

A *Socialist* **ACTION**

**Smash
apartheid!
one person:
one vote!**

FREE NELSON



MANDELA



Socialist ACTION

Tribune and the Campaign Group

THE CAMPAIGN Group of Labour MPs has played a significant role over the past eighteen months.

They have utilised their representatives to address the press, disrupt hallowed parliamentary procedure, they have pumped out parliamentary bills on policies such as withdrawal from Ireland and amnesty for sacked and jailed miners, and they have used their positions as MPs to speak at an enormous number of meetings in support of those people, engaged in mass extra-parliamentary struggle.

Precisely because it illustrates what the Labour leadership should be doing, and is not, the Campaign Group has become, alongside Arthur Scargill, the target of a growing series of attacks from Neil Kinnock's entourage within the Labour Party. *Tribune* in particular has acted as the mouthpiece for attacks on the Group and leading members of it like Tony Benn.

Tribune devoted the front page of its 18 October issue to a letter of resignation from the group by Derek Fatchett and Kevin Barron which accuses the group of vanguardism and authoritarianism.

Tribune's argument, summarised in the same issue's editorial is that '... the Left has never been stronger and the prospects of a radical, Left-wing Labour government have never been greater', so that those, like the Campaign Group, who do not agree with Kinnock are 'rocking the boat' and jeopardising the chances of achieving 'a radical Left-wing Labour government'.

Fatchett and Barron itemise their disagreements with the Campaign Group: 'vanguardism' refers to such actions as the publication of the Miners' Amnesty Bill and the circulation for discussion of an alternative to Hattersley's economic statements; 'authoritarian' refers to such things as the 'vicious personal attacks on Michael Meacher' — after he reversed his vote and so tipped the balance on the Labour Party NEC against the NUM's amnesty resolution to Labour Party conference.

Tribune develops its case against Benn as follows: 'Yet what could be more pessimistic than the view that the leadership always betrays, that principle and power are inevitably in collision and that the only way to keep the Left alive is to fight a constant series of running battles and skirmishes against the party leadership.'

First of all let's dispose of the view, falsely attributed to the Campaign Group that the leadership always betrays. This is manifestly absurd — as the example of the Scargill leadership of the NUM leadership has shown throughout twelve months of bitter class struggle and since the 'leadership' does not always betray.

It is not Benn and the Campaign Group who have been gratuitously picking fights with Kinnock, the reverse is true. Kinnock did fail to support the miners, and any government led by him will attack the working class in a way that would make Wilson and Callaghan look like raving socialists.

Kinnock is abandoning Labour Party policies in order to prepare for such a government. Kinnock did use the platform of the Labour Party conference to join the Tory Party, the SDP, the Liberals and Fleet Street in venomous attacks on the leadership of the NUM and of Liverpool City Council.

It is Kinnock who has also added his voice to what has been one of the most brutal campaigns ever to destroy a labour movement leader and his supporters. The campaign to destroy Arthur Scargill is of such dimensions that those supporting it are prepared to take all the risks of trying to smash the NUM itself in order to carry it out.

It is impossible to believe that *Tribune* is so naive as to fail to see that Norman Tebbit and Fleet Street's praise of Neil Kinnock's conference speech was precisely because it had nothing to do with the promise of a 'radical and left-wing Labour government.'

On the contrary *Tribune* is endorsing a cynical course of trying to split and destroy the only voice in Parliament which supports people actually fighting (and thereby weakening) the Thatcher government. The Campaign Group threatens to continue doing so whether the attacks come from a Tory, coalition, or even a Labour government. That is why it is a butt of attack by both the bourgeois press and *Tribune*.

Free Nelson Mandela



Demonstration outside treason trial court, 1956

NELSON MANDELA's name symbolises the struggle against apartheid throughout the world. He was voted the most popular man in South Africa in a recent survey of Africans and people of mixed ancestry. 'Free Nelson Mandela' is the slogan emblazoned on countless banners across the world. This chant even reached the British hit parade of pop records. But who is Nelson Mandela?

Nelson Mandela was born in 1918, the son of a tribal chief in the Transkei — now one of the so-called homelands where the apartheid regime forces the majority of Africans to live, below subsistence, as a pool of cheap labour for the factories, farms and mines of the white supremacists.

Mandela began his resistance early when, as a third year college student, he was expelled for organising a boycott of the student council — which had been stripped of its powers. Expelled with him was Oliver Tambo, a lifelong friend of Mandela and now president of the African National Congress.

Mandela then went to Johannesburg to study law.

In 1944 Mandela joined the ANC, which was spearheading opposition to the oppression of blacks in South Africa. With Tambo and others, Mandela formed the Youth League of the ANC in March 1944. These youth leaders pushed for the ANC to adopt a more militant programme of direct action, of strikes, boycotts and civil disobedience.

By 1949, following the election of the Afrikaner Nationalist government with its apartheid policy, the Youth League successfully persuaded the ANC to adopt this stance. In 1952, the ANC, working with the Indian Congress and other allies organised the Defiance Campaign. All over the country Africans, Indians and 'coloureds' flouted the apartheid rules and curfew laws. Almost 9000 went to jail as a result.

Mandela became president of the ANC for the Transvaal province in 1952. The regime's response to this popularity was a banning order, prohibiting Mandela from attending gatherings and confining him to Johannesburg. In 1956 he was

arrested with 156 others and charged with treason. Only after a four year trial were the accused acquitted. The acquittal came in the year of the Sharpeville massacre, when police gunned down peaceful

By Celia Pugh

protesters, killing 69 and wounding 176. Mandela was again arrested and the ANC outlawed. On his release he gave a speech to 1400 African delegates at the All-In African conference, rejecting the forthcoming establishment of a white republic of South Africa.

The delegates threatened to organise a general strike if their demand for a union of all South Africans was not met. Mandela was put in charge of this campaign and following a wave of street arrests he went underground. The white Republic of South Africa was declared in 1961, depriving Africans of the vote, even though they made up 70 per cent of the population.

On Monday 29 May 1961, 60 per cent of African labour stayed home in Johannesburg and Pretoria. In Port Elizabeth 75 per cent went on strike, despite threats of arrests, sacking and eviction. When Mandela went underground, his press statement explained: 'We stressed that the strike would be followed by other forms of mass pressure to force the race maniacs who govern our beloved country to make way for a democratic government of the people, by the people, for the people ... At the present moment ... we plan to make government impossible.'

Mandela then travelled to other African countries and Europe to gain support. In August 1962 on his return, he was captured and sentenced to five years hard labour for his leadership of the 1961 strike and for leaving the country without valid papers. But

this was to turn into a life sentence when in 1963 he was charged with others of trying to overthrow the state. The penalty if found guilty was death.

With his inspiring evidence, Mandela joined other revolutionary leaders, like Fidel Castro, who used the opportunity of a trial to spell out the conditions of their people and the policies to overthrow the oppressor. Mandela explained how the Freedom Charter — adopted by 3000 people at a congress of workers, housewives, peasants and students in 1955 — summed up the aspirations of the African people for democratic rights, equality and justice.

Their aim was not 'to drive the white man into the sea' but to overthrow white supremacy which deprived blacks of political rights. While explaining that the ANC united those who aspired to this democratic revolution, Mandela stated that 'I am attracted to the idea of a classless society'.

Mandela explained: 'The ANC was formed in 1912 to defend the rights of the African people ... For thirty years — that's until 1949 — it adhered strictly to the constitutional struggle ... But the white governments remained unmoved and the rights of the Africans became less instead of becoming greater ...

'All lawful modes of

expressing opposition had been closed by legislation. ... We chose to defy the law. We first broke the law in such a way as to avoid recourse to violence. When this form was legislated against and when the government resorted to a show of force to crush the opposition to its policies, only then did we decide to answer violence with violence'.

The Sharpeville massacre sparked a discussion in the ANC. Mandela explained 'At the beginning of June 1961, after a long and anxious assessment of the South African situation I and some of my colleagues came to the conclusion that the violence in this country was inevitable, it would be unrealistic and wrong for African leaders to continue preaching peace and non-violence at a time when the government met our peaceful demands by force'.

So, in December 1961 the military wing of the liberation movement, Umkhonto we Sizwe — Spear of the Nation — was formed. Its manifesto declares: 'The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices — submit or fight'.

The first operations of Umkhonto involved sabotage of the economy and government, but it soon adopted a policy of guerrilla warfare. Mandela's evidence continues,

'Because the soil of South Africa is already drenched with the blood of innocent Africans, we felt it our duty to make preparations as a long term undertaking to use force in order to defend ourselves against force'.

This determined and frank evidence to the 1963 trial shows that Mandela ducked none of the issues in order to save his skin. On the eve of going underground he explained that the deprivations and hardships of struggle would not deter him. He said: 'I have made my choice. I will not leave South Africa, nor will I surrender. Only through hardship, sacrifice and militant action can freedom be won. The struggle is my life'.

The apartheid regime was terrified that a death sentence would spark an explosion in South Africa and under international pressure they imposed a life sentence. Mandela has now served 23 years in prison — the first ten years without a bed and much of it in solitary confinement.

But his spirit is not broken and he still gives confidence to other prisoners by campaigning for better prison conditions. This year he turned down two offers of release from president Botha, refusing to comply with the condition that he renounce violence.

It is this determination to fight for liberation to the end which has earned Mandela the love and respect of the South African people and supporters across the world. When Mandela declares 'the struggle is my life' and 'I am prepared to die', he speaks for the thousands of African, Indian and 'coloured' people in South Africa who daily face death because they will not give up their rights to demonstrate, bury their dead and struggle for freedom.

That is why when we demand 'free Nelson Mandela' we are demanding the freeing of the Black people of South Africa. When Mandela walks free, the key won't only have turned on his prison cell. The door will be flung open for South African people to march to victory for democracy, justice and freedom. As Mandela explained: 'No power on earth can stop an oppressed people determined to win their freedom'.



Mandela and Walter Sisulu in South Africa's notorious Robben Island prison, 1966

Photo: IDAF

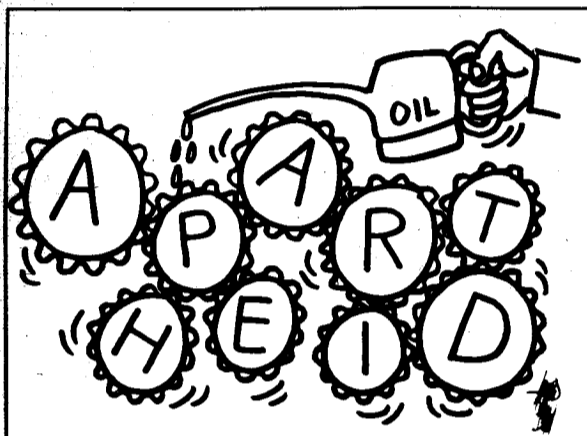
Photo: IDAF

Blood on Thatcher's hands

LAST WEEK Maggie Thatcher gloated over the 'tiny, tiny' concessions she made at the Commonwealth conference over sanctions against South Africa. Even as she spoke, Benjamin Moloise lay dead, murdered by the government, denied even the right to a funeral.

The reason Maggie Thatcher opposes sanctions is simple and sordid. It has nothing to do with defending freedom and democracy. It has nothing to do with reforming apartheid. It is because British investors have more money in South Africa than any other country in the world. They profit directly, to the tune of billions of pounds, from the misery, oppression and brutality which the racist regime inflicts on South Africa's black majority.

ALAN FREEMAN looks at how British companies have blood on their hands.



ABOUT 1200 British firms make their money directly off the backs of South Africa's black workers. They employ more than 350,000 people and they own about £5bn worth of investments. We list some of them below.

Their profits are understandably enormous. African workers earn between one-quarter and one-fifth of what white workers do. To put this another way: these firms pay, per month, £3-400 less to their black workers than they would pay if apartheid did not exist. That means each black worker boosts their profits by anything up to £5000 per year.

