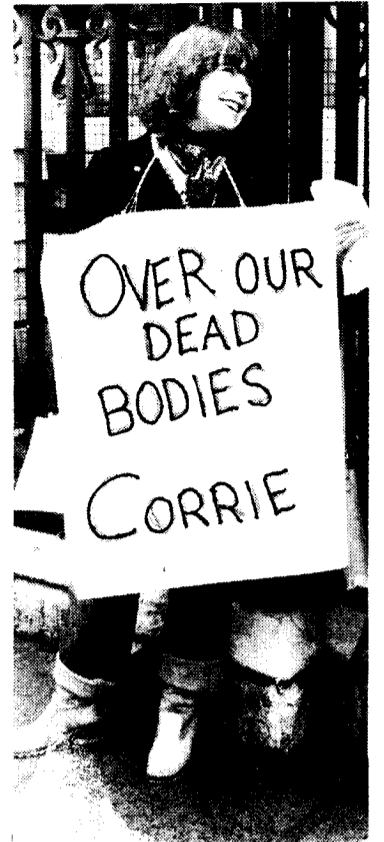
MASS TURN-OUT

In the last two weeks before the demonstration, there was growing activity in the college. The information stall was kept busy and the petition was supported by teaching staff, porters and administrative workers as well as a huge number of home and overseas students.

NALGO and the NUS have pledged their support for the lobby and will be mobilising actively for it. Despite the short time left, this call should be carried into all trade union and Labour Party branches.

If the Bill isn't halted on Feb 5th, then the mass opposition mobilised against it must serve as the base for an ongoing campaign until it is removed from the statute books.

ALL OUT ON FEB 5TH!
NO RETURN TO THE BACK-STREETS!
NO TO CORRIE'S BILL!



A great deal of information was disseminated, discussions and arguments entered into and a great many people, otherwise uninvolved in any aspect of the school's political life, were sufficiently concerned to put their names to the petition and wear the badges supporting CAC.

The extent of the support was reflected in the large numbers who marched behind the LSE banners on October 28th, many of them men and not all of them students.

CONTINUING

However, the march was not the end of the Campaign's activities. A month later, a debate was held at the school — organised by the Christian Union — between a representative of SPUC and Jo Richardson MP, and plans were laid for the new year. The purpose of these was to reactivate support for the lobby of Parliament on Feb 5th (the time of the third reading of the Corrie Bill).

Among activities planned are a video show of the demonstration on the 28th Oct and a benefit disco. In addition, the Campaign intends producing a pamphlet detailing the current position on abortion rights, how Corrie's Bill will change it and why the Campaign opposes it.

There will be few people at the LSE unaware of the issues involved and of the Campaign's reasons for opposing the Bill. It is to be hoped that this will provide an ongoing base for fighting until women are given the right to free abortion on demand — a woman's right to choose.



Afghanistan: US HANDS OFF!



During the last days of December, Soviet troops poured into Afghanistan. The reaction by Western governments was hysterical. Denouncing it as an attempt to "subjugate an independent Islamic people", Washington has curtailed trade and diplomatic links with Moscow. Its "allies" have been urged to do the same.

Washington's outrage is understandable. The move by the Soviet rulers came in reaction to increasing military activity, over the past year, by rightist guerrillas determined to roll back the land reform & other social gains that had been initiated after the 1978 April revolution. From the outset, these forces had been organised, financed and equipped by Washington and its allies, most notably the Pakistan military dictatorship.

The Soviet and Afghan offensive to defeat the rightist bands is, in this sense, a major set-back for Washington's manoeuvres, not only in Afghanistan but in neighbouring Iran as well. It is a sharp blow to their efforts to hold back the revolutionary upsurge in the area.

UPSURGE

Despite Washington's hypocritical propaganda, the entry of Soviet troops took place against a rising upsurge of the Afghanistan people for social change that can be traced back to 1978. The seizure of power in that year by the P.D.P.A (the Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan) was not a "coup", as the Western press would have us believe, but the culmination of a series of mass uprisings in the streets of Kabul.

Ironically enough, the events of 1978 were precipitated, in part, by Washington itself. In response

to inducements from the USA and the Shah of Iran, the capitalist regime of Mohammad Daud, that originally had economic ties with Moscow, shifted towards a more 'openly' pro-imperialist stance. As part of this shift, Daud cracked down heavily on the PDPA, a pro-Moscow Stalinist Party.

