

A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

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MURDOCH'S LAW

Defend SOGAT

Defend the NGA



MONDAY'S COURT decision to seize the funds of SOGAT shows just what a terrible price the labour movement is now paying for the failure of the TUC to defend the NGA over Warrington and the NUM during the miners strike. It also shows 'moderation' is no safeguard from Tory laws whatever.

Brenda Dean and the SOGAT leadership are no Arthur Scargill and the miners. They attempted to comply with the union law on ballots. But the point is, as Brenda Dean pointed out, there is no way an effective trade union dispute can be run and remain within Tory laws.

Human beings are now being treated like cattle by Thatcher. It

makes no difference if they want to work or not, show solidarity or not. No, they are just objects to be ordered around under a slaves charter.

The writs are already spreading out to the other unions. The NGA is coming up after SOGAT — and the last legal attack on the NGA, over the dispute with Eddie Shah at Warrington, cost the union £2 million. The UCW has already had a writ issued against it. The TGWU is also in the firing line. And lest we forget it the entire assets of the NUM are still held by a receiver.

It now appears that judges, and lawyers, not their members, are to be the people who determine the policies and activities of trade unions. The retreats which have been made since Warrington have not safeguarded the

trade unions one bit from the mounting legal attacks.

Confronted with the determination of the bosses, backed up by their courts, the labour movement has no other option than to step up the action. That means massive pickets at Wapping, and deepening industrial solidarity elsewhere.

First and foremost, the basis for this must be laid by the print unions themselves. Confining the strike to News International titles is a disastrous strategy for protecting the jobs of print workers. Other newspapers such as the *Express* and the *Financial Times* have already made clear that they too intend to travel the Wapping road. An all-out Fleet Street strike is the only way to bring the press barons to heel.

Above all, with the threats of sequestration flying all around, the TUC cannot afford to maintain the 'remain within the law' position it has adopted — and which it intends to deepen. Last Wednesday it ducked the issue with Hammond and the electricians: that of stopping EETPU scabs from crossing the picket lines. The general council voted down the resolution from Knapp and Buckton which would have instructed the EETPU to tell its members to do just that. Instead it directed the union to...let its members know that they were taking other union members jobs!

No wonder Eric Hammond has agreed to abide by the terms of the TUC directive — it is a directive without any teeth. That means one which capitulates to the EETPU's

own brand of union-busting and drags the TUC further down the road of accepting the Tory anti-union legislation. At the coming special TUC conference it is proposed to go further down the road of complying with the law by accepting government cash for ballots. This must be stopped.

Murdoch and the courts have shown their readiness to go all the way in their battle to destroy the print unions. Now the labour movement must show it is prepared to go just as far in defending them. The response to the use of the Tory courts against the NGA and SOGAT must be to step up all solidarity action with the print workers and for the TUC to take national action against the anti-union laws.

Socialist ACTION

Thatcher's Blues

PROBLEMS FOR Thatcher from within the ruling class are now coming thick and fast.

After Westland came the U-turn on British Leyland, followed by the punch up at last weekend's Young Conservative Conference. Thatcher herself has continued to slide down the opinion polls. The press are full of comments about 'amazing' it is that only three years after her 1983 landslide Thatcher should find herself on the ropes. But in reality it is not hard to discover the reasons for the sudden outburst of questioning of Thatcher's leadership.

First Thatcher *did not* win a popular mandate in 1983. Her vote, at 42 per cent, was the lowest real percentage of support for a prime minister with a safe majority in parliament in British history. It was the freaks of the British electoral system, not popular support for the Tories, that produced Thatcher's overwhelming majority in parliament.

Second Thatcher's own immediate economic base is slipping away by the day in the North Sea. The entire policies of Thatcherism were made possible by the tax revenue and exports of North Sea oil. With the price of oil having fallen by almost half in the four months Nigel Lawson projected tax cutting budget for March is already in ruins.

The falling oil price interrelates with another key problem. Despite the enormous setbacks suffered by the trade unions since 1979, Thatcher has not imposed anything like the defeat on the working class which she required for her economic strategy to work.

The theory of Thatcherism was simple. While the oil revenues flowed in the exchange rate of the pound soared and exchange controls were lifted. A flood of money poured out of the country as British capitalism enormously expanded its international operations. Weak sectors of the domestic economy were weeded out by remorseless international competition.

The theory went that as the oil ran out the exchange rate of the pound would decline again and manufacturing exports would pick up. A revitalised manufacturing sector would 'fill the gap' left by oil. Both the international and domestic sectors of the economy would be revived.

But this policy relied both on enough domestic manufacturing surviving to 'fill the gap' and on a truly crushing defeat being suffered by the working class — in particular by the working class in manufacturing industry. A lower exchange rate of the pound means that the power of the pound declines and inflation accelerates. A devaluation only works for capital if the working class can be prevented from fighting back against its effects. Now both the survival of enough of the domestic manufacturing base, and the ability to impose a truly devastating defeat on the working class have come into question.

For any other major imperialist country it would be inconceivable that the sale of the sole domestically owned car manufacturer could even be contemplated. US, Japanese, German, French, and Italian capitalism are literally constructed around their car manufacturers. It is only British capital that could even contemplate selling off BL. Even Thatcher, it turned out, couldn't get away with it at present. The pro-British, pro-BL lobby turned out to be able to get its way even when the pro-European Westland lobby could not.

But more seriously Thatcher has not been able to impose the scale of defeat on the working class that is needed. Throughout the Thatcher years wages in manufacturing have continued to rise at a far faster rate than inflation. Average wages for those inwork have risen by over 10 per cent during the Thatcher government. The relation of forces this shows does not allow the success of the economic policies needed when the oil price falls and the pound declines.

Little wonder, therefore, that alternative policies on at least some issues are now being canvassed. In a major editorial last week the *Financial Times* stated that the question of incomes policy had to be looked at again. Appeals from the government to industry to keep down real wages are becoming increasingly strident.

No section of the ruling class wants a break with the fundamental policies of Thatcherism. Thatcher is by far the most powerful section of the ruling class — as she showed in the outcome of the Westland fight. But at least some changes in policy on secondary question are now being considered.

Thatcher's mess is going to get worse and not better.

TUC surrenders to Hammond

AFTER A 13½-HOUR meeting last week, the 51 members of the TUC general council found the leadership of the EETPU guilty of five of the seven charges brought against the union as a result of its conduct at the News International plant. But the crucial move by the NUR and ASLEF to toughen-up the TUC's directive to the electricians was lost by a 15 to 14 vote. This would have instructed the EETPU to tell its members to 'refrain from undertaking work normally done by other print unions', in other words to stop crossing picket lines — a directive certain to have been considered 'unlawful' by the Tory courts.

While the eventual decision — that the electricians should inform their Wapping members that they were doing work usually done by printers — won a large majority, it is one which in reality poses no threat to Hammond's assault on the print unions. Thus John Lloyd, industrial editor of the *Financial Times*, was able to report last Friday that 'it appeared' that 'the electricians union will obey the TUC's directions on how to handle its approach to the Wapping printing operation'.

Those instructions are that it must not recruit into membership workers at Wapping and Glasgow unless and until an agreement is reached between all the unions concerned. Further, the electricians are also told not to assist recruitment, directly or indirectly, at the two Murdoch plants.

Unions

The EETPU must not conclude any agreement with News International or enter unilateral negotiations with the newspaper group. But there is no directive whatever for the EETPU to stop its current scabbing at Wapping.

That is why the EETPU executive which met on Tuesday agreed to the TUC's terms. Members of the executive no doubt regarded the concessions

demanding by the general council would not stop their overall policy in relation to Wapping and elsewhere. Hammond's declaration that his union would refuse to accept any judgement by the TUC which contravened Thatcher's anti-union laws has paid off.

By Annie Brady

The EETPU's 32-page submission, complete with 16 appendices, attempted to deny that negotiations

with Murdoch in December last year came close to a single union, legally binding, no-strike deal. Claiming part of the evidence offered against them by print unions was fake, Hammond said his Southampton and Glasgow offices has not been used to recruit labour to operate the Wapping presses. The two local offices, he claims, acted on their own initiative, recruiting only installation and maintenance personnel — an assertion which even the right wing of the TUC found incredible.

Smash

The document explains that the EETPU entered negotiations over the start-up of the new *London Post* only. No agreement has been entered into, and negotiations were not 'in contravention of the existing spheres of influence'

of other unions.

In view of the Hammond-Murdoch links exposed to public view over the last few weeks (which Socialist Action has reported on in full in our last two issues), the electricians' refutations are hard for even the most gullible to swallow.