These firms are among Britain's best-known household names. Next time you buy chocolate from Cadbury's or Rowntrees, or drinks from Schweppes, or food from Reckitt and Colmans, a razor blade from Wilkinson Sword, car parts from Lucas or Chloride, or any other of the host of household products sold here by champions of world freedom and democracy — remember this list.

Company	Number employed in South Africa
Barclays	26,338
Standard Chartered	21,716
Lonrho	10,482
BTR (includes Dunlop)	7,690
Courtaulds	7,633
Unilever (includes Brooke Bond)	7,317
General Electric Company	6,854
Shell	5,637
British Oxygen	5,433
British Petroleum	4,878
British-American Tobacco	4,565
Great Universal Stores	3,578
British Insulated Cables	2,669
Babcock	2,594
Guest, Keen and Nettlefold	2,478
Rowntree Mackintosh	2,442
Blue Circle Industries	2,248
Grand Metropolitan	1,972
Burmah Oil	1,875
Wilkinson Sword	1,837
Reckitt and Colman	1,786
Chubb and Son	1,680
Thorn EMI	1,539
Plessey	1,120
George Wimpey	1,111
Beecham Group	1,097
Hawker Siddeley	1,063
Legal and General Group	1,000
Coats Patons	997
ICL	945
Rank Xerox	791
Chloride Group	755
Lucal Industries	746
Tarmac	736
Johnson Matthey	718
Midland Bank	586
Prudential Assurance	571
Norwich Union	561
Smiths Industries	544



Shell implements apartheid. Said their public relations officer: 'When we find that the non-whites have proved they are capable of looking after and keeping their present toilets clean, the new luxury restrooms will be made available to them.'

How British bosses profit from apartheid

THE TORIES have refused to take action against apartheid from the word go.

On 26 July Britain abstained on the United Nations Security Council resolution calling for mandatory sanctions. When Common Market ministers passed a motion calling for an end to the state of emergency foreign minister Geoffrey Howe reportedly had the word 'immediately' removed. Even the USA called for the state of emergency to be lifted.

The reason isn't hard to find. Britain has about £12bn invested in South Africa. Half of this is direct investment —

British firms with subsidiaries in South Africa — and the other half consists of indirect investment, which means that British firms have minority interests in South African firms.

This amounts to nearly 40 per cent of all foreign investment in South Africa. But it isn't all. South Africa relies heavily on British banks for loans. It has a total debt of nearly \$23 billion, of which \$13.6 billion falls due within twelve months. Nearly a quarter of this has been lent by British banks.

The reason for their presence is bluntly explained by the UK South Africa Trade Association:

'British investment in South Africa is more profitable than most other areas of British overseas investment.'

This makes nonsense of the claim that business contacts with South Africa will move it in the direction of reform. It makes nonsense, also, of Reagan's assertion that free enterprise has a democratising, liberalising influence. Private enterprise is up to its neck in apartheid because it can make more money there than anywhere else in the world.

That is why Thatcher won't back sanctions, and that is why we, the labour movement, must impose them.

How they cover up

THATCHER'S OPEN refusal to take action against apartheid is only one of the ways British bosses cling on to their apartheid profits.

Firms with a stake in apartheid are fully aware that their profits are threatened by the prospect of sanctions and by measures that already exist to try and regulate their functioning. These include codes of practice which are applied by the EEC and the USA regarding treatment of black workers by multinationals.

These firms have therefore taken many steps to conceal what they do and prevent outside bodies finding out how they collaborate with apartheid.

The most blatant and well-publicised are straight sanctions-busting operations. One of these came to light when anti-apartheid activists and Southampton dockers unearthed a container en route for Durban containing a milling machine for repairing and servicing military aircraft. It came from the Berox Machine Tool Company who sold it to Atlas Aircraft Corporation, a subsidiary of the South African Armaments Corporation, and breached the United Nations arms embargo. The South African middlemen who arranged the deal wrote to Berox on 10 January to say 'We request that nowhere in your company or reference lists, nor in any future correspondence, is our customer's name to be mentioned.'

A lot of straight illegal trading of this type goes on. But deception on a far wider scale is practiced in order to reap the benefits of apartheid from subsidiary companies, in which the

British and American companies have a major — often controlling — interest, but which are registered as South African rather than foreign companies.

The collaboration between imperialism and South Africa is encouraged by South Africa's own capitalists, who are dependent on foreign capital and technology and have to maintain tight links abroad to get the money and know-how they need.

For example, the giant mining monopoly Anglo-American, which dominates 40 per cent of all mining and has a stake in thousands of other enterprises in South Africa, was set up, as its very name suggests, as an alliance between local producers and British and American banking capital. The Oppenheims, who ran and still run Anglo,

were able to defeat their rivals because they had access to the financial resources of bankers such as America's J.P. Morgan, the Rothschilds,

and their British counterparts and associates. The collaboration has lasted to this day.

The consequence is that British and US interests can rake in the profits from apartheid without declaring what they do. For example, Consolidated Gold Fields, the second largest mining corporation in South Africa, claims is 'does not employ anyone in South Africa!' This is absurd. It was set up in South Africa. It owns, for example, a 48 per cent stake in Gold Fields of SA which employs 84,312 people in South Africa!

In the USA, multinationals have admitted to a total of only 22,000 black workers. These are the only people to whom the protective codes of conduct apply. Yet total US investment adds up to billions of dollars, directly or indirectly profiting from hundreds of thousands of black people.

Many companies claim they are divesting — getting rid of their investments — but, like Barclays bank, simply hive off South African subsidiaries in which they retain a controlling interest.

Some of the better known indirect exploiters of apartheid are:

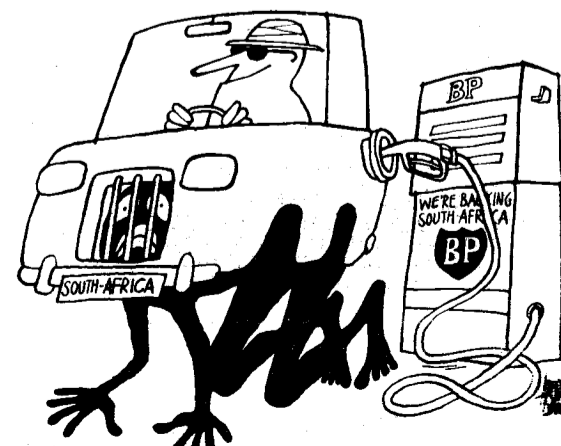
- ICI, set up in the 1930s to bring together Britain's chemical producers in association with the growing South African explosives industry. It holds a 38 per cent share in the South African explosives and chemicals firm AECI, with 26,800 employees.

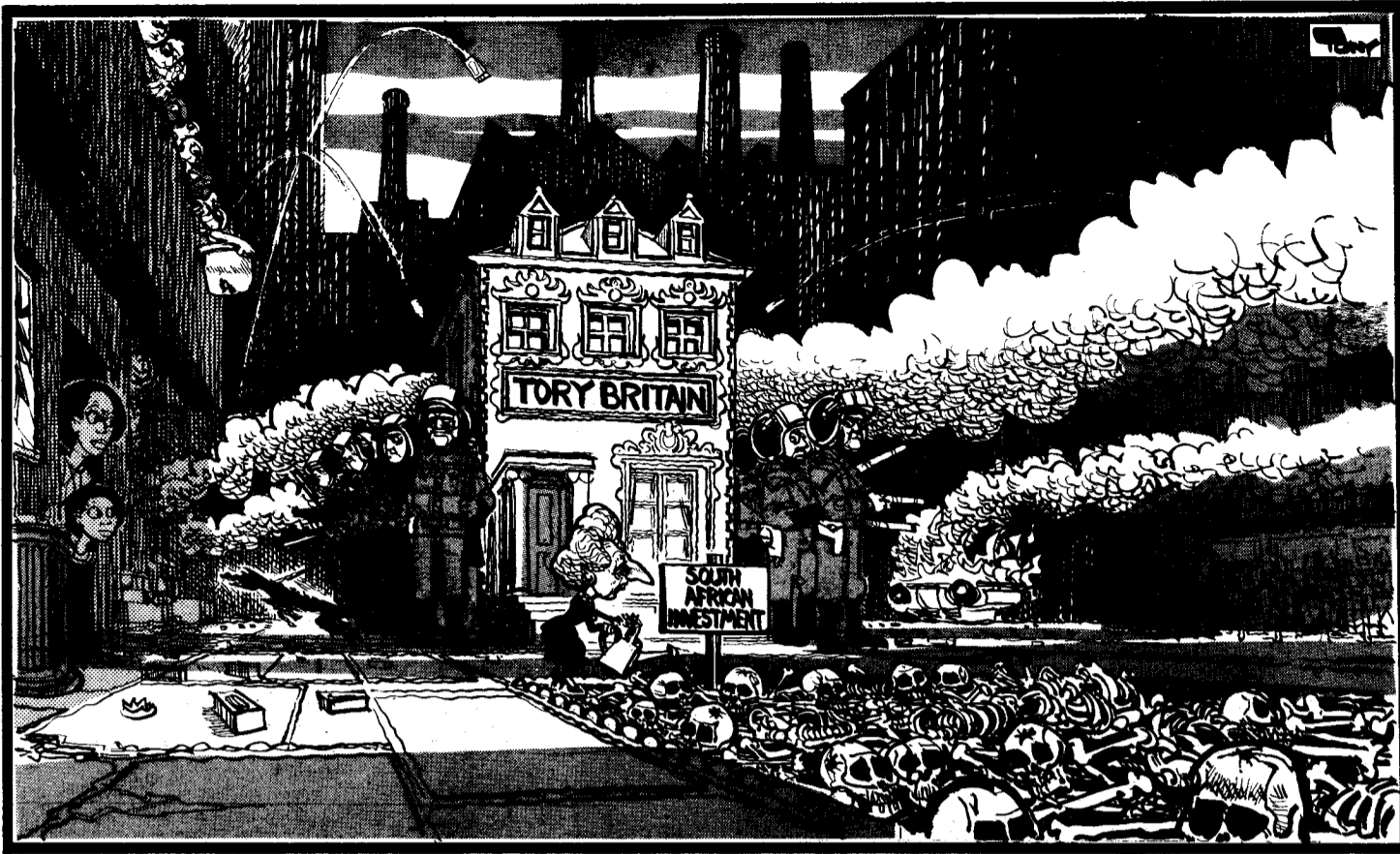
- Metal Box, with a 25 per cent holding in Metal Box SA, employing 11,000 in South Africa.

- Pilkington Brothers, with a 48 per cent stake in Glass SA, employing 8016 workers.

- Rio Tinto Zinc, with holdings in some of the world's most notorious dictatorships, has a 29 per cent stake in Pallabora Mining, with 3935 employees; and many other mining connections in Southern Africa.

This is why the codes of conduct, which apply only to multinationals with a direct stake in a South African enterprise, have failed to change apartheid. It shows why all links must be broken.





Defending Broadwater Farm

HARINGEY council leader Bernie Grant has come under enormous pressure for his trenchant defence of Tottenham's black youth, including from sections of the labour movement. Fellow councillor NARENDRA MAKANJI explained to Socialist Action what's going on in Tottenham after the uprising and why the labour movement must support black youth. Narendra also makes the point that it is all youth whom the Haringey council is fighting for.

The exact sequence of events on Broadwater Farm is important. On Saturday 5 October, a young black man, Floyd Jarrett, was stopped by the police.

They said, there was something wrong with his car, and he was taken into the Tottenham police station. He is a very well-known member of the Broadwater Farm youth association, and like many other active members of the association has had a continuous running battle with the local police.

Later that afternoon, a key from his possessions was taken and — despite the fact that he didn't live

with his mother and the rest of his family — the police got into their house and ransacked it, using the key. During the process of the search, whilst they were looking for stolen goods, Mrs Jarrett collapsed and died.