On April 1st, 1978, Mir Abkar Khyber, a prominent leader of the PDPA, was assassinated. This sparked off an immediate popular response which led to mass actions against the government. Against the background of mass upsurge, PDPA militants and supporters in the military deposed Daud and seized power.

REFORM

All the posts in the government were held by PDPA members and Taraki became president. On May 9th, he described the armed uprising as the beginning of a "democratic and national revolution". He outlined a 30-point programme of democratic and social reforms aimed at breaking the power of the landlords and improving the lot of Afghanistan's workers and peasants which began to be put into effect. These included:

- * cancelling the debts of poor peasants.
- * implementing land reform by setting a ceiling on ownership of about 15 acres.
- * legalising trade unions for the

first time in Afghanistan's history.

- * recognising the rights of some of Afghanistan's various peoples (who had previously been dominated by the Pushtun nation).
 - * introducing a mass literacy campaign.
 - * improving the status of women by outlawing child marriages, declaring primary schooling as compulsory and offering special courses to married women.
- When the PDPA seized power, it had only a limited base of support, but the social measures it tried to introduce won it greater popularity. At least until mid-1979, demonstrations in support of the government were held on almost a daily basis, drawing as many as 150,000 people.

WASHINGTON

The Soviet government had no ties with the Afghan revolution, but the Kremlin could not ignore it. Since Afghanistan was strategically important, Moscow began to give it considerable assistance. Some 40 new economic aid agreements had been signed by late 1978 and the number of Soviet military & civilian advisers rose to several thousands.

It was not Moscow's increased influence in Afghanistan that alarmed Washington, however, but the Afghan revolution itself and its repercussions in Central Asia. Washington was opposed to the social gains won by the Afghan workers and peasants and feared that the revolution might lead to an overthrow of capitalist property relations. This fear was fed by the revolutionary outburst in Iran only shortly later.

It was to curb this development that Washington began to back those forces in Afghanistan who were themselves opposed to the progressive measures taken by the Kabul government. Dispossessed landlords, former military officers, monarchists, usurers, smugglers and opium dealers began to be organised into guerrilla bands to oppose the land reform, the literacy drive and other measures.

Some groups, like the Hezb-i Islami favoured the restoration of the monarchy which had been overthrown by Daud in late 1973. Others, like the Jamiat-i Islami, had close ties with rightist Pakistani circles. Some of them fought

specifically to maintain control over the opium trade.

The US Imperialists did not hide their sympathy for these reactionary forces operating mainly from camps in Pakistan's north-west frontier. When the regime in Kabul sought to suppress them, Washington denounced it as "repressive". When Moscow gave some assistance to the Afghan government, Carter warned them against "interference".

With such backing, these groups stepped up their activities in many parts of Afghanistan, destroying bridges and schools, murdering PDPA members and seeking to create so much insecurity that the government would be unable to carry through its reforms.

DIVISIONS

Although the guerrillas' claims to success were exaggerated, they did cause severe disruption and damage, and wore down the morale of the Afghan army. The Afghan government managed to hang on to the cities, but their ability to carry through a struggle against the guerrillas in the countryside was hampered in two ways.

First, factional conflicts inside the PDPA emerged. As early as July 1978, one faction in the party - led by Karmal and known as the Parcham - was purged. The victorious faction, known as the Khalq, was itself rent by divisions. It was through these factional infights that in September 1979, President Taraki was removed & Hafizullah Amin seized power.

Secondly, it also appears that some of the regime's reforms were implemented in a bureaucratic manner, without any serious attempt to organise, educate and mobilise the masses, particularly in the countryside. This gave the reactionary guerrilla groups real chances for exploitation which they naturally seized.

Both Taraki and Amin repeatedly requested Soviet military aid to combat the guerrilla forces. Some was provided but, as the *Izvestia* Jan 1st admitted, Moscow hesitated in the hope that the rebellion would itself lose momentum.

This attitude changed, however, in response to Washington's manoeuvres in regard to Iran. When Carter began to threaten military

aggression against Iran - and to prepare to 'bolster' his military position in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf - Moscow feared that the escalation of rightist guerrilla activity could result in the weak Afghan regime being overthrown.

It was this that prompted the Soviet decision to act. As *Izvestia* pointed out Jan 1st, Moscow was not going to allow a "neighbouring country" to be "turned into a base for the preparation of imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union".