Hammond has undoubtedly lost support from among right wing of the TUC general council, going as far — and as publicly — as he has with Murdoch. It was right wingers such as Alistair Graham of the CPSA and Roy Grantham of APEX who were on the attack last week, especially over the Southampton and Glasgow recruitment. They had to distance

themselves from Hammond's crassness. But the final decision arrived at by the general council shows the refusal by the TUC to take the sort of action necessary to call a halt to Murdoch's plans. Graham and Grantham disagree with Hammond on tactics not on line.

As the High Court decision against SOGAT at the beginning of this week shows, the full weight of anti-trade union legislation will be backing Rupert Murdoch's bid to smash the print unions and lay the basis for weakening the entire labour movement. Staying within those laws is no framework whatsoever for defending print workers, their unions or the unity of the trade union movement as a whole. The general council's position last Wednesday represents a further step down the road of accepting the Tories' anti-union laws.



Photo: MORNING STAR

'This dispute has got to be won'

JOHN TOCHER is the left's candidate in the forthcoming AUEW presidential election and AUEW divisional organiser for Greater Manchester. He has taken a strong stand in support of the striking print workers in Fleet Street. He had this to say to JON SILBERMAN and BILL ADLER.

YOU'VE got to look at the history of it all. The first challenge to the government's anti-union legislation was the NGA-Shah dispute. Let's be quite frank, the TUC backed off.

That was the first dilution of the Wembley conference decision that the movement would render assistance to any union that found itself in difficulties under the legislation. But the general council didn't do this over Shah.

That gave the government comfort to have a go at the civil servants at GCHQ and deprive them of their trade union and



John Tocher

civil servants at Cheltenham. And it gave comfort to the government to take the miners on.

The miners didn't win — and we know that the movement has suffered a setback as a result. Today we see the difficulties of the teachers dispute because the unions have broken ranks.

Murdoch has taken advantage of all this: the outcome of the Shah-NGA problem, of the accumulated weaknesses of the trade union movement. With his considerable capital, he has built himself a fort and is brutally imposing conditions of new technology by blatantly conspiring to sack everybody and employ scab labour to produce the papers.

That is the measure of the crime the EETPU have committed. They have given comfort to Murdoch. They've directly assisted him: their members are running the plant and they're perform-

ing work that people have performed for many years in Fleet Street — and their fathers before them.

The EETPU have really jeopardised the entire livelihood and futures of those people in Fleet Street. They must be openly condemned for their activities.

I don't think they should be expelled from the TUC but I would be in favour of their suspension. You simply can't have one rogue union going along and undercutting other people's conditions and organisation.

The other connotation is this: in this country we have a very reactionary press. This man Murdoch is a multinational in that field. If he is able to win out, he will be seeking to use his unbridled power not just in terms of industrial relations, to dictate to his workforce, but

he will be dictating to governments in terms of policy through his newspaper empire. That is a big threat and this dispute has got to be won.

The TUC should be coming out to the whole movement with the message 'Murdoch's got to be defeated!'. If the trade union movement doesn't respond to this not only will all manner of new technology be introduced (in engineering in particular), but the entire movement will have been weakened further still.

If that means stopping water, stopping paper, stopping machinery, stopping electricity, that's got to be done. Rather than being on the defensive with Murdoch as the TUC appears to be, the EETPU should be brushed aside and the whole movement involved to ensure that Murdoch is stopped.

War at Wapping: Week 3

AS THE PRINT workers dispute with Rupert Murdoch's News International entered its fourth week, SOGAT found its £17 million-worth of assets sequestered. And anyone who thought that all-or-nothing demands to step up the action were exaggerated was sadly disabused. Now more than ever is the time to build mass action in support of striking print workers.

Thousands of angry women began to show how last Saturday, with the first mass demonstration of the strike. Led by women from the print unions and joined by a vociferous contingent of Women Against Pit Closures, it was a big success. Speaking at a meeting in Kent the

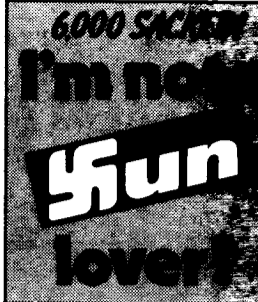
following day, NUM president Arthur Scargill took up the same theme of total solidarity, demanding that the 'whole might of the trade union movement' be brought to bear against Murdoch's union-bashing strategy.

The lessons of the miners strike are there to be drawn. The bosses and the courts have done that. Other newspaper barons have made it plain that if Murdoch wins they will follow suit in no time flat. Now the labour movement must draw those same lessons — and massively step up the action to defend SOGAT '82 and the NGA. The response of the TUC and other unions has already shown that the basis for extending the strike exists — and the

High Court has given the clinching argument.

It's up to the print unions to lead the way. No good continuing the softly-softly strategy of confining the action to News International workers in a mistaken belief that keeping other Fleet Street presses rolling will protect the jobs of other print workers. To make the strike effective, the whole of Fleet Street should be brought out. That would stop Rupert Murdoch and the rest of the press sharks in their tracks. Mass picketing and a campaign of all-out solidarity strike action must be launched if victory is to be won.

CAROL TURNER reports on solidarity with the print workers.



Women lead the way

'I'M HERE for the print workers' right to fight for their jobs,' Ann Scargill told Socialist Action at the beginning of last Saturday's women's march on Wapping. 'Our door is always open to them just as theirs was to us. Murdoch is trying to do to the print unions what Thatcher and MacGregor tried on us. But enough is enough. We've got to stand together now.'

It is a magnificent tribute to the power of the Women Against Pit Closures movement that the first mass demonstration against Murdoch organised last weekend was a march of women from Tower Hill to the Wapping plant. Over 3000 took part in a mass picket that held up deliveries of the scab papers for over an hour while police plotted an alternative route to avoid demonstrators.

Women print workers, print workers families, and other women trade unionists marched down The Highway singing 'Here we go' and 'I'd rather be a picket than a scab'. The impact on the men who lined the route to welcome the march was tremendous.

Large contingents of Women Against Pit Closures from up and down the country made explicit the connection that is already being made between the strikes. Speaking at a rally at Wapping after the march, Betty Heathfield spelled it out.

Her theme was complete solidarity with the print workers fighting to protect their jobs and their families. Women from the mining communities, she said, had been through a big strike, so they knew

what this one was all about. Miners already had direct experience of Murdoch and his newspapers used against them during their own strike.

Everything was ranged now against the print workers just as it was ranged against the miners during the 1984-85 strike. The government was trying to smash the print unions like they tried to smash the NUM.

Heathfield raised the possibility of a consumer boycott of the Murdoch titles, identifying it with the boycott of South African goods that black workers there called for. It should become second nature not to buy the *Sun* or *The Times*, she said, just as it is not to buy South African goods.

There will come a time very soon, she explained, when everyone will say 'give up, go back, stop fighting — you can't win'. But what if Nelson Mandela had given up when people said the same to him? In South Africa today people have the prospect of winning. 'So don't get down-hearted. When you don't have a choice — as we didn't have a choice — then you've got to fight'.

To drowning cheers

SOGAT • AUEW • NUJ • NGA



MY DAD HELPED MR MURDOCH MAKE MILLIONS.

NOW HE WANTS TO PUT HIM ON THE DOLE.

DON'T LET HIM.



DON'T BUY THE SUN, NEWS OF THE WORLD, TIMES AND SUNDAY TIMES

Betty Heathfield concluded: 'Mandela said "the struggle is my life". That's what I say — and that is what you should say too.'

Brenda Dean, speaking from the same platform, related the fact that a ship carrying paper had been turned away from a Scottish dock. The dock workers, she told the audience, were approaching their Belgian counterparts to organise a boycott of ink supplies to Murdoch. Talk of international solidarity too showed the impact of the miners strike. Already print workers are adapting the songs of the miners strike to their own dispute.

At least one miners support group, Lambeth, has taken on board that message. They have reconstituted themselves into a print workers support group and, under the auspices of the local trades council, have set up shop in Brixton to organise solidarity, including a public meeting this Friday with speakers from SOGAT, NUJ, AUEW and others.

• SOGAT strike centre can be contacted on 01-261 9302; Lambeth support group on 01-733 5670. The Lambeth public meeting starts at 7.30pm, at the town hall.

Solidarity

Telecoms engineers:

ALL telecom engineers in London City, the NCU branch which covers both Fleet Street and Murdoch's new Wapping plant, have been issued with instructions not to cross picket lines.