That incident sent shock waves right through the community in Tottenham, particularly on the estate. Mrs Jarrett was also well-known and had been active on the estate, and was very popular. The police didn't find any stolen property. Everything has been cleared as far as that is concerned. But in the process Mrs Jarrett had died.

That was just a week after the shooting of Mrs Groce in Brixton. We knew that things could get out of hand very quickly. So an urgent meeting was set up by the chief executive of Haringey with councillors, CRC representatives, and the Jarrett family at noon on the Sunday with the police, to see what they were going to do about this.

We got a blank wall: it would be a police complaints enquiry and nothing else.

There was a demonstration by the Jarrett family in the afternoon, outside Tottenham police station, which passed off peacefully. They were there for about an hour. I was there myself and saw that.

During this time there were various meetings going on to try and work out how we defuse the situation because, as you can imagine, there was considerable anger. The leader of the council had already pledged a council public enquiry should the government not hold one, in an effort to try and calm the situation down.

It did not help when, at about 6.30 in the evening, the young people on the estate who had decided to have another demonstration outside the police station, were blocked in by about 6-700 police. I refuse to accept that those police were assembled within five minutes because of the decision to hold a demonstration. That's when the fighting began.

Since then that estate has been occupied by about 600 police who have been conducting door-to-door enquiries. Young people — 12, 13, 14 year olds — have been arrested. They have been taken in and kept for 50 or 60 hours without access by parents, social workers, and so on.

any time. It's really as serious as that.

Bernie Grant, as the first black leader of a council, refused to put a difference between himself and the communities he was seeking to represent. Seemingly, this was unacceptable to the gutter press who then branded him as all sorts of evil things and tried to destroy his credibility, enforcing this distance between him and the community he represents.

Anybody who knows Bernie Grant, and knows his record over the last several years, knows the part that he's played in actually representing and reflecting local people and their opinions.

The labour movement as a whole needs to understand the deep alienation that exists between large sections of our community and the rest of the community including the labour movement. They do not see any solutions emerging from within the labour movement. That is a very serious question that we have to address.

We have to ensure that we start reflecting those opinions, that we do start attacking the Tory policies in a way that builds hope for the people who are alienated. The thing that we must not do is put any further distance between us — the Labour Party and labour movement —

and the people who are at the fringes of society.

What we face is so serious that mere ritual condemnation is not going to get us anywhere. We have to understand the reasons for that violence, whether it originates from police insensitivity or public disorder. Condemning it in the process isn't going to make it go away.

The council now has a three-fold objective. In the very short term we want Tottenham and the Broadwater Farm estate to return to normal. That means normal policing and normal services being available.

In the medium term we want to establish the truth about the death of Mrs Jarrett and of PC Blakelock. There are many rumours flying about — we need an independent public enquiry. Anything less than that will not be trusted by many people.

In the longer term we shall be seeking to put together more resources for housing and employment in that area we shall be campaigning for that through government, through the European Community, through the GLC — and through anywhere else we can get those resources.

But of course, until we get rid of the present government and its policies we're going to be swimming against the tide.

Black councillors back Bernie Grant

THE STANDING Conference of Afro-Caribbean Councillors has issued a statement in solidarity with Bernie Grant, leader of Haringey council, against the attacks launched on him.

It condemned the attacks on the black communities in Toxteth, Brixton, Handsworth, Peckham and Tottenham.

The statement demanded: 'An immediate Public Inquiry into the incidents surrounding the death of Cynthia Jarrett.'

Douglas Hurd's recent comments about 'arch priests of race conflicts' does nothing but create further alienation and unrest in the community.

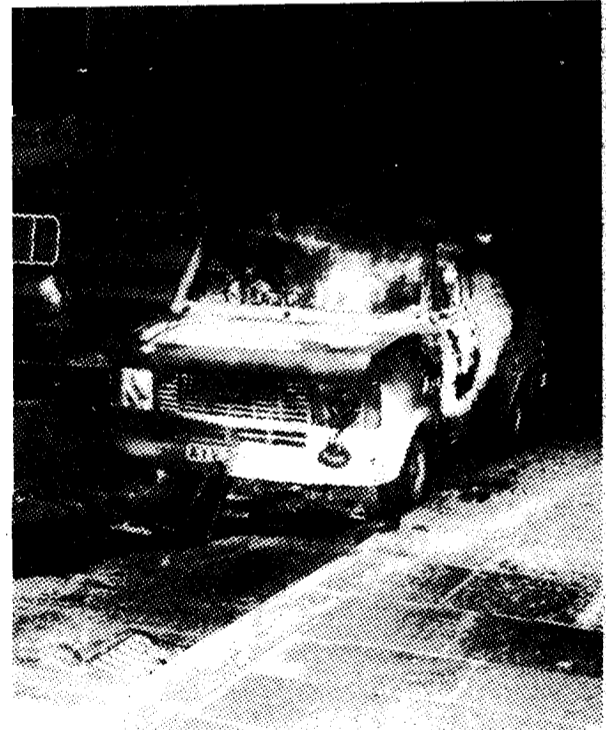
These are the true outside agitators and infiltrators who have no understanding of the appalling conditions and racial harassment that is faced by the black community.

Black councillors are in the forefront of the struggle to improve the living conditions of black people in this country. They are the only voice of representation for the black community.

These attacks on Bernie Grant are carefully orchestrated with a view to isolating black leadership in our community and is headed by the government and sustained by the media with the purpose of dividing the disadvantaged in society as a whole.

Bernie Grant's statements reflect the views of the unheard voice of youth in this country. His stance taken in the wake of disturbances around the country are wholeheartedly endorsed by the members of the SCA-CAC.

Our condolences go out to the families of those who lost their lives during the recent disturbances in Tottenham.



Black anger explodes on Broadwater Farm



Photo: ASIAN TIMES

Photo: ASIAN TIMES

Other Books

The following selection of books on South Africa is available by post from Other Books:

South Africa: white rule, black revolt, Ernerst Harsch, Monad, 352pp, £6.25 plus 69p postage

Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950, Jack and Ray Simons, International Defence and Aid Fund, 702pp, £5.00 plus £1.33 postage.

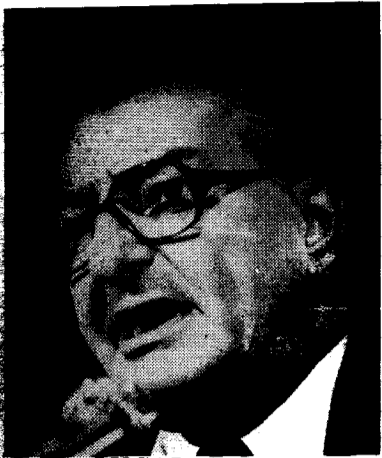
Power: black workers, their unions and the struggle for freedom in South Africa, Macshane, Plaut and Ward, Spokesman, 195pp, £4.95 plus 46p postage.

To honour women's day: profiles of leading women in the South African and Namibian liberation struggles, IDAF, 56pp, £1.00 plus 22p postage.

Nelson Mandela: I am prepared to die, IDAF, 48pp, 50p plus 18p postage.

Nelson Mandela: The struggle is my life, IDAF, 216pp, £1.35 plus 46p postage

More books available from Other Books, 100, Broadwater Farm, Tottenham, London N15 4AA. Tel: 01-818 1234.



A CLASSICAL piece of 'double-think' has come to dominate the columns of journals like *Tribune* and *New Statesman* since the Labour Party conference. This consists in applauding Neil Kinnock's efforts to unite the Labour Party by attacking the people who have led or are presently leading struggles against the Thatcher government — such as the NUM leadership, Liverpool city council or black people. Yet anyone who tries to organise support for these people and the bitter struggles they are engaged in — like the Campaign group of MPs — is denounced as 'authoritarian', and divisive.

We print below extracts from a speech by ERIC HEFFER, a member of the Campaign group of MPs and the Labour Party NEC, which puts an alternative view of the purposes of Labour Party unity and how it can be secured. For airing his views Eric Heffer has, it goes without saying, come in for the now habitual attacks from a Fleet Street press that is increasingly being marshalled to help to impose Kinnock monolithism within the Labour Party.

AT A CONFERENCE held in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, on Tuesday 27 February 1980, Keir Hardie, socialist and miner, moved: 'That the conference was in favour of establishing a distinct Labour group in parliament, who should have their own whip and argue upon their policy.' The proposal was put and carried nem con.

The Labour Party was therefore formed as a parliamentary party, supported in the country by the ILP, the Fabian Society, the Social Democratic Party (Marxist in character) and those trade unions who decided to affiliate to the new party. At that stage the Cooperative movement did not join, although the Cooperative Party affiliated later.

The Labour Party, from its inception, was based on the organised working class movement. It, therefore, found that the affiliated trade unions were both positive and negative. They gave the Party its class basis, and mass membership, but whilst some unions were progressive and quite revolutionary in outlook, they also acted as a brake on the party, at times holding it back, because of the character and nature of the unions, which had economic objectives, i.e. to get more for their members, rather than going all out for fundamental transformation of society.

It was and continues to be a broad church. Various newspapers who support the Party — like *Tribune*, *Labour Herald*, *Labour Weekly*, *Militant*, *Socialist Action*, *Socialist Organiser*, *London Briefing*, *Labour Leader* etc — compete with each other for the ear of the membership.

Over the years there has always been within the party a right, left and centre — people often moving from one position to another. The party also has seen many groups within it. The ILP was a party within the party until in the 1930s it decided to disaffiliate. The Socialist League was set up in the late 1930s, and was disbanded and some of its leaders like Nye Bevan and Mr Stafford Cripps expelled from membership. After the 1931 debacle, the party moved relatively



'The Labour Party ... must not accept the myth that the class struggle is dead'

The future of the Labour Party

leftwards, but never accepted a full-blooded left-wing socialist position.

After World War II, the party again saw a number of groups arise, such as *Keep Left*, the Bevanites, and later the *Tribune* Group. The party has, therefore, been a sort of kaleidoscope, moving and shifting, but basically being part of a whole.

Labour governments are usually water-sheds, which in one way or another affect party policy, party organisation and future development. The 1945-51 government was a progressive reformist government. It created the welfare state and affected British politics, including Tory politics, for almost three decades. Centrist reformist governments were the accepted norm, and it was only with the Heath government, that some of the basic reformist concepts got overturned, certainly in relation to the trade unions. For example we saw the 1971 Industrial Relations Act.

The 1979 Thatcher government, and the relative failure of the 1974-79 Labour government changed all that. The Tories under Mrs Thatcher moved away from the middle-ground, accepting a 'radical right' emphasis, being opposed to 'creeping socialism'.

Within the Labour Party, because of arguments about what should be in the election manifesto, plus the role of the leader in drawing up the manifesto, and the dissatisfaction of party members with some of the MPs, a campaign got under way for constitutional changes.

There were also important policy changes. The party accepted unilateral nuclear disarmament and clearly said it would remove all nuclear bases and weapons from and

around British shores. The party urged the abolition of the House of Lords, setting in the manifesto, to remove its powers concerning legislation. It said it would get Britain out of the EEC. It called for more public ownership, with greater planning on the nation's resources. It moved, in real terms, to the left and to a more socialist position.

Something which many on the right of the party could not accept. They opposed both the constitutional changes and the policy changes, and unlike the majority of the left over the years, who had accepted a minority position, they refused to do that, and created the modern Social Democratic Party.

This split before the last 1983 general election undoubtedly had its effect. It caused confusion, and after the SDP had formed an alliance with the Liberals it meant that in some parts of the country it attracted some voters away from Labour.

I do not believe that the party lost the last election because of its policy, even though it was not properly explained in areas such as defence. But it was basically the SDP split, and the divisions in our own ranks during the election which led to confusion and in some areas a loss of votes. With regard to the electorate, the working-class has not really shrunk, but it is clearly in certain ways different.