In the process of sending in Soviet troops to deal with the rightist guerrillas, Moscow at the same time backed the overthrow and execution of Amin, in whom they had little confidence. As the Kremlin bureaucrats often do with ousted Soviet officials, Amin was made a "scapegoat" for past failures.

Karmal, whom Moscow gambled would be more reliable, was returned from exile in E. Europe and became the new President. He reinstated a number of previously purged Parcham faction leaders.

US - HANDS OFF!

Washington would undoubtedly like to do more than scream in outrage to stop the Soviet drive and contain the Afghan revolution. They have been limited, however, by their growing political weakness since their major defeat in Vietnam. This has been shown in their inability to openly intervene in the mounting struggles in Iran, Grenada, Nicaragua and Ethiopia.

This does not mean, however, that their 'threats' of military action should be taken lightly or that their continued support for right-wing guerrilla bands cannot seriously damage or hold back the Afghan revolution.

While the Soviet move will do much to break the rightist opposition, the only sure way to defeat it is to back up military action by social measures to advance that revolution. New social measures and the organisation of workers and peasants to support them is the only sure way of blocking Carter's ambitions.

We, in the West, can play our part too by exposing the sheer hypocrisy of Carter's so-called defence of 'democratic rights' and demanding: 'US - Hands off Afghanistan'

By P. Henning

Who's Behind the Blood Bath?

By LEN WAGSTAFF
(ASTMS)

"But if the troops are withdrawn from Northern Ireland, there'll be a blood bath . . .". How often has this argument been heard in the labour movement - on the brief occasions N. Ireland is raised - to oppose any idea of troop withdrawals. Isn't it the argument used by figures from Callaghan to Roy Mason to justify their bi-partisan policy with the Tories?

But isn't it a fact that, on analysis of what is going on in the 6 Counties, a bloodbath is already occurring and that the chief cause of it is the British troops (supposedly there to "prevent violence")?

ACCIDENTAL?

The creation of N. Ireland in 1921 was achieved despite the opposition of the mass of the Irish people for self-determination. Forcing thousands of nationalist Irish people into this artificial state, successive British governments have collaborated with the right-wing Orange politicians to set up a repressive regime based on the

denial of elementary rights to the Catholic minority.

A look at a few of the economic statistics within the border dramatically illustrates this "division". Since the partition, wage rates for the (largely Catholic) unskilled jobs have constantly been 4-6% lower than the corresponding rate in Britain, while those for the (largely Protestant) skilled jobs have been equal to if not higher than the corresponding British rates.

Unemployment presents a similar picture. In 1975, the jobless total in Protestant areas was about 3-4% (Britain: 5%) while in Catholic areas it was about 15-20%. In housing, the Catholic area of Fermanagh has a staggering 40-45% of unfit housing while in "loyalist areas" (Antrim, Down and Lisburn), the rate is about 10 to 20%. Similar differences can be seen in health, infant mortality and infectious diseases.

EXPLOSION

It was these differences - combined with election manoeuvres - which explain the upsurge among the Catholic minority at the end of the 1960s. The mass rallies and

demonstrations represented the fight by thousands of Catholics for equal rights - for the right to decent housing, a job and democratic rights.

The entry of British troops, under 'sunny' Jim Callaghan in 1969, was not - as was widely suggested - to prevent pogroms in the North. It was to preserve a status quo loaded against the minority, to protect a status quo in which Protestant workers obtained certain privileges at the expense of Catholic workers.

Far from helping to preserve "peace", British troops have been used as the bulwark of a system which breeds violence and opposition. Their main aim has been naked repression, torture in Castle-reagh barracks and the imprisonment of hundreds of political prisoners by means of no-jury courts and the anti-democratic Prevention of Terrorism Act.

LABOUR COMPLICITY

Unfortunately, instead of opposing this repression, successive Labour Home Secretaries have been only too prepared to enforce it by claiming the need to fight against



"terrorism".

What they are in fact doing, of course, is to preserve a system of repression and privilege in Northern Ireland which divides working people and pits one sector against the other. By so doing, they create the situation in which a "bloodbath" constantly exists as the recent toll of deaths only too eloquently proves.

Removal of the troops from N. Ireland is not just an elementary duty of the British labour move-

ment which has long pioneered the fight for democratic rights. It is also the only way to ensure that a bloodbath does not take place since the repressive Protestant majority - confronted with a united Irish opposition - would be much more likely to lay down the gun and come to the conference table.