The circular, dated 24 January and signed by branch secretary Jock Campbell, makes clear: 'The policy of the TUC, the National Communications Union and the London City branch is that members must not cross a picket line.' Confronted with a picket line, telecom engineers are advised to comply, notify their supervisor and seek alternative work.

Following the NCU instruction could be one sure way to ensure that scab journalists working on the four News International titles are starved of the vital tool of their trade: the telephone.

Manchester actions:

PRINT workers on the Express Newspapers group are standing firm on their decision not to print the northern edition of the *News of the World* at the Ancoats works in Manchester.

This is despite Murdoch's injunction against SOGAT and despite a threat by local management to make 600 printers redundant if Express Newspapers lose the Murdoch contract. Tony Dubbins spoke to an NGA meeting there last Friday after which NGA members agreed to continue their ban.

Another Manchester ban affecting Murdoch is the decision by council to stop Manchester libraries taking copies of his four titles during the dispute. Meanwhile officers of the City Labour Party will be recommending to this week's party meeting that a rally in support of the print workers be held on Tuesday 25 February

Rail workers:

NEWS reports last week claimed rail workers were prepared to ditch their principles and transport Murdoch's scab papers. Not so according to Brian

Whitehead, NEC member of the NUR.

Whitehead told Socialist Action that scab papers won't go by rail because the NUR is committed to the TUC guidelines and will respect all picket lines.

'At any rate this work isn't on offer to the railways. British Rail has £27 million worth of newspaper contracts. Murdoch's is worth £9 million. For us it involves 780 jobs.'

'But Murdoch doesn't care about jobs in the print or on the railways. He had a well worked out plan around Wapping including massive investments in road haulage so he would avoid industrial action that he reckoned rail workers would take in opposition to his union smashing operation Wapping.'

Kent miners:

THIS Thursday, 13 February, Kent miners are holding a rally in Conway Hall in joint solidarity with the NUM and striking print workers.

Originally called to end a five-day 'Save Tilmantstone' march, the trek from Kent to London has now been called off because the Coal Board has announced a reprieve for the pit. But the rally, which includes Campaign group MPs Dennis Skinner and Bob Clay on its platform, will now hear the case for News International strikers.

Kent secretary Jack Collins told Socialist Action: 'The theme will now be that Kent NUM is on the verge of a victory — print workers can do likewise.'

'Printers poured in money and food convoys to us during our dispute. Because they've not yet asked for our support doesn't mean we should wait to give it. The TUC should be compelled to act in defence of the print workers.'

Bingo card ban:

THE Union of Communications Workers, whose members include postwomen and men, have taken solidarity action with striking print workers.

The UCW has banned postal workers from delivering Rupert Murdoch's *Sun* bingo cards through your letter box. This act will encourage

the consumer boycott called by print unions against the four newspaper printed at the Fortres Wapping. After all, what other good reason could anyone have for reading that scandal sheet?

TGWU:

A LEAFLET *Fact about the dispute* issued by the TGWU of the Wapping strike call for a consumer boycott of the Murdoch titles.

'Support the TUC boycott to protest at Murdoch's dictatorial policies,' it says. Pointing out that the TGWU has agreed with the TNT management that no disciplinary action will be taken against union members refusing to cross picket lines, the leaflet explains why transport workers can make a difference.

'TGWU lorry drivers have helped out in recent Fleet Street battles,' it says. 'BRS truck rental drivers refused to cross Daily Mirror picket lines in November.'

'This helped bring Robert Maxwell back to genuine negotiations. So don't fall for the line that your action won't make any real differences!'

... of a different kind

'BEHIND the success of Rupert Murdoch' newspaper road distribution service, which has run the print unions blockade, looms the shadow of Sir Peter Abeles,' reports last Sunday's *Observer*, in an article which outlines the suspected mafia connections of the TNT boss.

Abeles is a fellow Australian and a big buddy of Rupert Murdoch. The two jointly own Ansett, Australia's leading domestic airline.

At the end of the 1960s Abeles's TNT haulage company began operations in the United States. In the process, it seems, Abeles made contact with the mafia-linked Teamster union.

Now Abeles wants to buy Murdoch out from Ansett it is rumoured. As the *Observer* aptly comments: 'After the events at Wapping Mr Murdoch might be more inclined to do Sir Peter a favour in return.'





End the ban on Farrakhan, support Lester Lewis

LOUIS FARRAKHAN, leader of the Black nationalist Nation of Islam Organisation (NOI) was refused entry into Britain by immigration officials. This followed the ruling by the Home Secretary that he be banned from the country. The Hackney Black People's Association (HBPA) had invited him to address a series of meetings in Britain. The grounds for Farrakhan's ban was allegedly his anti-semitic utterances.

But the real target is not any anti-semitic views of Farrakhan but the black community in this country. Clearly, the Tory government which openly defends the apartheid regime in South Africa, and invites here regularly representatives of the South African government, can play no role in fighting any sort of racism, including anti-semitism.

This offensive has been compounded by the attacks on Lester Lewis, the black Labour councillor in Hackney who invited Farrakhan here.

The January meeting of the Hackney North GC passed a resolution which opposed the national ban on Farrakhan, but which then, with only five votes against, went on the deny him the use of any council premises.

The subsequent assault on Lester Lewis came from all sides. At a council at the end of January both Labour and Tories condemned him. The Labour chief whip was quoted as hoping he would be

deselected for the forthcoming local elections. The Tory leader called for an enquiry into the finances of the HBPA.

What is worse, the attack has spread to the wards. It appears that a concerted effort was made to ensure that Lester Lewis was deselected as a councillor. He is calling for an enquiry into 'dirty tricks carried out against me' in his South Defoe ward.

Lewis alleges that a letter was sent out to members attacking him, and a private meeting was held prior to the selection interviews. Certainly at the selection meeting photocopied articles very unfavourable to Lewis were circulated. His reception from many members was far more hostile than to the other candidates.

There are also stories about the of the selection meeting for Lea Bridge ward (which he represents), where around twice the number of members turned up to the previous AGM shortly before.

In such an atmosphere,

with the local rag the *Hackney Gazette* whipping up feeling against him, it is not surprising that Lewis has failed to win reselection in the two wards to fight the local elections in May. He has withdrawn his name from the shortlist in a third.

Lewis explained his invitation to Farrakhan:

'I do not agree that Farrakhan is a racist or that is anti-semitic. My view is that his criticism of the Jews is made on a religious basis. I realise that he is a deeply religious man and nobody who wants to deal with religion should deal with that.'

'However I am interested in his economic programme which is aimed at providing employment for unemployed blacks in the United States.'

'I work in a bakery and 99 per cent of our customers are blacks, and this means that this is black people using their purchasing power to provide employment for black people. The five of us who work in the cooperative bakery, were previously unemployed.'

Those in the Labour Party who have protested against the ban on Farrakhan but argued that Farrakhan be denied any council premises for his meetings, are falling into the trap of this racist smear campaign. Those black people who would

attend Farrakhan's meetings are not right wing but people looking for proposals and perspectives to advance the fight for Black rights in this country.

Debate and discussion, not bans, are what are required of the labour movement — no matter what is thought of Farrakhan's wrong and dangerous politics.

The deselection as councillor of Lester Lewis for making the invitation to Farrakhan to come and speak in Hackney is an attack on black people. It is not contributing to the



Lester Lewis: deselected

fight against false perspectives for fighting racism. It contributes to racism.

Wales LPYS conference

THE WALES regional LPYS conference took place last weekend and was considerably smaller than last year, with only 60 YS members in attendance. Despite the success of the school strike and the continuing youth radicalisation in the mining communities, the Wales LPYS has not grown in the past year.

The highlight of the conference was a debate on South Africa during which Hanis Bhamjee,

By Paul Davies, Newport East LPYS

secretary of Wales Anti Apartheid Movement, addressed the conference. He explained that the British labour movement was permeated with imperialism and racism, and that the YS's refusal to build the AAM was a reflection of this. 'Who are you to tell the South African people what they are fighting for? International solidarity is judged by what you can give.'

The LPYS counterposed the struggle to build a campaigning AAM fighting for one person one vote to the struggle to build socialism in South Africa and called only for direct links with South African workers. The Wales AAM secretary explained that if Labour Party youth wanted to build direct links they must do so through the official channels of the labour movement in Britain and through COSATU in South Africa. He called on the YS to join in the campaigning activity of Wales AAM.

At the end of the debate the *Militant* leadership of the LPYS in Wales was forced to concede. It called on all branches with resources to do so, to get involved in the local AAM groups.