Labour's task, therefore, is not to turn its back on its natural supporters, but to properly analyse where the changes have taken place and go out to get their support. It must, for example, pay much more attention to the ethnic groups in society, especially the black workers. That means, in my

view, that eventually the party will have to agree with some sort of separate affiliated group which will cater for the special needs of those groups in society.

Public ownership is as essential today as it was in the past. That does not mean being tied down to bureaucratic nationalisation, but it does mean that we cannot transform society, and make it a genuinely democratic society unless the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange is taken out of the hands of private owners. To avoid an East European type society, there must be many forms of public ownership — state, local, cooperative, individual firms etc — all of which must have democratic forms of management, with both consumer and workers' interests involved.

The party must also ensure that control of the party is left with the national executive of the party, who are responsible to the party conference, and not allow it to be transformed to the parliamentary party, with the shadow cabinet, or a cabinet making the policy and organisation decisions. It is genuine collective leadership that we must have, not the cult of the individual, whoever the individual might be. The whole of the party membership must be involved in policy making, and no one person must be allowed to determine what should or should not be in the party's election manifesto.

The party must also continue to be a broad church. Groups, even highly organised ones, as long as they abide by the constitution, must be allowed to exist. We should not go back to the days of proscribed lists, with people



... because they hold right wing views and neither should those on the left be expelled.

The party must not turn in on itself. It must not look for scapegoats, because of image-building. It must not turn against councillors whose only crime is to fight Tory policy, as George Lansbury and his colleagues did in the 1920s.

The Labour Party certainly must take note of the new developments in the class structure of Britain, but in doing so, it must not accept the myth that the class struggle is dead.

The party continues to have a number of groups and tendencies within it. In parliament there is the Campaign group (the so-called hard left, so named by the press), the *Tribune* group (a mixture of some left and centre MPs) and the Solidarity group, a party right wing group, who in a sense are the heirs of the 'Gang of Four' who with the help of the media created the SDP.

As long as the contradiction exists in the type of socialism Labour stands for, and the way it will be achieved, with class politics at the centre of the argument, there will always be different groups and attitudes. This is not a bad thing, something which has to be accepted, and exhortations to a phoney type of unity, as used to be made in the Bevanite days, are unrealistic.

The immediate perspective for Labour is to win the next general election. Every group and section in the party agrees with that. The feeling for party unity is rightly very strong. This has led some in the party, especially amongst the right wing (but not confined to them) to argue that argument and dialogue over policy and other matters should cease. But that cannot happen. The nature of the party will not allow it.

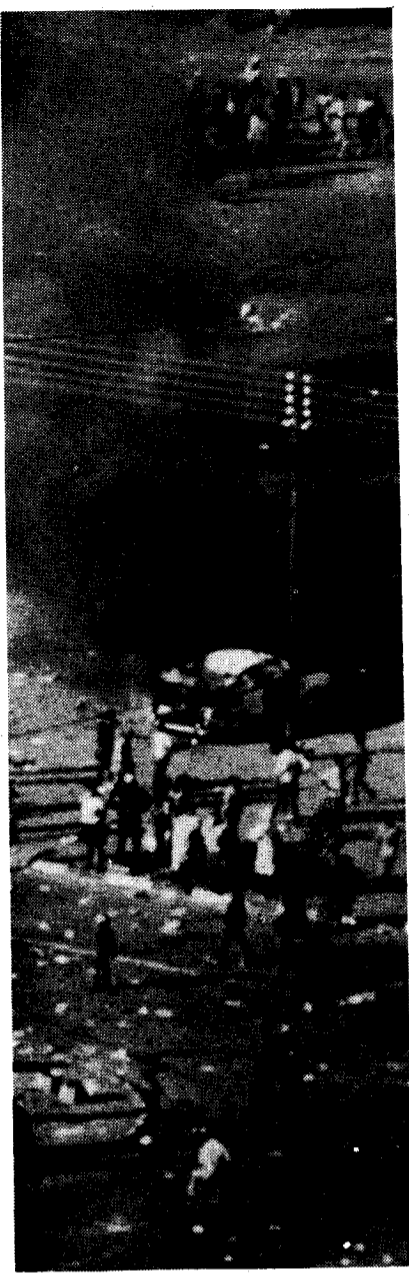
The Labour Party was not created for any individual and when it rather slavishly followed Ramsay MacDonald, it got into real difficulties. The party was created to carry out the task of building a just society, of eventually creating socialism. The election of Labour governments are only a step in that direction. Labour believes that one must make every effort to get a socialist Britain by democratic parliamentary means, but at the same time, if the need arose to fight to keep democracy, (if it were under attack from anti-democratic forces) it would resort to defensive force to keep it.

If therefore, the party has such a socialist perspective, then image-building, conformity, disciplinarianism, are unlikely to be willingly accepted by the membership. Voluntary quietism for a period, personal discipline, are acceptable, but to try to foist authoritarian control over the party will not be acceptable. We are a democratic socialist party, not a centralist party, like the Bolsheviks or Stalinist parties of the recent past were.

I believe a Labour government, even a miserable reformist one, is better than a Tory government, but it cannot be an end in itself. Labour governments must have clear objectives, and they must go out to create and build the type of society that Keir Hardie and his colleagues worked for. That is still our task, and therefore, to do it, we need a socialist campaigning party, not just a campaigning party, but one which really is determined to change society, not merely reform it.



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)



South Africa's economy

THE CHIEF specific feature of South Africa, the one leading to its explosive crisis today, is the contradiction between the rapid development of its economy and its utterly reactionary political structure based on the apartheid state. That political structure in turn not only inhumanly oppresses and exploits the black working class but distorts and mangles every social relation in South Africa.

From certain features of its development and structure South Africa's is a relatively advanced economy.

By 1982 42 per cent of South Africa's output was accounted for by industry — that is mining, manufacturing, gas and electricity production and so on.

Twenty seven per cent of South Africa's economically active population is in industry — only slightly less than the thirty three per cent in Britain.

Mining products account for 55 per cent of South Africa's exports. The inability of South Africa to build an internationally competitive manufacturing sector, which leaves its economy almost totally dependent on fluctuations in its revenue from gold exports, is one of the primary contradictions facing the apartheid state.

Blacks comprise 80 per cent of the workers in mining and manufacturing. There is no significant black bourgeoisie in either mining or manufacturing.

In the agricultural sector tremendous poverty and oppression exists among the African rural population compulsorily confined to the bantustans.

But the core of South African agriculture is a rich and prosperous capitalist farming sector entirely owned by whites. In this sector blacks are confined solely to hired labour who are denied any rights of trade unionism.

On the land therefore the black population is divided into a completely impoverished peasantry on the Bantustans and a black rural proletariat working in the white capitalists' agriculture. No significant black agricultural bourgeoisie exists at all.

The service sector of the economy in South Africa is divided almost completely into two. One part provides the most minimal and primitive services for the black labour force. The service sector for the whites in contrast is up to the highest European and North American standards.

In the service sector is concentrated what small black bourgeoisie exists. But it is in reality tiny. Owners of shops, small businesses, 'professionals', even black puppets and flunkies of the apartheid state, simply do not compete, or compare, with the giant white monopolies from Anglo-American downwards.

What in reality exists as a social class is really a black petty-bourgeoisie — a 'middle' class in the most literal sense. In no sector of the economy, not even in the homelands, is there any really major black capitalist class.

The great bulk of the black population in the service sector are of course proletarians — wage earners. They work in the transport system, in the mail system, in health, in education, in the state apparatus. There is also a significant layer of black 'domestic servants'.

in the direction of the proletariat. This will give the proletariat a chance to place itself at the head of the nation as its leader.'

As Trotsky wrote: 'To approach the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie of the cities, to draw them to our side, is the necessary condition for ... the conquest of power.'

The black toilers of South Africa — the industrial and service workers, the black rural proletarians, the impoverished peasants of the bantustans — must weld around themselves every oppressed layer of black society in South Africa.

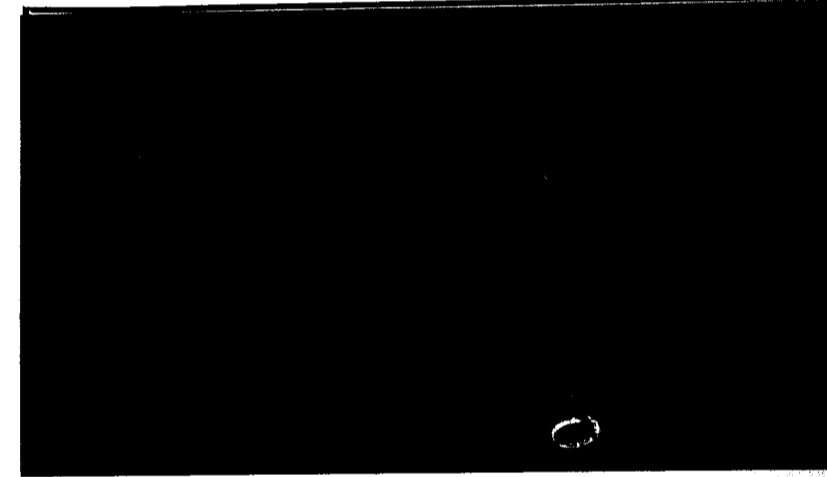
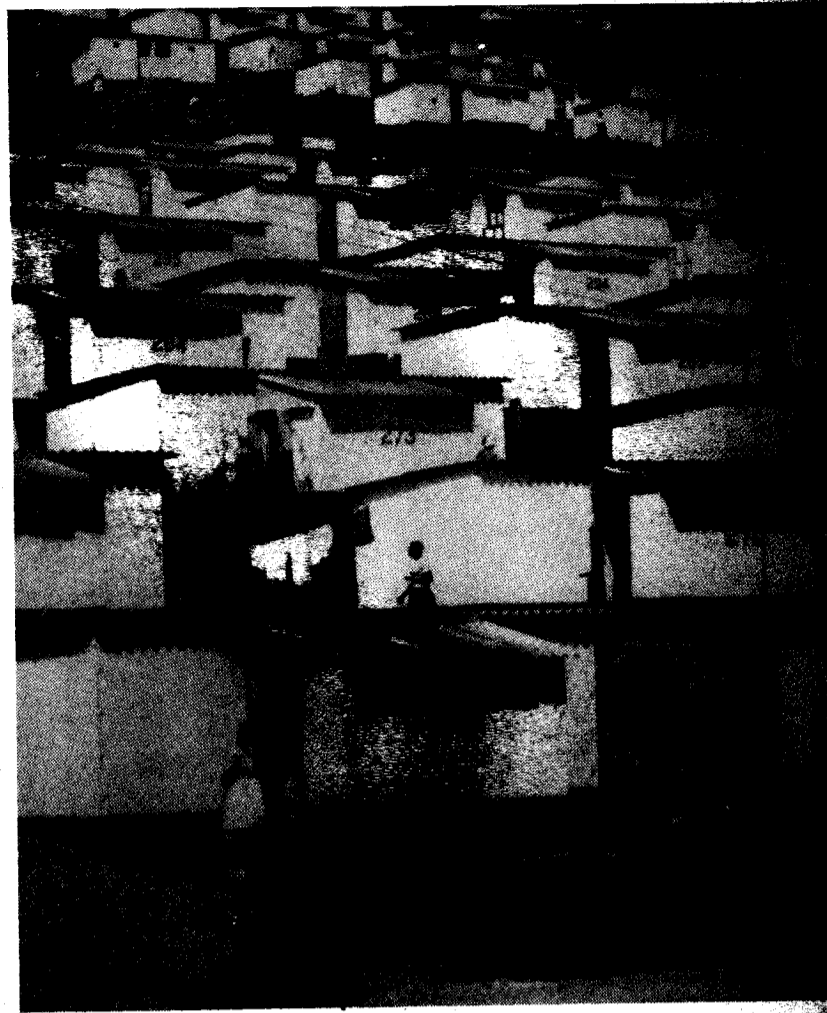
The middle classes/petty bourgeoisie swinging rightwards behind big capital is the typical formula of fascism, military dictatorship etc. The middle classes/petty bourgeoisie swinging decisively leftwards behind the working class is on the contrary, as Trotsky pointed out, one of the necessary conditions for successful proletarian revolution.