This is why it is vital for socialists to take the issue of Ireland into trade union and Labour party branches, demanding the removal of troops - now!

NO WITCH HUNTS!



By RALPH WOOD

On January 11th, the *Guardian* leaked extracts from Reg Underhill's report on so-called 'infiltration' into the Labour Party. The reasons for printing the report — shelved by the NEC for over 4 years — were as a "contribution to the growing debate".

The real reason for the *Guardian's* interest in this cold chicken, however, was revealed in the editorial on the same day. It was a call to party "moderates" to take arms to save it from what it called "the teachings of Trotsky". In other words, it was a call for a witch-hunt.

To back up its clarion-call, it prominently featured right-wing David Owen's speech at the Labour for Victory meeting in Newcastle which singled out the Militant current for special treatment. Warning of "authoritarian" attitudes, he called on Labour moderates to close ranks to freeze

them out of any office.

SURPRISE

The fact that the *Guardian* should rush to the support of Labour's right-wing is, of course, no surprise. The capitalist press has always shrieked loudly on their behalf whenever it looked as if the party might become even moderately responsive to the interests of working people.

The resounding slap in the face Callaghan received at the last conference — and the identification of the party with many of the anti-Tory struggles now taking place — are clearly seen as danger signs. Such a trend could increasingly — they are only too aware — isolate the social democrats (already talking of a "third party").

The aim of these revelations is not only, however, to rally the right before it is too late. They realise how isolated they already

are. It is also to split the left by warning the Tribunites that, whatever differences they may have with Callaghan, they have more in common with him than with the "authoritarian" left.

DEMOCRACY

Such an attack is, of course, launched under the fig-leaf of preserving "democracy", of which the right-wing are the natural custodians. It is, you see, perfectly democratic for 300-odd MPs to calmly overturn conference decisions representing the wishes of millions of Labour voters.

It is equally perfectly democratic for these 300-odd MPs — collaborating with unelected civil servants, bankers and monopolists — to launch attacks against the millions of working people who put them into office in the first place.

And it is even more democratic, it seems, to stick a strip of cellulotape over the mouths of those who

disagree with this and bundle them out of the back door. Democracy, in the eyes of these Liberal allies of the Labour right-wing, obviously entails the minority dictating to the majority and the unceremonious shutting up of those who dare protest.

ALTERNATIVE

Unfortunately for the *Guardian* — and its scare tactics — many Labour and trade union activists are learning to view democracy in a different light. They are learning that democracy means MPs abiding by the wishes of those millions of members in the party which they represent.

It means creating a mechanism to ensure that those MPs, once elected, will not be able to get away with calmly overturning the decisions of the Labour movement passed after a long and democratic debate.

And it means ensuring, for all currents in the labour movement, the right to present its ideas for debate free from witch-hunts, gags and censure motions. Freedom of speech, while it may be alien to the *Guardian's* notion of "democracy", is being seen more and more by thousands of labour activists as an elementary right.

DEFENCE

Whatever differences may be held with the Militant current, it is in the interests of all labour party members to defend their right to express their views and argue freely for them.

The real enemies of democracy in the labour movement are not currents such as these. It is those forces backed by newspapers such as the *Guardian* which would like to maintain their bureaucratic grip over the party by the witch-hunting and expulsion of currents they disagree with. It is up to us all in the labour party to show them they will not succeed.

Politics of Disaster

by TERRY VINEY (NUT)

"Opposition to nuclear power might well provide a focus for protest groups over the next decade".

That's the reason the Tories give for deciding on a "low profile" approach to their nuclear programme over the next 10 years. The Central Electricity Generating Board's promise to give public reports on the safety of their nuclear plants tends to sound rather hollow after that.

EXPLOSION

The reason for the Tories' reticence is clear. They are scared of an explosion. Not the sort that shook Harrisburg, Pennsylvania last year, when a bubble of explosive gas blocked the reactor's cooling system and threatened the contamination of almost 100,000 people.

These kind of explosions are, as we all know, merely the "scare-mongering" reports issued by "dissident" groups.

No, the explosion they fear is a human one. They are frightened of the mass upsurge that might develop if their suicidal plans ever became widely known.

DANGER

And, of course, they're right. The Tories plan building another 10 nuclear power stations in the next decade. Some of these will be pressurised water reactors (PWRs) of the kind that almost brought disaster to Three Mile Island.