In his report from the LPYS national committee Tony Wedlake said that the LPYS would support the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign. It is vital for YS branches throughout Wales, where most sacked miners have won reinstatement, to aid the national struggle of the NUM and attend the Justice demonstration and rally on 2 March. Only by turning YS branches out into the mass campaigns of youth in struggle against apartheid and against Tory repression can we stop the decline of Wales LPYS.

Youth Fightback

THE CAMPAIGN in support of Kingsley Abrams, black sections candidate for the LPYS place on the NEC, has posed every section of the LPYS with the question of how the YS can be transformed into a mass campaigning youth organisation. As Kingsley has said, the LPYS can only build and defend itself by beginning to support people in struggle — like the miners, black youth, and print workers — supporting the self-organisation of the oppressed, and by building an 'alliance for socialism' on this basis. *Youth Action*, a newspaper supported by a number of LPYS branches, has been strongly supporting Kingsley's campaign.

At its conference in December *Youth Fightback*, a paper supported by LPYS branches backed by *Socialist Organiser* and *International*, voted down, at the initiative of *Socialist Organiser*, a resolution to back Kingsley Abrams' campaign. *Youth Fightback* at the same conference adopted a draft programme drawn up by *Socialist Organiser*. Supporters of *International* voted against both the programme proposed by *Socialist Organiser* and to support Kingsley Abrams.

Since the December conference clear signs of tension have appeared in *Youth Fightback*. YS branches led by *International* supporters have nominated Kingsley. *Youth Fightback* supporters in the Southern region organised a fringe meeting at their regional LPYS conference on 8 February in support of Kingsley — despite the national position of the paper. *Youth Fightback* now look likely to rediscuss Kingsley's campaign again at their next editorial board meeting on 23 February.

But this raises a much more general question. Supporters of *International* have far more in common with *Youth Action* than they do with the type of politics put forward by *Socialist Organiser*. Surely they should draw the conclusion from the Kingsley Abrams' campaign that they should pull out of *Youth Fightback*, come into *Youth Action*, and help build a mass campaigning LPYS?



Wendy Savage on trial

'ONLY MRS Savage is on trial here,' Christopher Beaumont, chair of the Savage enquiry, has declared. But only a week into the four-week enquiry it appears that much more is at stake.

The enquiry is looking into the handling of five maternity cases. Charges against Savage are of 'gross mismanagement' and 'bizarre and incompetent practices well outside the accepted range of behaviour'.

Amongst the issues already raised have been whose property are patients files (three of the cases being used are of women who support Wendy Savage and oppose their cases being used against her) and the rights of patients to be consulted in their own treatment. Wendy's opponents claim that women in the throes of a difficult labour are not in any position to make decisions. She believes that women are intelligent enough to discuss the options.

More importantly, the enquiry raises the fundamental issues of obstetrics and the health

service. Is Britain to go the high-tech way of the US, where the caesarean rate is

By Leonora Lloyd

twice that of Britain?

The trend towards constant monitoring of the foetus has been shown by American researchers to put the emphasis on the baby rather than the mother. This leads inevitably towards caesareans, which are much more dangerous than vaginal births for the women.

Savage's head of department, Professor Grudzinskas, has said that he wanted her to 'consider a review of her many commitments', but so far in the enquiry no mention has been made of his and his male colleagues other commitments. Unlike Wendy they have private practices and spend much time planning to extend

these. They want to set up a private fertility clinic.

Their commitment to high-tech obstetrics and private medicine are connected in many ways. For example, foetal monitoring machines are expensive and very big business.

Wendy's 'heavy commitments' were mainly her patients. Unlike any of her other colleagues at the London Hospital, she saw all her patients and personally attended the difficult cases. She also ran the Tower Hamlets day-care abortion service, started by Professor Huntingford, as part of her commitment to women's choice in fertility.

Women have been campaigning for some years to regain control over their bodies and to have child birth seen as a natural function in a healthy woman not an illness. Under the best conditions some babies will be stillborn, others will die or be damaged at birth.

The enquiry has already shown that Wendy Savage's record is second

Bernie Grant speaks in Bristol

A MEETING of over 400 people was held on Wednesday 5 February by the Bristol West Labour Party and St Paul's Community Association. Its theme was 'Defending the black communities.'

The meeting was held in the heart of the St Paul's

By Peter McGahan, Bristol West LPYS

area of the city. The speakers were Bernie Grant, leader of Haringey council, Emerson Webster from the Cherry Groce Support Group, and Kuumba Balogun, chair of the St Paul's Community Association.

The media gave wide publicity to the meeting, but more important it was widely supported within the black community.

Kuumba set the tone of the meeting when he said: 'It's time for black people to address the situation they face themselves, rather than always reacting to events.'

Emerson Webster set out the background to the attack on Cherry Groce in Brixton — bad housing, 90

per cent youth unemployment systematic harassment by the police. He said 'the police are fast becoming judge, jury, and executioner.'

Bernie Grant received a warm welcome from the St Paul's audience. He began by attacking the racism of the press and establishment over the events in Tottenham.

Since 6 October in Tottenham, Grant said: 'There has been a virtual state of siege on Broadwater Farm.'

'The Broadwater Farm Youth Association's premises have been smashed up. Young kids of 10 and 12 are being arrested and held for up to 72 hours. Files are being kept on activists. Phone tapping is rife. Guns are being distributed to the police to intimidate people.'

Grant said a public inquiry should be set up to get to the truth of the events in Tottenham.

He called on black people to join the Labour Party and organise — linking up with those progressive forces in the forefront of the struggle against the racist system.



Wendy Savage: on trial for giving women an option

to none and that her practice is a victory for women-centred medicine and the NHS.

● The Savage enquiry is open to the public and is taking place at Addison

House, Old Street, London E1. Money is still needed for Wendy's cost in the enquiry and donations should be sent to: Tower Hamlets CHC, 23 New Road, E1.

Livingstone speaks in Derry

KEN LIVINGSTONE attended the annual **Bloody Sunday** rally in Derry at the end of January at Derry Sinn Fein's invitation. Below we reprint how *An Phoblacht/Republican News* reported the visit.

AT THE INVITATION of Derry Sinn Fein, Ken Livingstone, leader of the Greater London Council, made a weekend visit to the city before speaking at the annual Bloody Sunday rally on Sunday, 26 January. It was Livingstone's second visit to the six counties (his first to Derry) and the recently-endorsed Labour candidate for Brent East had his first taste of British rule in the North early on in this particular visit when he was held on Saturday 25 January, for almost an hour at a British army checkpoint at Burntollet Bridge.

As soon as he arrived in the city, Livingstone embarked on a walkabout tour of the Bogside and a very crowded Derry city centre with Sinn Fein elected representatives Martin McGuinness and Mitchel McLaughlin.

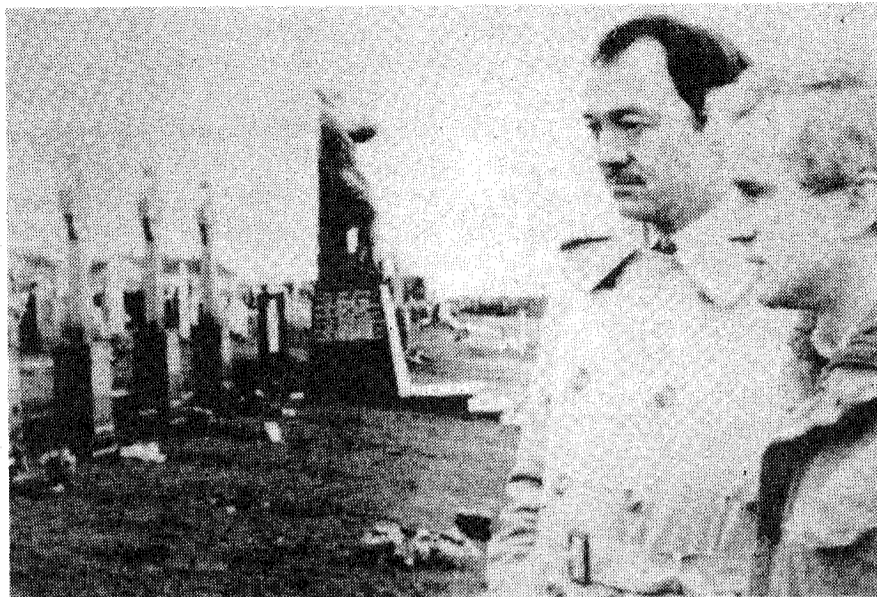
Displaying considerable knowledge of Derry already, the Labour Party councillor discussed some of the many social problems facing Derry with shoppers and local

people. He showed a keen interest in the plight of the residents of the Rossville Street Flats when he was shown around the complex. The tour of the city over, Livingstone then met several members of Derry Trades Council.