The revolutionary struggle against apartheid is a struggle against the bourgeoisie. If there were a significant black bourgeoisie in South Africa, and to the degree that a black bourgeoisie exists, there has to be a relentless struggle against it — against the inevitable attempts such a class makes, would make, to compromise with the apartheid state.

But the petty bourgeoisie — whether the peasants or the urban petty bourgeoisie — is a completely different matter to the monopolists and big capitalists. Far from expropriating the petty bourgeoisie, either in the town or the countryside, the working class guarantees the property of the petty bourgeoisie even in a workers state.

The most familiar example of this is the guarantee given by socialist to peasants — 'the petty bourgeoisie of the village' as Trotsky reminded us — against forced expropriation and collectivisation. But the principle is exactly the same with the petty bourgeoisie of the town as well.

A bloc of the black working class and black rural and urban petty bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the working class — a bloc against the (massively white) bourgeoisie — that is the force that must overthrow apartheid in South Africa. Comprising the vast majority of the population of South Africa it also has the power to smash apartheid to pieces.



Class alliances

THE BLACK population of South Africa is not merely the majority numerically. It is today the decisive section of the population in terms of production and the economy.

That black working class in turn is becoming more and more organised. While still only 15 per cent of the workforce are members of trade unions by 1983 nearly 900,000 black workers — 545,000 Africans and 343,000 coloureds and asians — were unionised.

Unions

The main black union federations are engaged in unity talks which, if successful, would produce the most powerful organisation of black workers ever seen in South African history, and the most important trade union organisation on the African continent.

But this rapidly growing and organising black working class, and black population, faces political conditions which seem almost to belong to the European middle ages — although in fact they were produced by the modern development of South African capitalism itself. This political structure in turn reacts back on and crushes every social relation in the South African state — not simply those of the black industrial working class but of the black agricultural workers, of the impoverished peasants on the bantustans, the black service workers, the black petty-bourgeoisie and every sector of black society. That apartheid state is becoming less and less viable.

Society

The fact that the whole of South African society and politics is in crisis — that white big business is demanding at least some changes in apartheid for its own purposes, that a massive organisation of black workers is taking place, that not simply the black working class but ever widening layers of the entire black population are being thrown into violent conflict with the apartheid state — has caused enormous confusion on the British left.

In order to see the way through the confusion, and to settle the detailed and crucial tactical questions of the at-

titude to the black trade unions, to organisations such as the United Democratic Front, the African National Congress, the National Forum, and other issues it is necessary to go back to the fundamental class alliances involved in a revolution in general and the South African revolution in particular.

Firstly, far from a crisis in the white ruling class, and proposals for reform, being a danger in themselves without them a revolutionary struggle to overthrow apartheid would be completely impossible.

In his *Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* Lenin outlined 'The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions... is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes: for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way.'

Cosmetic

It is therefore fundamental that the apartheid regime is manifestly unable to go on in exactly the old way. The continued efforts at cosmetic reform by Botha, the deep contradictions in the South African economy, the demands for change in aspects of apartheid by big business, all testify that the whole of South African society and politics — including ruling class politics — is moving into deeper crisis.

The second striking feature of the situation, the mobilisation not simply of the black working class but of virtually every strata of the black population against apartheid, is also not a problem of the involvement of the 'middle classes' but an indispensable condition for revolution.

Trotsky, following Lenin, noted that not even a crisis of the ruling class, and a refusal of the masses to go on in the old way, constituted by itself a sufficient condition for successful revolution. As Trotsky wrote in *The Turn in the Communist International*: 'For the social crisis to bring about the proletarian revolution, it is necessary that, besides other conditions, a decisive shift of the petty-bourgeois class occur

Democratic tasks

THE WEIGHT of democratic demands, and democratic tasks, in the struggle today in South Africa is overwhelming.

To establish a one person one vote constitution in a unitary state, to end the situation where the white minority holds 87 per cent of the land and instead transfer it to the black population; to forge indissolubly the South African nation against the attempts of the white supremacists and their puppets to shatter that nation into purely racial and tribal groups; to establish the democratic right of the black South African working class to organise itself throughout the economy; to end the inhuman barbarity of apartheid's super exploitation of black workers; to smash to pieces the system of residential segregation: these are the decisive immediate tasks propelling the great mass of South Africa's black population towards revolution today.

They will also continue to do so given the nature of the apartheid state. The socialist revolution in South Africa will grow out of the revolutionary struggle for democracy against the apartheid state, and not develop by bypassing that struggle.

This reality also determines the attitude of Marxists to the various programmes of revolutionary democracy and revolutionary nationalism put forward in South Africa — most famously the Freedom Charter supported by the ANC. It determines also the practical attitude to the various organisations fighting against apartheid.

The Freedom Charter and any similar document of the type of which it is easily the most important is not a socialist programme — and nor could it be the full programme of a revolutionary marxist organisation in South Africa. Such a programme would go

beyond the revolutionary nationalist and revolutionary democratic demands of the Freedom Charter to take up full tasks of socialist revolution in South Africa.

But a revolutionary socialist programme for South Africa must definitely include, and centrally, a single one of the crucial democratic-nationalist demands of the Freedom Charter — and in South Africa such democratic and nationalist demands can only be won by revolutionary struggle.

Socialist

Socialist revolution in a country like South Africa goes beyond revolutionary nationalist and revolutionary democratic demands. But it does not negate them. The socialist revolution in a country like South Africa will centrally develop on the basis of the revolutionary struggle for democratic and national demands.

For that reason revolutionary socialists proclaim that they favour implementing every demand of the Freedom Charter — and as we shall see the revolutionary nationalist revolutionary democratic demand of the Freedom Charter can only be implemented by transferring political power into the hands of the working class.

For exactly that reason the revolutionary nationalist and revolutionary democratic demands of the Freedom Charter, which is by far the most famous democratic programme in South Africa, are a genuine, vital, central part of the programme of the revolutionary marxist organisation in South Africa.

The central demands of the Freedom Charter are those of thorough going bourgeois democratic revolution in South Africa. And

Permanent revolution

IT IS possible on the basis of a number of theoretical positions to have agreement on the concrete line of march for the South African revolution. However Socialist Action also has a clear view on what is the correct and most accurate theoretical framework for understanding the events unfolding in South Africa, and pointing the strategic way forward. This theoretical framework is provided by Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

The struggle in South Africa, the revolution developing in that state, illustrates with great clarity the correctness of the theory of permanent revolution as developed by Leon Trotsky. This is not a matter of theory in books but of understanding the material reality of the class struggle in South Africa itself.

The axis of the struggle in South Africa — for democratic demands — and will continue to be so. The force necessary to carry through to a successful conclusion this struggle for democracy is a bloc of the black working class in the town and the countryside and the black rural and urban petty bourgeoisie under the leadership of the working class. This struggle against apartheid must be carried on against the bourgeoisie.

But in order to carry through the democratic revolution in South Africa state power must pass into the hands of the working class. Without state power passing into the hands of the (majority black) working class the democratic revolution itself will be aborted. To understand why it is simply necessary to look at the material reality of the class struggle in South Africa.

Land

To transfer the land to the black majority, to end the situation where less than 18 per cent of the population who are white own 87 per cent of the land can only be achieved in one way. It means expropriating the white capitalist farmers and transferring their land to the black population.

As there are no black capitalist farmers in South Africa such a transformation means the essential elimination of an entire social class. The white capitalist farmers will, of necessity, literally fight to the death against this. But without such an expropriation there can be no democratic solution of the land question in South Africa;

Take housing. The Group Areas Act totally segregates housing — creating separate slum black cities and towns in most cases and reserving all decent housing for whites in every case. No democratic transformation in South Africa can accept this segregation and oppression of the black majority.

To smash this aspect of apartheid to pieces alone, to carry through the democratic revolution in housing, means forcibly expropriating whites, and ending segregation, on a scale never seen in history.

Factories

The whites, once more, will fight to the death to maintain their privileges. Yet to accept that segregation, whether in law or simply in fact, would be to fail to carry through the democratic revolution in South Africa. Exactly the same applies to education, health, and every other sphere of social life.

Take the situation of the black workers in the mines, factories, transport and other sectors. This is, relative to the advanced character of much of the South African economy, the most deprived and shackled workforce in the entire world. Even the most elementary democratic transformation in conditions — real effective trade union rights, adequate health and safety, abolition of the migrant labour system — would by itself smash to pieces the profitability and position of the white monopoly firms. Similarly smashing all remnants of tribalism and



ethnic divisions, and the reactionaries who defend this, would involve a gigantic social upheaval.

Social

Any serious democratic transformation in South Africa in short would unleash, accompany, and be propelled by a vast social convulsion. Not merely the black working class but the entire black population — the rural agricultural workers, the inhabitants of the Bantustans, the black petty-bourgeoisie and middle classes, the black unemployed — would be thrown into a frontal confrontation with the entire social structure created by apartheid — which is of course exactly the dynamic of the struggle itself.

It would not be a democratic reform, a little tinkering, but a literal revolution that would be necessary to smash apartheid to pieces.

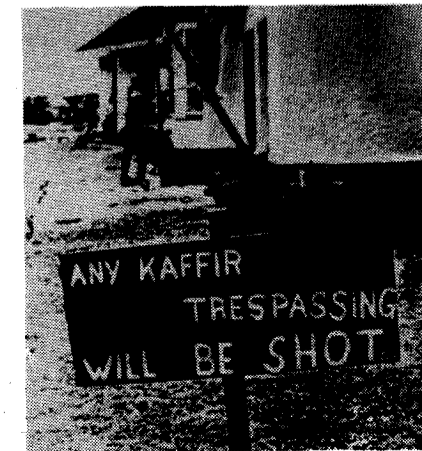
This finally not merely raises but settles what type of state can carry through this vast democratic revolution. The white capitalist farmers will not accept being expropriated peacefully — no matter what the constitutional situation might be. Their resistance must be crushed by force — or the certainty that if they resist they will be crushed by overwhelming armed force.

Expropriate

To expropriate the white residential districts in order to desegregate them; to desegregate the schools; to smash the resistance of the white employers to even the minimal defence of conditions of life for the black workers; to crush tribalists such as Buthelesi and his Inkatha thugs, will take armed force — armed force concentrated in the hands of the organised black masses and prepared to crush the white racists and capitalists by any means necessary.

It is here that the final confrontation with apartheid must come. Because finally apartheid does not rest on any laws at all. It rests on a white dictatorship draped in laws. Apartheid constitutes a state system of rule.

The core of apartheid's rule in South African army, the police, and the rest of its armed forces. Linked to these



are the Defence Force, the huge bulk of arms held by the white police population, and the military training of virtually the entire white population. This momentum of armed force by the white bourgeois class is actually the sole reason why apartheid still holds today — and the momentum of armed force the central part of the struggle.

That white armed force would defend to the death the essential privileges of the whites in South African society. They would resist, gun in hand, any democratic, let alone socialist, transformation of South Africa.

Smash

The only conditions under which the white supremacists would abandon their armed defence of apartheid in South Africa would be conditions under which they knew they would lose because of the internal and international relation of forces. This is why the support given to Pretoria by Britain, the United States, and the other imperialist states is so criminal. It encourages the white racists to continue their frenzied armed defence of their privileges.

The sole means whereby any thorough going destruction of apartheid, and democratic revolution, in South Africa can be carried through, is by the destruction of the entire armed force on which the apartheid state rests. Without that the democratic transformation, the democratic revolution, in South Africa will be aborted.

Without smashing the armed core of the apartheid state the land will not be distributed to the blacks, the apartheid system in housing will not be smashed to pieces, tribal and other divisions will not be crushed, the resistance of the white employers to the just demands of their black employees will not be ended. In short the democratic tasks of the revolution would not be carried through.