It is not just the horrendous possibility of a "melt-down" that makes reactors like this potential time-bombs. Scientists have admitted that radiation leaks cannot be completely eliminated and that the incidence rate of cancer among the workforce will therefore be high. The accident rate at Windscale confirms this.

Moreover there are the dangers of "atomic waste" which — as scientists at the Windscale enquiry confirmed — retains its deadly effects for up to 30,000 years. Just where will it be contained — and what guarantees are there that natural disasters won't "disturb" it?

FIGHT-BACK

The implications of these death-traps have already led to wide opposition in many countries from the USA to Germany, where mass protests have forced the government to halt their suicidal programme.

The beginnings of a similar movement seem to be emerging in Britain when last November, a major anti-nuclear conference took place in London chaired by Arthur Scargill. Bringing together all the anti-nuclear groups, the conference called for an unqualified No! to nuclear power and decided to launch a major campaign against Tory policy.

The potential of such a campaign is unquestionable since there have already been numerous calls for a public enquiry and conservation groups all round the country have challenged the methods the Tories are using to steamroller through their plans.

AIMS

One of the major aims of the campaign — in light of the Tories' secrecy — must be to bring the horrendous dangers of a nuclear future to the public scrutiny. This will mean a major struggle within the labour movement, many of whose leaders — including the TUC — have given their stamp of approval to the Tory plans.

It has to be pointed out, in opposition to figures such as Chappell of the ETU, that nuclear power is not inevitable, that there is easily enough coal to provide energy needs for hundreds of years (during which time research could be developed into alternative sources).

Equally important, it has to be pointed out that nuclear power is a threat not only to the safety of the labour movement, but to jobs and to unions' democratic rights. It may provide the industrial barons with massive profits at a time when oil supplies are becoming "precarious" but for working people, it is a potential time-bomb.

**No! to Nuclear Power!
For a Retraining Programme!
For an alternative strategy based on coal!**

CUTS Continued from page 1

December. A month earlier, over 8,500 firemen marched against the cuts in Nottingham and, in numerous areas, there have been Labour Party and Trades Council-sponsored demonstrations.

Moreover, pressure is building up for even stronger action now that the cuts are beginning to bite. On Feb 9th, the Northern Region of the TUC is launching a mass rally against the cuts and on

Feb. 18th, the South Yorks. Trades Councils — backed by the 60,000 strong NUM and AUEW — are calling for a strike against Thatcher's policies.

It is undoubtedly this growing pressure that has forced the TUC — and their allies in the Labour Party — to call a national 'day of action' against the cuts on March 9th. But will the Callaghans and Murrays — who have denounced

the Tories so eloquently from the platform — continue to reflect this feeling and use March 9th as a springboard for an on-going mass anti-cuts campaign?

The outlook hardly favours optimism. While the TUC has declared its support for a "concerted campaign of action" against the cuts, it has been a campaign long on words and short on action. At no time have the labour leaders called on Labour councils to refuse to implement the cuts or on trade unionists to take strike action against them.

WARNING

On the contrary, figures like Callaghan — while mouthing criticism of the Tory proposals — have issued stern warnings against the unions using any "industrial muscle" to defend their jobs or the social services. Respect for the "law" figures much larger in their minds than the livelihood of working people.

The main concern of the labour leaders seems to be to contain the mounting opposition to a few "protest" actions combined with weak-kneed appeals to wait for the return of a Labour government in 5 years' time.

Such an attitude, of course, isn't too surprising. How indeed can Callaghan be expected to lead an effective opposition to the cuts when he himself, in office, was

prepared to slash the social services and hold down the wages of the low-paid? How can he be expected to stop the Tories when he sympathises with the very policies they are pursuing?

THRUST

The Labour leaders must not be allowed, however, to get away with uttering their toothless threats against the Tories combined with appeals for the return of a right-wing Labour government. They have to be forced now into building a real fighting campaign against the Tories or else — as Ted Knight (Leader of Lambeth Council) put it, "removed".

"No cuts in the public sector! No rate increases!" "No redundancies — for the 35-hour week". These are the demands that have to be taken up in a real, fighting campaign against the Tories.

Such demands have to be taken into trade unions and Labour Party branches to mandate Labour Councils, up and down the country, to follow the lead given by Lambeth and refuse to introduce the Tory hatchet-work for them.

More importantly, the Labour leaders have to be called upon to mobilise the whole Labour movement behind them. March 9th must become the beginning — not the end — of a real united labour movement campaign to halt the Tories in their tracks.

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.

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