On Saturday night, Livingstone attended a local 'community forum', held in the Creggan Community Centre. The title of the debate was 'The Road from Bloody Sunday' and speakers were Paddy Logue (Sinn Fein), Bob Doyle (a former member of the IRA in the 1930s who fought with the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War) and Ken Livingstone.

Ken Livingstone described the significance of Bloody Sunday in the ending of his misconceived ideas about the role of the British army in Ireland and its impact on public opinion in Britain.

Livingstone pointed out that all Irish nationalists should be well aware of what he called 'the incredible shift of public opinion in Britain over the



last 15 years, especially since Bloody Sunday ... for there hasn't been an opinion poll in Britain in the last half a decade that hasn't shown the majority of British people in favour of withdrawal.'

Early on Sunday morning, the day of the commemoration, the GLC leader visited Creggan Cemetery and saw for himself the graves of the Bloody Sunday victims.

Before the march got

underway, Livingstone paid a short visit to Betty Anderson, mother of Martina Anderson, the Derry woman incarcerated along with Ella O'Dwyer in Brixton prison. Livingstone has repeatedly criticised the brutal regime of strip-searching in the jail and has also applied for a formal visit to the two women.

Before he left, Livingstone took part in an interview with Sinn Fein members (one of them the

son of Bloody Sunday victim Paddy Doherty), which will appear in the next issue of *Iris*.

The success of the visit can be measured by the reception Livingstone received. Everywhere he went the Labour councillor was instantly recognised. Derry people were greatly impressed by Livingstone's intimate knowledge of Irish history and his optimistic attitude towards British withdrawal.

Cook spills the beans

ROBIN COOK is Labour Party campaigns coordinator, and prominent in the LCC. His speech at a Socialist Society meeting on 2 February on 'The Next Labour Government' was therefore of some importance. It was the first time that a Labour Party leader, close to Kinnock, had openly proposed a change to the electoral system.

The first interesting aspect was that Cook explicitly attacked the 'softly-softly' approach taken by the party leadership over Westland. He particularly attacked the view that for Thatcher to be replaced by Walker, Hurd or Biffen would be a setback because Thatcher was unpopular and would lose votes at the election.

Cook argued 'the movement need a victory'. And even the limited one of getting Thatcher's head would encourage Labour

support. Cook argued that Thatcherism is unpopular.

By Paul Atkin

There are popular majorities in support of the welfare state, against the arms race, against privatisation, and people believe that the Tories are a threat to civil liberties.

But nevertheless Thatcher represents radical change. Labour had become the party of the post-war consensus. It was simply defending the

status quo without putting forward, for example, a positive alternative on the welfare state-based on accountability to those who use it.

Cook used this to argue that it was 'oppositionist conservatism' to demand the restoration of the pre 1979 trade union laws or the industries privatised by Thatcher.

Cook stated that it was necessary for the party to respond to new trends. He particularly singled out the ecology movement, and castigated the limits of the front bench's vision on this. Gerald Kaufman, when asked 'What about the green vote?' in the 1983 election had responded 'Fuck the green vote.'

Cook argued for a full blooded Labour ecological

programme which would break from the notion of 'the party of production.' Such a programme Cook argued, would require a wholesale winding down of the nuclear power industry, against trade union opposition, as well as rapid close down of nuclear weapons production.

But Cook explicitly stated and emphasised his difference with Kinnock on a key question. He argued openly there was unlikely to be a majority Labour government after the next election.

Reeling off the statistics — since late 1984, despite successes in the trade union political fund ballots and among youth (queues of youth are reported to be joining the

Labour party at Red Wedge concerts) — the Labour vote in poll after poll has been within 1½ per cent of 36 per cent. The volatility has been between the Tories and Alliance, but their aggregate vote has stayed within 1½ per cent of 62 per cent. In the local authority by-elections in the last year Labour has lost 33 seats and gained 37 — so there is no dramatic advance.

Therefore the most likely prospect for Cook was for a *minority* Labour government. While arguing against deals and coalitions with the Alliance Cook stated that such a minority government does not allow dramatic transformations from parliament.

He stressed the question of the Alliance. He said too many debates take place as though it didn't exist — which is like playing Hamlet without the prince. But Cook emphasised the difference between the Liberals and the SDP. He said that the Alliance was a 'dustbin vote' — people voting against Labour and the Tories. It was necessary to win over this vote with 'plausible, practical' policies.

According to Cook all this would pose the question of reform of election to parliament — not proportional representation exactly but something like the single transferable vote in individual constituencies — the system where voters number candidates and parties in order of preference when they vote.

Despite being Neil Kinnock's Campaign manager during the leadership contest, Cook does not always see eye to eye with his boss. It would therefore be interesting to know what other 'new thinking' is going on in LCC and Kinnockite circles.

Molesworth blockaded

LAST THURSDAY, 6 February, despite the snow, 4000 people responded to CND's call for a sit-down. **By Ben Armstrong** (Greenwich CND) blockade of Molesworth cruise missile site — successfully closing it for the day.

At the Cockbrook Lane gate, which building contractors normally use, musicians played the 'Fencebusters' tune while protesters danced to keep warm.

The Cambridgeshire police did not try to clear the entrances of protesters this time. Just before 3 o'clock everyone stood up for three minutes in symbolic silence.

Clearly there is still large scale opposition to NATO's plans to install 64 cruise missiles at Molesworth by 1988. CND must continue to oppose it.



IRELAND UNFREE

Maire O'Shea victory

THE SUCCESSFUL defence of Dr Maire O'Shea against charges of conspiracy to cause explosions, and her subsequent acquittal, is indeed a victory. It will cheer the hearts of every socialist fighting against injustice and repression directed at Irish activists. For Dr O'Shea the trial was the culmination of a year-long agony having been arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) at Xmas 1984.

Right up to the start of the trial the prosecution hadn't produced a clear case against her. It became

By Phil Rogers, Manchester LCI (personal capacity)

evident during the past three weeks that what case they did have had big holes in it.

O'Shea is a 66 year old psychiatrist, who suffers from a severe hip problem, curvature of the spine and an illness which means she falls asleep at times in public. This is someone who was supposed to be the brains behind a 'mad bombing campaign' in this country.

Her arrest however should have come as no surprise. It is no small coincidence that Dr O'Shea is president of the Irish in Britain Representation Group (IBRG), set up during the hunger strike of 1981. It is the first organised grouping of Irish people in this country to express their political demands. If Maire had been convicted, putting the IBRG president out of the way it would have served as a strong deterrent against Irish people organising.

To achieve this conviction the police mounted a massive operation during the trial. At the beginning and end of each day's session James Anderton's boys whisked the defendants in and out of the court in a convoy of siren-screaming police cars. A helicopter hovered ominously overhead throughout the proceedings. The estimated cost of this police operation was £100,000.

Throughout her year-long struggle against the force of the British state however, Maire O'Shea was not alone. She has worked in this country in the field of medicine and in the labour movement for over 30 years. And she has many friends. In April of last year a defence campaign was set up on her behalf. At its first meetings there were well over 100 people.

The lobbying, petitioning, defence costs fundraising, and demonstrating this committee was to undertake over the next eight months was to turn it into the most prominent campaign in defence of anyone arrested under the PTA. A demonstration in Birmingham attracted over 2000 people, with MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Christine Crawley addressing the rally.

The committee was broad-based. It encompassed the IBRG, LCI, medical and church organisations, Labour Parties, trades councils and most significantly, trade unions. This latter support was crucial. Maire is a member of ASTMS. Despite the leadership of her own union failing to implement the unanimous decision of its conference to support her, considerable rank and file action was organised mainly through Associated Staff for a United Ireland (an ASTMS caucus). Everyday throughout the trial, ASTMS delegates were present to observe and monitor the proceedings. Other trade union activity included the leadership of COHSE donating generously to the campaign.

Maire O'Shea's acquittal was not solely because of the flimsy evidence against her. Many people who oppose state oppression find themselves imprisoned on such evidence. Maire is free today because of good defence — inside and outside the court.

This campaign should not now be disbanded. On the contrary it should be deepened and taken right into the heart of the labour movement. Over 6000 people have been arrested under the PTA since it was introduced. Only 0.6 per cent of these have been convicted of any offence. The sole reason for retaining the PTA is to silence all political opposition to British policy in Ireland. Trade unions and the Labour Party must actively campaign for the scrapping of this repressive legislation.