State

Only by smashing the state machine of apartheid, and transferring power into the hands of the black masses, could the destruction of apartheid in South Africa be thoroughly carried through. Given the structure of the black population in South Africa this means that the national and democratic tasks of the revolution in South Africa can only be solved in a thorough going way by the transfer of political power into the hands of the black working class and its allies.

The struggle in South Africa will start, has already started around democratic and national demands. It will involve an axis around a revolutionary struggle for democracy — and an alliance with revolutionary nationalists in that struggle. But these democratic tasks can only be carried through by transferring political power into the hands of the working class.

If that does not occur then, as with Zimbabwe to its north, the democratic revolution will be aborted. Racist

democratic revolution, the theory of permanent revolution, is the only revolutionary theory which can carry through to a successful conclusion this struggle for democracy in South Africa. This struggle against apartheid must be carried on against the bourgeoisie.

Trotsky formulated this entire dynamic theory in his *History of the Russian Revolution* in the chapter *The Problem of Nationalities*: 'Only the working class standing at the head of the nation can carry either a national or an agrarian revolution clear through.'

Or as Trotsky put it more generally in the same work: 'By "Trotskyism" ... was meant that revolutionary conception according to which the bourgeois revolution in Russia would not be able to solve its problems without placing the proletariat in power.'



Permanent revolution in regard to South Africa has nothing to do with the idiotic idea that the struggle in that country against apartheid has anything other than democratic demands as its cutting edge, or with the idea that the black working class must make the revolution 'alone', and without allying with the other strata of the black population — including the black rural and urban petty bourgeoisie.

For South Africa it means that the solution of the democratic tasks of the South African revolution, which are its axis of development, can only be solved through the dictatorship of the proletariat — a struggle for which unfolds precisely on the terrain of the struggle for democratic demands itself.

It was classically formulated by Trotsky as follows in *Permanent Revolution*: 'the theory of permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of the tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the oppressed nation.'

Rarely has such a view been so clearly vindicated as by the dynamic and necessities of the struggle in South Africa.

struggle for socialism in South Africa, as earlier in this century in Russia, will grow out of the struggle for a bourgeois democratic revolution, and not develop by skipping over it. Revolutionary socialists drive through to the utmost the revolutionary nationalist and democratic demands of the Freedom Charter.

In Russia the Bolsheviks implemented not only the democratic demands they advanced but also implemented totally and completely the agrarian programme of the Social Revolutionaries — in fact after 1917 every Communist Party in the world took over an agrarian programme based on the experience of implementing the programme of the Social Revolutionaries in Russia.

Revolutionary Marxists quite openly, and genuinely, state that they would implement, and favour completely implementing, every comma of the Freedom Charter — and fight for this. On that basis they will also go beyond it to a socialist revolution in South Africa.

Forming a united front on the basis of the demands such as those of the Freedom Charter, that is fighting for demands of revolutionary nationalism and revolutionary democracy, is not counterposed to, but is a fundamental part of, revolutionary strategy in a country facing the objective tasks today in South Africa.

Democracy

In this fight for democracy Marxists seek unity in action with the revolutionary nationalist organisations in South Africa such as the ANC.

Posing the weight of the democratic tasks in South Africa however also poses the question of what type of state, what state power, can carry through these democratic tasks. To answer that question it is simply necessary to pose coldly and soberly the full scale of the tasks that would have to be carried through to destroy apartheid.

IRELAND UNFREE

Belfast comes to Tottenham

LAST WEEK Nora McCabe's husband Jim came from Belfast to visit Bernie Grant in Tottenham. Jim did not go to get Bernie to 'tone down' his remarks to the media, to question his attitude to violence, or to find out why this black council leader resented the police. He understood that all very well.

Jim McCabe went to Tottenham to tell the story about the death of his wife Nora. He went to Tottenham to express the sympathy of the nationalist people for the victims of state violence in Britain. There was no sourness. It was not a question of saying: 'you sat back and allowed your army to use such methods of oppression against us, now it's happening to you.' More like a numbing realisation of what the future holds for the people of inner city Britain and a personal knowledge of the heartbreak and tragedy which will accompany it.

Kenneth Newman, head of the metropolitan police, talked to the press the day after the Tottenham riots. Surveying the labyrinth of alleys and buildings he remarked: 'Of course it would take an army to completely control this.' During the riot, all the hardware of counter insurgency control developed in the Six Counties seemed to be available and on display. But the most important feature of the state's experience in Ireland might be missed — that political control of state violence must be used to achieve a given end.

By political control is not meant the control of politicians. Certainly not local politicians like Bernie Grant or community leaders. But neither the home secretary — whose post-riot visit and subsequent stoning in Handsworth had him marked out as a bozo from the start. No, it was the political control of the state. Each new piece of hardware is bought 'for extreme emergencies', is trained with, and paraded around until the right moment occurs for its public launch.

The metropolitan police are estimated to have 15,000 of the 20,000 plastic bullets stockpiled in Britain but they are politically unable to use them at present. Jim McCabe explained to Bernie Grant what they are: 'More like wood than plastic ... Four inches long, the same size round as a child's arm ... they weigh about the same as a can of baked beans ... they are fired at 200mph.'

Nora McCabe wasn't involved in a riot although the police said she was. Only the coincidence of a Canadian TV crew filming in the area provided the evidence which showed the armoured car turning the corner on a street unlit with the debris that the RUC claimed was being thrown at the time. They filmed the puff of smoke from a plastic bullet which killed Nora McCabe.

The plastic bullet is a weapon of random terror whose aim is to get people off the streets. It is a weapon that has legitimised the death sentence for youngsters who throw stones at the police. It is a weapon that is coming to Britain's inner cities.

Labour's policy is for a ban on the use, storage or manufacture of plastic bullets. Whilst liberal opinion wrings its hands with the dilemma of how to create a repressive police presence with a human face, in the black areas, Labour and particularly those sections that have their own experience of state violence, must campaign for a complete ban.



IRELAND AFTER BRITAIN is a book of interviews with some of the leading protagonists in the debate about withdrawal. Jointly published by Labour and Ireland with Pluto, it looks at the latest developments in the republican, feminist and labour movement in Ireland and discusses a British response. Send a cheque/PO made out to 'Labour and Ireland' (book) for £3.95 + 25p postage and packing to LCI, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

Kanak victory in New Caledonia

THE KANAK independence party, the FLNKS, last month won three out of four regions in New Caledonian elections called by the French government. This result is a blow to the compromise proposed by French government envoy Edgard Pisani and a victory for the Kanak people. VINCENT KERMEL analyses the outcome.

THE 29 September regional elections were a striking success for the FLNKS. They won a majority of seats and votes in three of the four regions set up by French prime minister Laurent Fabius. In the North they got 50.6 per cent, 52.12 in the Loyalty Islands and 45.46 in the Central Region.

They won 28.75 per cent of all votes cast. A further 6.75 per cent voted for a second autonomist organisation, the LKS. Since the Kanaks form 43 per cent of the present population of the territory, it is clear that at least 80 per cent of Melanesian people support independence and the FLNKS.

This result reinforces the evidence of the 34.43 per cent vote which the independence front won in 1979, and the mobilisations of November 1984. It clearly poses an eventual referendum on Kanak self-determination. This victory can only add to the Kanak people's determination and constitutes a great encouragement to anti-colonial struggle.

The settlers came out in favour of the right-wing Republican and fascist parties. The National Front (the fascists) got 14 per cent in the south, which includes the capital Noumea. This means a current has stabilised which is determined to confront the independentists.

More than ever, New Caledonia is thus divided in two — economically, politically, electorally and geographically. The 60.84 per cent achieved by the anti-independence parties are confined to white Noumea and a few white enclaves. The Kanaks have the majority everywhere except for the capital and its immediate surroundings.

This is what helped the FLNKS to establish a certain anticolonial relation of forces, despite the numerical inferiority of the Melanesian population, by means of the elec-

total boycott of November 1984 and the schools boycott which followed.

The polarisation has swept away all those forces who backed the 'compromise' solution put forward by Edgard Pisani and the French government. This is the case with the LKS, which only got one deputy elected, and the OPAO, who got none. It is a snub to Pisani who wanted to construct a base for his policy of independence-within-association by picking up chunks of the FLNKS and the Republican vote.

What rendered this road illusory was the national mobilisation of the Kanak people and the scale of the conflicts, particularly in relation to unequal access to the land.

This removes the possibility, on which Pisani had counted; that thousands of Europeans could be won to vote for his project in a referendum.

We haven't had to wait long for the first political effects of these results. The metropolitan right changed its tone towards the FLNKS and the leader of the right-wing RPR, Bernard Pons, in calling for FLNKS participation in regional councils, explained that: 'If they are willing to play ball, then so are we.' This demagogic appeal is only designed to gain time. The French government will now try to recuperate the electoral ground won by the independentists in order to launch its neo-colonial plans. In the long term, the government has not lost hope that it can break up the unity of the Kanak people around the demand for an independent, socialist Kanaky. Many of the FLNKS's action committees are aware of this danger — and there is a long gap between Mitterrand's neo-colonial dreams and putting them into practice.

• This article is adapted from the French socialist paper, Rouge.



French troops confront Kanaks

French anti-racists launch European march

SOS-RACISME, the French anti-racist organisation, has called a demonstration for 14 December in Paris. It will be followed by a pop festival in Le Bourget, just outside Paris.

The 'third march for

equality' — it follows large anti-racist marches in 1983 and 1984 — is already under way. On 21 October, contingents set out from four European starting points to conduct a 'giant tour of Europe for equality'. They plan to meet up in Paris for the final rally.

The first column will

march from Avignon through the South of France, where Le Pen's fascists hope to become the largest party.

The second will start out from Bordeaux and march through the south-west, through Brittany, and then through the north to Paris.

Two further legs will set out from Stockholm and from Rome, aiming to traverse Europe's capitals before the main demonstration.

A second march has been called over the same period by 'France-Plus', an organisation based on France's Maghrebian (former French colonies) population which was formed around the demand for the right to vote for France's Arab immigrants, of whom 1,400,000 are of voting age.

SOS-racisme has since its inception provided a channel for a very broad anti-racist sentiment in France. Its most spectacular success has been in promoting the slogan 'Touch pas mon pote' (hands off my friend), with badge sales totalling millions.

But it has provoked a lot of friction, particularly with young Arabs, by trying to dominate and rigidly control the movement. It has failed to recognise the role of organisations which young Arabs have created, which are often more militant and combative than the rest of the movement, since they are in the front line of racist attacks.

However, the French revolutionary newspaper Rouge explains that: 'Though SOS-Racisme has underestimated the place and strength of the young Arab movement ... and has committed errors, particularly by not providing any means for a joint appeal and for joint organisation of the march with other anti-racist forces ... the need now is for convergence, for respect by each for the position of all, and for an understanding that unity multiplies forces and does not just add them together.'

Rouge goes on to say young people will regard the division as the result of political manoeuvres and there is a risk that they will reject both initiatives. It calls for the widest possible united effort at local level to ensure there is a single, gigantic march in December.



Spain: Anti-NATO forces organise

ANTI-NATO forces in the Spanish state are organising. On 8 September a national coalition called the 'statewide coordination of pacifist organisations' (CEOP), which unites virtually all the country's anti-nuclear opposition decided to launch an out-of-NATO campaign.

The issue is at the centre of Spanish politics because the Socialist government, which was elected on a pledge to stay out of NATO, is now campaigning to get Spain in. It has pledged a referendum which is likely to be held in March.

Opposition to NATO is widespread because the Franco regime is

associated with American backing in popular memory, and because the Spanish state has not yet been in NATO.

CEOP is building a campaign of demonstrations and protests, rock festivals and other events of which the high point is to be a mass march on Madrid.