The state of the left

SINCE THE end of the miners' strike the left wing of the labour movement has been clearly dividing into a number of currents.

The force that hit the headlines last year was the 'realigned' Kinnockite left. The touchstone of this current was support for Neil Kinnock's leadership of the party.

But as Kinnock moved progressively to the right — abandoning support for the miners, attacking the local councils, accepting mass unemployment, returning to bipartisanship on Ireland, and launching the witch-hunt — this left has found itself called upon to accept more and more unpalatable politics. Elements of a crisis have now developed among sections of it.

Some have gone along with Kinnock — *Tribune* handing progressively more of its columns over to witch-hunts. But others have been forced to take their distance from Kinnock on a number of questions.

By John Ross

The second force which has developed is a 'class struggle left', which emerged out of support for the miners' strike. This had its strongest bases in the leadership of the NUM in the strike and those who supported it, Women Against Pit Closures, and sections of the PLP. This left is probably most associated with the Campaign group. But since the end of the miners' strike it has widened out.

Support for the black section, for defending the black communities against the police attacks last autumn, supporting the struggle in Nicaragua and El Salvador, opposing the witch-hunt, opposing the Anglo-Irish Accord, supporting the campaign of the Women's Action Committee for shadow elections to the women's places on the NEC, active involvement in supporting all those engaged in struggle, are the features that have marked this left.

Since the end of last year the different components of this left have been increasingly tending to converge.

It has set out to determine the agenda of the party — putting forward positive proposals for action. It has also been notable for linking activity in Parliament to struggle outside it. Campaign group MPs have become relatively familiar figures at picket lines and in leading campaigns like Justice for the Mineworkers. It is a parallel process to the way, for example, Bernie Grant backed the black community in Tottenham.

The third current which has developed is a genuinely ultra-left one. This left takes as its stated goal not the fight against Thatcher but organising an 'anti-Kinnock left'.

Events since the end of the year have clearly moved in favour of the second of these currents — the class struggle/Campaign left. The Westland crisis has both shown that Thatcher, and her government, are vulnerable and revealed the failure of the Labour leadership to take advantage of it. Meanwhile an increasing policy shift to the right, and dissatisfaction in the party with it, has opened up greater possibilities for united action on the left. It gives the possibility to re-compose the movement around positive proposals for action, and policies, not around 'oppositional activity.'

SOCIALIST ACTION asked **TONY BENN** how he saw prospects in the coming year, after Westland, how he assessed the present state of the left, and what he saw as the role of the Campaign group.

The left in 1986

An interview with Tony Benn



Building from below

WESTLAND IS a very important turning point. But it's not only Westland. 1985 was a hard year for socialists. You had a period where the setback with the end of the miners strike created a great sense of disappointment and anxiety.

There was the beginning of what was called 'realignment' around the feeling that the local government battle could not be sustained.

At the Bournemouth conference the main news story was that the Labour leadership intended to eliminate what was known as the 'far left' — although the actual decisions of the delegates were excellent.

At the end of the year there were three or four articles by lobby correspondents — Hugo Young, Peter Jenkins, Peregrine Worsthorne, Brian Walden — all at the same time in December looking back and saying 'socialism had been defeated.' It was a minority cult, and it was finished.

Interestingly what began explicitly last May in a *New Socialist* article chronicling the supposed end of the old left, which was to be replaced by a new 'realigned left', was followed quickly

by the analysis, after Bournemouth, that in fact it was socialism that had disappeared, not a particular stream of thought.

Anyone would have been excused last year for feeling that it was a very hard grind and that we had to face a long period perhaps in the wilderness — before there was any prospect of a change. It was difficult to keep morale and spirit up.

But I think that pessimism was an illusion. Things were happening simultaneously that came to a head quite quickly at the turn of the year.

First it became apparent to a large number of people in the movement that policy in the Labour Party had been downgraded to the point where we were now just 'campaigning' — and campaigning meant polling, charts, illustrative arguments, and anti-Tory attacks. There was a serious lack of analysis, a lack of criticism. The policy vacuum became explicit.

Secondly people began to realise that the witch-hunt was a desperate move to undertake. You could no doubt make criticisms of anybody. But once you start to go for witch-hunts you go deeper and deeper into the mire. The Liverpool councillors were fac-

ed with the possibility of personal surcharge, bankruptcy, and disqualification. To add to that, just as they were going to court, a Labour commission of enquiry — with the possibility of expulsion and regular public denunciations — really mobilised a lot of people who were far from *Militant* in their thinking. They were not prepared to see good comrades vilified.

I think the attack on Bernie Grant, like the attack on Scargill, was seen as a signal by the movement. They thought 'this can't be right.' Here are comrades in a difficult situation and they're being hammered.

It became apparent that there was no end to it. The threat of expulsions goes far beyond the *Militant* tendency. There are now many constituencies and individuals around the country who are being witch-hunted by the right.

Devon Labour Briefing are under attack by the Exeter party. Walsall party has been suspended. St Helen's has been suspended and so on. You've seen the list in *Labour Witch Hunt News*. This created a great deal of unease.

The fact that the left did not respond personally in counter attack was very wise. It was very important that these events — the vacuum in policy, the witch-hunting of the left — should be allowed to be conducted without the normal press comment that this was really the left attacking the right. It was manifestly seen to be the right attacking the left. And the message got through to the constituencies.

Over and above that there was this mounting crisis which became known as the Westland affair. This was really a crisis with very deep roots, the nature of which has hardly been reported. I think all these things have combined to underline the need for the socialist analysis.

How do we fill this vacuum? A crisis in the system, a break up of the establishment between Europeans and Americans, a perception of parliamentary democracy as a cover for something quite different (which it is), a vacuum of policy, and a right wing attack upon the left. That is part of a big vacuum.

I think that the filling of that vacuum, by the left, is what needs to be done. Not attacking the leadership, not putting up a candidate, not splitting the party. Not to be drawn into this superficial idea that it's all against 'Thatcherism' which *Marxism Today* have been running.

That fills no gap at all because Thatcher may well be replaced. If things go wrong for her all these old analyses fall to one side.

The task is to fill the vacuum in the political system, that must be our prime task. Perhaps I can give examples of what I mean.

One area where I am working now is in a constituency. You take one area. You are not organising a new sect. You are working in a geographical area which happens to be the one I represent, and you work there.

What do you find when you develop that? You find that if you are doing the right things your membership quadruples. You find there are a lot of things you should have been doing which you haven't been doing.

We've started an international committee in Chesterfield. The Russian and American ambassadors have written to say they're prepared to supply senior officials for a sort of Chesterfield summit. There we will have a discussion about East-West relations under the auspices of the international committee.

Then we had the immensely important 'Aims and Objectives' discussion. There were four months of work, ten special meetings of the wards, two



special general councils, forty nine amendments, a hundred and sixty five speeches. This is a declaration we are sending to every constituency in the country saying 'you might like to consider doing the same'.

We're not trying to organise people around us. We say 'we found this satisfying, you might like it. Here's our draft which you might find is a trigger. That is vacuum filling in a way that is entirely non-personal. Nobody talk about expelling anybody, attacking anybody, or putting anybody on a pedestal.

It is saying to people 'this is what is happening, this is what we believe in, this is what we can do.' It is an attempt to recreate the socialist tradition within the party, which is there and which has got to be rediscovered. Its like excavation, and a whole generation has learned its relevance through the miners strike.

The miners strike and the extent which, by its nature, the decisions had to be decentralised during it, was amazing. Not just in terms of the picketing, but in terms of organisation.

The Kent miners were in London for a year. Terry French was one of them. Terry Harrison was another. They, and many others — especially the women — became political organisers on a formidable scale.

People like that went back and you meet them everywhere. The discovered skills and capacities that they never thought they had. That is still there.

For the moment it is held back in the case of the miners by the awful setback of March 1985. But they are still there. The women's organisations developed what the movement was capable of doing in an enormous way.

Militancy is also spreading up the salary scale to include the teachers and the nurses. What is happening is that trade unionism, and the structure of trade unionism, is changing in the light of people's experience.

Hobsbawm is right of course, when he says there are fewer people in overalls — in the classic manufacturing working class. But there are more and more people who are becoming dependent upon collective strength to protect themselves. As there is the company merger movement, as you get the new technology coming into areas like banking, there will be renewals and revitalisation of trade unionism. What it will come the new waves of black representation and pressure for women's demands to be met.

Nothing happens automatically. We must be explicit in supporting it. In the Labour Party it is very important that we are absolutely uncompromising in our support for black sections and women's rights — and similarly in the trade union movement. This is despite some funny lip-ups, with some left groups in the party thinking that this is a diversion in liberal direction away from class towards sex and colour, or towards Irish nationalism.

I disagree with this. I think the demands of the Women's Action Committee must be strongly supported —

The Campaign group



particularly support its campaign of shadow elections at the women's conference for women's places on the national executive. I think the black section and its demands must be supported. The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights also must be taken forward. Women Against Pit Closures showed the way for everybody. Don't wait for anybody. Do it yourself.

I think all these are an investment in a future change in Britain on a very important scale.

There has also been a renewal of political trade unionism linked to this.

The campaigns that went on quietly about the political ballot were extremely important. There has been a renewal down the line which hasn't penetrated at any noticeable level in the TUC general council. It is waiting, but it will only come to life when people think that there is a prospect of it producing short term results. This is important because there was a headlong retreat among many trade unions up to the point of the ballots.

You can go back to 1959. Then the emphasis was on Gaitskell and Clause 4 being abandoned. But actually non-political trade unionism was devastating.

The argument was that we didn't want any connection between politics and trade unionism. If there is an industrial dispute keep out, that was the philosophy. We don't want Members of Parliament, Labour people, interfering in our disputes. In the end that contributed to the defeat of the steel workers and other unions.

In the end I fear some of the trade union leaders did become generals without troops because they didn't actually provide political education.

With *In Place of Strife* Wilson tried to separate Labour and the unions. Wilson and TUC general secretary Woodcock both felt that the other was an embarrassment.

Wilson felt the trade union link was an embarrassment for him — as he was now the leader of the 'natural party of government'. Woodcock regarded the Labour Party as nothing whatever to do with trade unionism, the trade unions were 'all party'.

That philosophy of trade unionism has been exposed and found wanting. So the TUC general council have been weakened — automaticity in election to the general council weakened them still further politically. But then two things happened.

First you had the miners strike. That, without any doubt, began to recreate the old trade unionism. It didn't extend to everybody but you could see what it meant and there was a real example of it. This consolidated other groups. It was political, it was courageous, it was respected.

Then you had the political ballots. The outcome was staggering. I would never have thought a year back that there would have been the prospects of the results we have seen. Underneath there is a new awareness among trade unionists.

Look at the teachers — who are not affiliated to the Labour Party. They're fighting a very tough and successful battle, and there is a realisation that it is political.

Then in the trade unions there are the broad lefts. Of course they represent different groups. But I do see a new wave of political leadership coming through the trade union movement which is more democratic in character, which is more radical in thought. I think that wave has to work its way through.

We have to work with everyone who is fighting, and the party has to be built up from the bottom. It cannot trickle down from the top any longer. There is a vacuum at the top of the general council as, for example with their extraordinarily uncritical support for the Manpower Service Commission and the Youth Training Scheme.

You've got to do it from the bottom up — and working with the new social forces.

The second area of my work is in the Campaign group. The Campaign group is not sectarian, nor is it trying to line people up according to one ideology. We are based on the idea that the Labour Party has always believed there is a parliamentary aspect of its work, and we are trying to do that.

We work with people outside, we have people in, we operate with them.

We've got the miners to start with. There will be a huge miners meeting held in the Albert Hall on 2 March. We're doing all we can there. We're helping the tin miners. We're helping the Murdoch workers fight the struggle at Wapping for example.

Campaign group members went to Wapping. We've had Sean Geraghty come to talk to us about it.

We are also preparing a series of Bills. Later this year there will be a book published called *Legislating for Socialism* containing the texts of the Bills we've been working on.

We've done one on nuclear bases, we've done one on justice for the miners, we've got one on local authorities, we've got one on the land, we've got one on sexual equality, there is the Reform Bill introduced last summer.

These are all Bills which show simply and modestly, without oversimplification, what structural changes would be needed if the labour movement was to have a Commons majority.

I think that work is useful. The annual report of the Campaign group, which will be published shortly, lists hundreds of meetings, hundreds of delegations, all of which we've been at.

Local Campaign groups are growing. The annual report will publish the 'Aims and Objectives' of the Campaign group — which will be very similar to those of the Chesterfield ones.

We're saying two things about these groups. We want them to be open and non-sectarian. We don't want one group to capture a Campaign group in a particular area and use it for its own purpose. It must be genuinely open to all the left.

Secondly they must be genuinely democratic with proper elections and so on.

On that basis, local Campaign groups as an open and democratic part of the network of the left, will grow. They are growing. They are non-sectarian. They are active. They do fill the gap and the vacuum. I think anyone who does those things has got a potential audience — I don't think there is any group that can do it by itself.

You can see the way things grow at the bottom, are expressed in some way actively at the parliamentary level, and are spreading out into the trade unions.

It's not just that the Labour Party failed, the left failed too. The left went off in its own way with some of its sectarian excesses. It failed to do the work. It thought perhaps it was all too easy. It thought it could all be dealt with by disposing of individuals and replacing them with other individuals. There was a vacuum in the left that had to be filled.

When you look ahead to this years conference we ought to be beginning to put forward with determination the demands we make, not focussing everything on what we can persuade the leadership to put into the manifesto.

When I came to your 'Alliance for

Socialism' conference I emphasised that we shouldn't be too worried about the promises made. What we should be clear about is the demands we are making. Promises depend on twisting somebody else's arm to get them to say what you want them to say. Demands are what we want and those who make them not working by proxy. We are doing it ourselves. I think these demands will be building by conference.

Though I have never played any part in what is loosely termed 'sectarianism', I've always had a great respect for people who sit and think about socialism, because I think the future belongs to socialism. Therefore anybody who's got anything to say about socialism, from a principled position, I'm interested in.

The so-called realignment of 1985, was painful personally because a lot of people I'd worked with closely were explicitly involved with it.

But when I looked very hard at what it was about, and at the people who were declaring for that, I found that there wasn't as much substance in it as I thought.

First of all they tended to justify it on the grounds that you had to relate to the new leader. The whole thing was about your attitude to the new leader.

But I've never thought that that was what politics was about. Once you start positioning yourself politically in relation to somebody else who happens to occupy a particular position, you have in some deep and fundamental sense abandoned real analysis.

You say 'well I'm more critical than he or she is', 'he or she is more critical than I am', but 'despite my criticism I stand in this relationship to someone else. That is really lining up in a supporting actor's role, which I don't think is what we're about.

Also, having seen all this happen before over many years, I came to the conclusion that people who realign themselves on that basis tend very quickly to find that they haven't got a lot to say. I can't say that out of the so-called realigned left of 1985 I've seen much substance emerging.

I've seen a lot of substance from Chesterfield, I've seen a lot of substance from the Campaign group, I've seen a lot of work going on by teachers, hospital workers, miners and so on but I haven't seen a lot come out of the 'realigned left'. That was, on their part, a false step.

Some may want to think again. I don't think that personal rows at any stage have got anything whatever to do with creating a winning alliance. If you want an alliance you've got to work with all sorts of people and I believe that you should.

At the same time there will have to be some rethinking. Because I don't believe that the so called realigned left has actually been in a position to offer very much except pages of evidence against *Militant*. If that's what they want that's up to them but I don't think its a very positive contribution personally.

Remember that at the moment the major factor in British politics is fear and hopelessness. It is encouraged by Thatcher and by some of the left who argue that Labour will always betray.

The only way to defeat these arguments is to present some real vision of the future and fight for it consistently.



THE STRUGGLE in South Africa has given rise to a wide ranging debate, and taking of positions, throughout the entire international labour movement.

One organisation which has taken a position on this struggle is international organisation founded by Leon Trotsky. We are printing below the resolution adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on South Africa. Articles by the Labour Party, the ANC, COSATU, and other organisations have been carried in previous issues of Socialist Action.

1. The new rise in struggles in South Africa falls into the framework of the general crisis of imperialist domination, opening a new front which could increase the difficulties of the imperialist counter offensive including in Central America. The South African mass movement had already been stimulated by the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Angola and Mozambique. Today the struggles against apartheid constitute the most advanced form of the anti-imperialist struggles in the whole of Black Africa. The new wave of popular mobilisations in South Africa constitute an element of first importance for all anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world. The imperialist governments and big capital have all recognised the danger and are each seeking to close the breach that is opening in South Africa.