It has tried to ensure unity by setting up a panel of spokespeople from the various bodies supporting it. These include both Communist Parties, the Workers' Commissions (the CP and left dominated trade union federation), several far left and innumerable activist anti-nuclear and pacifist organisations.

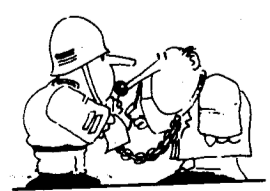
So far the Socialist Party has not even entered discussion with CEOP,

and the socialist-dominated UGT trade union federation has given a cold response. But a number of UGT leaders and a handful of socialist MPs were among 100 prominent personalities who recently signed an advert sponsored by the Movement for Peace, Disarmament and Liberty two weeks ago, insisting that the referendum be held.

It is not certain the referendum will be held. Spain's right wing want to ride rough-shod over the Spanish people. Conservative leader Roca says a referendum would be unconstitutional! Still further to the right, some forces wedded to extreme reaction are unhappy about going into the Common Market, and about NATO, for isolationist

reasons. This split on tactics is one of the reasons Gonzalez is fearful about losing a referendum.

His latest move is to visit Germany's chancellor Kohl and, according to the Financial Times, 'seek to enlist his aid to persuade Spain's conservative opposition, Coalicion Popular, to back the socialist government in the campaign to keep Spain within NATO.' A fine example of socialist internationalism!



Salvadorean trade unionists tour pits



John Smith translates for Arturo Valencia and Alfredo Represa at a rally with Arthur Scargill and Dennis Skinner

SINCE THE beginning of the 1970s, the power workers union of El Salvador, STECEL, has played a leading role in the Salvadorean trade unions. Two exiled leaders of STECEL, Arturo Valencia and Alfredo Represa, recently toured the coalfields of South Yorkshire and the Midlands, meeting thousands of miners and their wives.

The tour covered Sheffield, Nottingham, Doncaster, Chesterfield, Rotherham, Mansfield, Barnsley, Leicester, Wakefield and a number of pit villages.

Highlights included a spirited public meeting with NUM president Arthur Scargill, attended by nearly one thousand miners at Hatfield Main, near Doncaster. Greetings were given to a 4000 strong NUM rally in Barnsley. The tour also included an underground visit to Highmoor pit, five miles south of Sheffield, and a canteen meeting at Silverwood colliery near Rotherham with 250 miners who delayed the start of their afternoon shift to hear the Salvadoreans.

Silverwood miners afterwards told us about the 'sensational impact' this had had on the entire workforce. Branch officers who had set up the

meeting commented that they had not imagined how useful the meeting would be for their job of rallying and inspiring political consciousness. The Silverwood NUM branch meeting voted a few days later to make a regular monthly contribu-

By John Smith and Christiane Mathews

tion to the Salvadorean union federation, FENASTRAS.

In Notts, Arturo and Alfredo spoke at a social evening jointly organised by the Nottingham Anti-Apartheid Movement and Notts Women Against Pit Closures. Throughout the evening miners and their wives discussed with the

Salvadoreans and the guest from the South African Congress of Trade Unions. At the end of the evening Notts WAPC donated £400, to be divided between SACTU and the Salvadoreans' trade union federation, FENASTRAS.

Other notable successes of the tour were a morning meeting with 150 mostly unemployed youth, organised by Barnsley unemployed youth, and a dawn picket line visit to Forgemasters, where 1000 workers are on strike against their union busting management.

The Salvadoreans spoke to delegate meetings of trades councils in four towns and met 100 delegates at the Sheffield district Labour Party. They discussed with NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield and members of the Derbyshire and Yorkshire NUM executives, local MPs and MEPs.

They travelled to the Donnington Power station in the Trent valley where they explained to members

of GMBATU how they were able to shut down the power supply to push forward the struggle in El Salvador. In Loughborough they spoke at a meeting organised by the Dirty Thirty striking Leicester miners and Coalville rail guards.

Arturo and Alfredo noted many parallels with their experiences. 'In El Salvador,' they said, 'the working class learnt the

Unity

need for unity the hard way. At first the most militant unions were isolated by repression and witch-hunts. But just as we have overcome this, so we are sure that the rest of the working class will come to realise that the miners strike was just, necessary and victorious'.

Strike

They offered four reasons for this view — because the strike broke the ice which had frozen the class contradictions in Britain; it had shown the capacity of struggle of the working class; the tremendous role played by

women of the mining communities and because it showed millions of working people in the colonial world that here, in imperialist Britain a working class movement is fighting back against injustice and exploitation.

Arturo and Alfredo heard from many miners and miners wives about their experience of police violence. They commented: 'This repression reminds us of how it was in El Salvador at the beginning of our struggle.'

Miners

'Our experience paralleled that of the NUM, as the most politically conscious and combative union. Like with us, the NUM will continue to be a special target for oppression, slander and blackmail'.

One strand of discussion between miners and the Salvadoreans was how the struggle in both countries teaches that trade union struggles are only part of a much bigger political fight — a revolutionary struggle, which the Salvadoreans explained needs to establish 'a government that respects and defends the rights and interests of working people.'

Women

Arturo and Alfredo explained that STECEL had become one of the most combative unions in El Salvador by forging strong links between the leadership and the ranks and by involving the entire membership in political union action, including solidarity with other sections of the oppressed — women, peasants, students.

The Salvadoreans made a big impression on the mining communities but they also learnt from the miners and their wives. They were particularly impressed by the role of the women. They will take this back to El Salvador, including a report to the FENASTRAS conference in San Salvador on 7-8 November.

Their tour has strengthened solidarity with the revolutions of Central America. The next step will be to get miners representatives on the trade union delegation to El Salvador planned for January 1985 and to follow this with a bigger more intensive tour.

● Messages of solidarity to FENASTRAS to: Avenida 29 de Agosto, Plaza Barrios 29, 20 Piso, San Salvador, El Salvador, Central America.



Coffee harvest threatened by Contras

Nicaragua: 'In a struggle for survival'

LAST week, a Contra sabotage squad was arrested red-handed in the Nicaraguan capital Managua with plans to blow up the main centres of transport and communication.

This graphic evidence of a turn by

By Paul Atkin

the Contras to urban sabotage led to the declaration of a state of emergency by the Sandinista government.

Its terms are the same 1982 and last autumn, which were relaxed to allow greater scope for campaigning in the national elections — which the Sandinistas won with a 68 per cent vote.

Ray Hooker, an FSLN delegate to the National Assembly, was in London last week and described the measures — which involve restrictions on the press, assembly and strike action — as 'distasteful to the Nicaraguan government'. But, he stressed, 'we are in a struggle for survival'.

The effect of the US economic embargo has lost Nicaragua 25 per cent of its exports. There are shortages of food, spare parts, medicine, education materials. The economic disruption suffered by Nicaragua in the last three years has been greater proportionally than that suffered by Britain during the whole of World War II, during which there were very great restrictions on civil liberties of all sorts.

The military and political pressure exerted by the USA is also increasing. At the moment there is a rapid military build up on the Honduran border by the Contras. Large scale invasions are expected in the coffee growing provinces of Nueva Segovia, Esteli, Matagalpa and Madriz. A recent article in *The Times* estimated that 7000 Contra were poised to invade during the harvest period in November and December. Last year a quarter of the coffee crop was lost through Contra activity.

On the diplomatic front the US is actively aiming to break up the Contadora peace process. The government of Panama has openly accused the US of pressuring it to sabotage the process. Last month Ecuador

broke off diplomatic relations with Nicaragua after receiving a 250 million dollar loan from the US. Washington then announced that Ecuador and the Dominican Republic — which helped give Caribbean cover to Reagan's invasion of Grenada in 1983 — would be joining the Contadora process as supporting nations. That this was announced in and by Washington indicates the 'independent' role these countries will play.

In this context, the wonder is that Nicaragua has been able to get through the last year without a formal state of emergency! Even now, as Ray Hooker pointed out, the regulations 'haven't really been applied yet ... things continue much as before', but 'the government needs to have the authority to use these measures'.

International solidarity is desperately needed in the next three months, as the Contras go over the border, particularly in the trade union movement. At this year's TUC, a resolution was passed in defence of Nicaragua, despite opposition from the EETPU. The US will be applying pressure through the CIA backed international union federation, the ICF-TU, for trade unions internationally to attack the state of emergency as an attack on trade union rights. This despite the fact that the Sandinistas encourage trade union membership and passed legislation in support of workers control.

This attack will be dutifully echoed in this country by the EETPU, AUEW and their ilk.

The state of emergency is imposed not because the Sandinistas are unpopular, not because they want to impose restrictions, but because there is a state of emergency imposed by the US embargo and war.

The Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign trade union conference on 23 November is an opportunity to discuss how to take this and other solidarity issues into the British labour movement.

● Trade union conference on Nicaragua. Sheffield Town Hall Saturday 23 November 9.30-5pm. Contact NSC 26-27, Colinton Terrace, London N16 7JH for information.

Maurice Bishop remembered

THE Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement group in Britain organised a seminar on 27 October to mark the murder of the Grenadian prime minister two year ago.

Bishop's death ushered in the US invasion troops to the Caribbean island of Grenada.

Speakers at the October meeting included Gus John of the *Race Today* collective and labour councillor Ben Bousquet. The main speaker was Kendrick Radix a minister in the People's Revolutionary Government after

the 1979 revolution and a leader of the MBPM in Grenada.

Representatives from solidarity groups in Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany, Austria and Holland came to the seminar to discuss coordinated activity across Europe.

An appeal was made for the British labour movement to raise funds to aid the Maurice Bishop Foundation in Grenada and the newspaper *Indies Times*, produced with scanty technical facilities and under harassment from the US-backed administration.

An urgent appeal was

issued for messages to be sent to Grenada protesting against a decision to extradite imprisoned trade union leader Chester Humphrey to the United States, to face charges of exporting arms to the revolution in 1979.

● For information about the MBPM (UK) and copies of their newsletter write to: 48 Broad Lawn, London SE9 3XD.

● Send telegrams demanding the release of Chester Humphrey and no extradition to: Herbert Blaize, Prime Minister's Office, St George's, Grenada, West Indies.



Maurice Bishop

Photo: GM COVINGTON



Photo: MORNING STAR

NUM steps up campaign for sacked miners

THE NUM has decided, at a special delegate conference in London on 28 October, to step up the campaign in support of victimised miners with measures that include a lobby of parliament. The same day also saw a decision by the union to purge its contempt of court in order to try and recover NUM funds sequestered since last year.

Announcing the latter decision to the press, Arthur Scargill explained that he personally had argued against it. But, as on all issues, he would carry out the democratic decisions of the conference and of the national executive. He said:

THE special delegate conference today discussed two things. The first item concerned victimised miners. Conference has agreed, first of all, to reaffirm its determination to secure the reinstatement of all miners dismissed, no

matter how long it takes. We welcome the decision of the TUC and Labour Party conferences, which have supported those who have been dismissed and their campaign to win reinstatement. We also welcome the wide support

which is growing in the wider movement for our case for reinstatement.

In an effort to bring this matter to the attention of an even wider section of our society, we are going to convene a lobby of parliament. We are going to ask the TUC and Labour Party to actively participate in this lobby, so that the issues raised — not only by the NUM, but also by the select committee — can be brought very firmly to the attention of parliament itself.

We are going to do everything possible to coordinate the activities of all our members who've been dismissed, so that they can be actively involved not only in raising money for

themselves and their families but also in presenting the case of this union and demonstrating what can happen to other trade unionists if they attempt to struggle against this government.

Obviously the lesson to be learnt is that we need unity amongst the labour and trade union movement to prevent this type of victimisation. We believe that that kind of campaign, and that kind of organisation, is the best security we can have.

Finally, of course, we reaffirm our opposition to the latest Coal Board proposal — called *A Strategy for Coal* — which is yet another attempt to close down the mining industry on a large scale. If that programme is carried

through, on the basis of their own projections, it will lead to no more than 80-100m tons of coal production; it will lead to the closure of 80-100 pits.

It is ironic that those figures are absolutely in line with the projections we made 18 months ago and which were vociferously denied both by the National Coal Board and by Margaret Thatcher.

The executive today also discussed the question of receivership and sequestration. A long discussion took place, and at the end of that discussion there was a division of opinion. The result was that the national executive decided by a majority vote to go to the court on 14 November and purge the contempt.

Around the coalfields

THIS WEEK saw another step in the fight to rebuild the NUM in the Notts area, when a branch of the union was reestablished at every pit in the coalfield.

Many of the meetings had a bigger attendance than has been seen in any so-called NUM meeting before the ballot.

Over the past few months many miners have signed forms stating that they wish to remain in the NUM. More are coming forward all the time. NUM loyalists remain confident that they will be able to rebuild their union.

The branch meetings held across Notts on Sunday 27 October ratified the decisions taken at a meeting between national union officials and representatives from most of the areas pits, held immediately after the ballot result was known. The meetings also elected the acting branch officials who will hold office until normal elections can be arranged over the next few weeks. This will ensure that the union can continue to fight for the recognition that the NCB has denied.

The situation in Notts must be seen as a unionisation fight. This fight must be taken across the length and breadth of the country.

Part of the struggle to crush the UDM in Notts and South Derbyshire means stopping this outfit gaining a foothold in other parts of the country. All trade unions have a duty to ensure this.

The NCB will now step

up its victimisation campaign against NUM loyalists, especially those elected as acting branch officials. We will fight to defend our officials against the Coal Board attacks, and their right to conduct union affairs at every pit in Notts. NUM members in the rest of the country must support this struggle.

By Mark Hunter, Acting NUM Secretary, Welbeck (personal capacity)

Already there is disharmony among members of the area council of the UDM. Its failure to consolidate itself is highlighted at Sherwood pit, by the response of the UDM members to the suspension of the branch secretary who was elected some months ago and has now chosen to remain in the NUM.

The UDM members have organised a petition of protest to send to their leadership. Once again, Lynk's moves have proved unacceptable to many of his followers.

The UDM membership is in total confusion over whether to accept the

substantial rise the Board promised before the ballot materialises. Rumours of major increases in productivity, continental shift work — for example, compulsory weekend work without overtime payments — and wholesale closure of Notts pits are rife. Such rumours can only strengthen the position of the NUM.

The determination and fighting spirit of the men and women in the Notts area, that we have seen throughout the last 18 months, has shown through again. Notts Women Against Pit Closures are now preparing to fight on the question of recognition of the NUM.

● *The Notts WAPC are willing to send speakers to any trade union or Labour Party meeting. For more details contact Gwen McLeod on Mansfield 559255.*



Photo: MARK SALMON

Wales

SINCE the end of the strike the South Wales NCB has become more confident about implementing their pit closure programme — with the resultant loss of 3000 jobs since March '85.

By Gareth Thomas

The recent decision of Penrhwiweiber to overturn its 2:1 majority vote in favour of opposing closure is evidence of the seriousness of the situation. Penrhwiweiber's decision — despite its militant traditions and its 100 per cent loyalty during the year-long dispute — shows the difficulty of opposing the NCB strategy at a lodge level.

The only lodge now to hold out against the closures in South Wales is St John's. As a direct result of its continued opposition, the Coal Board have withdrawn St John's case from the review procedure. This means that a fight against closure there would require ignoring Coal Board demands to stop production by, for example, occupying the mine.

The position in South Wales has undoubtedly developed as a direct result of the NCB propaganda but, at the same time, the South Wales NUM area leadership has failed to

mount an adequate campaign against closures. If they had, there would be a far stronger fight from the membership in South Wales.

If a lodge like Penrhwiweiber can be defeated, what hope do other militant lodges have without the leadership required at an area level? The reality of the situation is such that every day the William's leadership position remains unchanged is a further blow against an effective counter-campaign against the pit closure programme in South Wales.

Kent

THE situation in the Kent coalfield has changed dramatically since the announcement that Tilmanstone would close was made last July.

By Roger Godfrey, Secretary Tilmanstone NUM

The 'Save Tilmanstone' campaign was launched with the aim of raising public awareness to the dangers of a pit closure in Kent. The consequences for jobs and the economic life of East Kent would be disastrous.

The response to the campaign, however, was disappointing. The NCB had given assurances that the closure was necessary in order to better serve the

Fund Drive appeal to all our readers

Dear Readers

Socialist Action is addressing an appeal for financial support to every single reader. We feel justified in this because the weekly Socialist Action has won a definite place for itself as part of the fighting left wing which has converged during and after the miners' strike.

● We gave four-square support to the leadership of the NUM. We explained that in the forces symbolised by Arthur Scargill has emerged the first class struggle current and leadership in the labour movement for decades. While Fleet Street fumed, and many sniped, Socialist Action gave a platform to the views of the NUM leadership at every level.

● Socialist Action supported the black section of the Labour Party from its inception and opened its pages to the black section to argue its case in the labour movement.

● Socialist Action has supported the demands of women for self-organisation, and especially the development of women from the mining communities through the Women Against Pit Closures movement. We have, too, consistently reported in our pages the discussion of Labour women, and the struggles of all women at home and internationally.

● Socialist Action has provided a channel for the Campaign Group of MPs to put forward their views when *Tribune*, *Marxism Today* and other labour papers have been closed to them, or were only interested in criticism.

● Socialist Action extends support to the class struggle internationally, particularly today in South Africa and Central America. We have opened our pages to the views of the FSLN, the ANC, the independent black trade unions in South Africa and other forces engaged in the struggle against Apartheid. We publish the views of Sinn Fein in Ireland and we support all those engaged in a just struggle for democracy, national liberation and socialism the world over.

In short, our principle has been to develop a paper which has 'no interests separate and apart from those of the working class as a whole'. We believe all our readers have an interest in maintaining and developing Socialist Action by contributing to it in two ways. Firstly, and most urgently, through financial support.

Money is already coming in. A meeting of Socialist Action supporters in the NUM recently pledged £1000 for the paper's fund drive. Supporters and readers in the NCU have each pledged £50. Socialist Action readers in North London and South Yorks have pledged a week's wages to the paper. This is the kind of support we need and are asking for.

From next week the paper will carry a regular column showing our readers' response to this appeal.

Secondly, we are asking for your support in mobilising for the 'Alliance for Socialism' weekend conference on 16 and 17 November. Every reader should make it a priority to mobilise for this event which can be a vital opportunity to discuss the issues the paper covers every week.

Tickets can be obtained from Socialist Action, not just for yourselves, but to sell to other people who should be there. The Alliance for Socialism conference will bring together representatives of all the forces that Socialist Action has been supporting in the last year. It can help build up the political influence of the paper and help establish us further as a real, and useful, part of the 'fighting left'.

We support you. Now perhaps you can support us.

Judith Woodward for the Socialist Action Editorial Board

future of the other two Kent pits: Betteshanger and Snowdown.

At present, Tilmanstone is awaiting a date for our review procedure appeal meeting with the Coal Board at national level. It is at that meeting that the union will present its alternative plans for the pit. Then the NCB will make their decision on the pit's future.

After that, the position is unclear. There is still no national agreement on the independent appeals body. Tilmanstone will be operating in the dark from that point on.

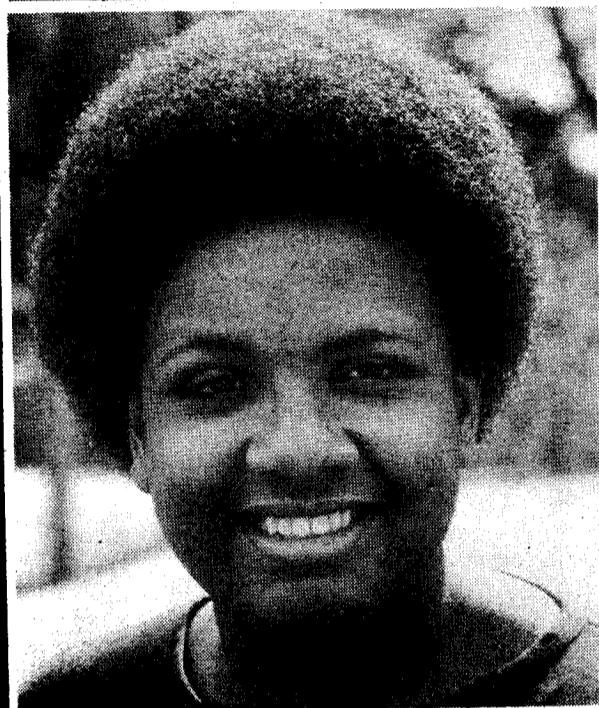
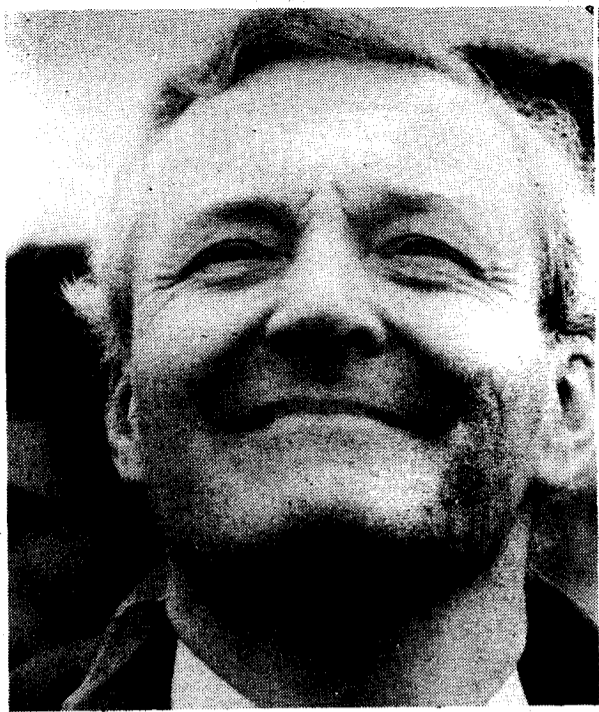
In the meantime, the new coalface has gone into production here, and the

pit showed a £97,000 profit for September. This is proving an embarrassment to the Coal Board.

In their desperation they even engineered a lock-out at the pit, when miners demanded the right to hold canteen meetings to be kept informed of the situation in the coalfield.

All their tactics have failed at Tilmanstone. So now they have turned their attention to Betteshanger and announced the closure of that pit.

The public must be made aware that the national assets of this country are going to be sacrificed on the altar of monetarism and anti-trade unionism.



An Alliance for Socialism

A weekend of debate and discussion in London

16-17 November

Topics include:

- How to draw out the lessons of the miners' strike and fight for amnesty
- How to fight racism and build the black section
- How to build Women Against Pit Closures, the Women's Action Committee, and women's organisation in the labour movement
- How to fight the legal attacks on the unions
- How to fight the assault on local councils
- How to fight the drift on the right in the party and build on the successes the left has won
- How to build solidarity with the struggle in South Africa
- How to defend Nicaragua and the Central American revolutions
- How to get Britain out of Ireland
- How to defend lesbian and gay rights

There is no better place to discuss these, and other issues, than in the sessions and workshops of Socialist Action's 'Alliance for Socialism' weekend.

Speakers at the event include:
The African National Congress

Diane Abbot, Tony Benn, Jack Collins, Jeremy Corbyn, Vladimir Derer, Betty Heathfield, Peter Heathfield, Stuart Holland, Ann Pettifor, Russell Profitt, John Ross, Marc Wadsworth, Jude Woodward, Doreen Weppler.
plus speakers from Black Sections National Committee, the FDR of El Salvador, and many many more.

Venue: Sir William Collins school, Charrington St,
London NW1 (near Kings Cross Station)
£5 for weekend, £3 each day
Tickets from Socialist Action,
PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

Please send _____ tickets for 'An Alliance for Socialism to:

Name

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Send to Socialist Action, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