The place of South Africa in the counter-revolutionary system of imperialism is considerable, as are imperialism's economic interests in this country. The South African regime remains the strong arm of imperialism in Southern Africa, and has even contributed to arming the dictatorships in Latin America. The important place that a revolutionary upsurge in South Africa could hold in the future is the product of all these factors.

2. There has been an important change in the political situation in South Africa with the explosion of the present revolt. The process began over a year ago, with first the education boycotts by high-school and university students, the boycott of the sham elections proposed by Botha for the Indian and Coloured communities, the miners strike in September 1984, and then the stayaway (general strike) in the Transvaal in November 1984.

This period has been marked by many workplace conflicts, the workers going into struggle on wage demands, demands for improvement in working conditions or in defence of trade-union rights or against sackings.

The present upsurge of activity and radicalisation is marked by a more and more direct link between a series of struggles that each involve different social sectors of the oppressed masses: youth, workers, township dwellers.

This same tendency towards unity is also noted at the level to which the struggle has broken through ethnic compartmentalisation that the regime has striven to establish through the apartheid laws, introducing divisions among the oppressed by classifying them into distinct racial categories.

This desire for unity on the part of the oppressed population is not yet however sufficient to overcome all the racial and ethnic prejudices that the apartheid system has succeeded in introducing among the masses. This situation remains the product of a division of the population in social and working life, and in their place of residence.

But the process underway represents a considerable political advance and seriously destabilises the organisation of racial segregation, the basis of the present regime. In the framework of the new relationship of



Fourth International position on South Africa

forces, the reform proposals put forward by Botha in the end satisfied neither the masses nor imperialism.

One of the key moments of this tendency towards unity in action was the stayaway in the Transvaal in November 1984, where among other things a united front was established, including the independent trade unions and the UDF. This strike particularly showed up the growing importance of the workers' movement through its trade unions, without which no action of such a scale would be possible. The imminent formation of a unitary federation bringing together the majority of the independent unions will be an event of considerable importance which can only encourage the activity of the Black working class.

All this illustrates the level of development already attained by the mass movement. Two main forms of organisation have particularly developed since 1980 on complementary fronts: community associations organising people in their place of residence; and non-racial independent trade unions which now organise a substantial section of the Black (non-white) working class. It is the problem of combining these two forms of organisation of the movement that must be resolved in order to pass to a higher stage in the confrontation with the regime. The real and effective unification of the different forms of organisation in the popular movement has not been able to be realised either in the UDF or ANC.

The present level of popular struggle poses urgently the question of self-defence of the masses, and initiatives taken on this question, so that the potential for offensive combat by the mass movement can emerge. The present lack of response to these questions is already a problem for the

development of mass mobilisations.

The struggle for emancipation, which has just experienced a new upsurge, will therefore be a long and complex struggle. Its outcome will depend, among other things, on the result of the political orientations on tactical and strategic questions which will be adopted on the basis of the present experiences.

3. In fact, the radicalisation of the mass movement and the political objectives that it is taking on have brought to the forefront the political differences and strategic debates that divide the different currents and organisations within it. On tactical questions, as on the long-term objectives, there are different orientations within the mass movement.

Among the currents existing, there is first of all the ANC which has mass support in certain sectors of the mass movement, particularly in the civic associations, and which enjoys a wide audience beyond its organisational network. There is also Black Consciousness, and particularly AZAPO. Among the main organised currents one should also include certain churches, members of the World Council of Reformed Churches, that have a specific political practice and have an active, militant base. Finally, the leaderships of certain of the principal unions act independently in the mobilisations by following their own perspectives and appear as political forces in their own right in the present political diversity.

The South African workers' movement is the product of modifications in the social structure of the country following the industrialisation process of the 1960s. The importance of the industrial proletariat in

the struggles ahead is thus first of all the product of its numerical reality and its degree of concentration, that is its social weight in South African society. During the last period the Black working class has proved its capacity to introduce its own methods of action and organisation into the struggle against the apartheid system, having forged its first weapons in the struggle around economic demands and for trade-union rights.

4. The present struggle in many ways started on democratic and national demands, but not exclusively. The oppressed masses want to get out from under the yoke of the racist state, they want an egalitarian, democratic and non-racial state. They demand universal suffrage without discrimination of any sort, under the slogan 'one person, one vote'. The immense majority of the layers of the oppressed Black population is interested in the realisation of these democratic demands. But already, at this stage of the mobilisation, demands have come forward in the workers' struggles directed to the bosses and the state that clearly link the question of apartheid to that of capitalist domination.

The reason for this combination lies in the interwoven history of capitalism and racist institutions in this country. Apartheid is an instrument of racial domination but it is also a way of guaranteeing a specific exploitation of the workforce. Apartheid is the specific form that capitalist exploitation has taken in this country. And that has immediate consequences in the way in which the workers' movement identifies its class enemies, including in the democratic and national struggles.

It is true that from a certain point

of view apartheid is full of contradictions for certain sectors of capitalism (limited domestic market, lack of qualified workforces, etc.) But today it is the direct danger of revolutionary explosion that has forced a section of the South African ruling class to try to introduce reforms. The liberals, who are essentially supported by a section of the South African finance and industrial capital, have thus embarked on the course of trying to find a political solution by meeting the ANC or trying to moderate the UDF. But precisely because of the link between capitalism and apartheid they are incapable of proposing the abolition of all discriminatory laws and the introduction of universal suffrage. Their attempt at reform will not for the moment go beyond the federative proposals that deliberately ignore the popular hope for a single non-racial nation. In the last instance, the real compromise that the liberals will have to make will be that which they will make with the rest of their class, that is, the reactionary sectors today represented by the National Party.

The new situation in South Africa has a worldwide importance, given the strategic importance of this country for imperialism and the scope of the economic interests. Up until now, imperialism had unflinchingly supported the racist regime. The new situation requires certain political rectifications in order to find a solution to the present crisis. Certain sectors of the banks and multinationals have undertaken to put pressure on the South African regime through a number of financial and commercial mechanisms. The immediate scope of these sanctions should not hide the fact that the imperialist countries fundamentally seek the stability of the capitalist regime in South Africa, and want to avoid a radicalisation of the present movement. To achieve this, they rely more and more on the liberal currents and South African big capital.

5. For all these reasons, the South African revolutionary process will be in line with the social, economic and political reality of the country, that is, the reality of its class structure, which gives the industrial proletariat a central role in unifying the oppressed masses in the struggle against apartheid. The popular movement strives above everything else to liquidate the apartheid regime through the formation of a single non-racial nation, through the question of equal civil and political rights, and through the land question.

While we must pay the greatest attention to the immediate struggle for these demands which are in the interests of all the oppressed, it is nevertheless decisive that the workers' movement should furnish the mass movement with its leadership. The strengthening of the workers' movement and the construction of a recognised revolutionary proletarian leadership are thus necessary tasks to prevent the present struggles ending in stalemate or dead end, without even having been able to meet the main democratic demands. A proletarian leadership will be the only guarantee that the democratic and national questions are fully resolved. The real, complete solution to these questions can only be carried out by the dictatorship of the proletariat as the decisive point in a process of permanent revolution. Even if certain socialist tasks must wait for later, only the dictatorship of the proletariat is capable of fulfilling and defending the demands of the national democratic revolution. This is possible in South Africa because the social and political relations existing in the country are ready to bring the proletariat to power at the head of the oppressed and exploited masses.

Politics and trade unions in South Africa

In our next issue DODIE WEPPLER takes issue with the article 'The politics of COSATU' which appeared in Socialist Action in January.

International

Haiti: Baby Doc flees

THE DUVALIER family, for 30 years dictators of Haiti, has fled the country, driven out by its people. Power now lies uneasily in the hands of General Henri Namphy and a five-member military council — long term associates of the Duvalier dictatorship.

By Alan Freeman

Meanwhile Haitians are extracting long awaited justice from the Tontons Macoutes — Duvalier's personal militia, through whose indiscriminate and vicious barbarity he and his father have clung to power since 1957. Members of the Tontons Macoutes were reported to be fleeing and abandoning their uniforms.



Baby Doc Duvalier

By the time the news spread last Friday that 'Baby Doc' Duvalier had fled, he had already surfaced with 50 of his entourage at the Talloires holiday resort on the boundaries of France and Switzerland. Throughout last week he had been discreetly seeking 'asylum' in at least 20 countries including Argentina, Greece, Paraguay, and Nigeria. Haiti immediately went into a delirium of celebration. 'The whole nation appeared to erupt with joy,' reported journalist Simon Hoggart. 'The people poured through the streets, dancing, waving, chanting, singing, embracing one another and waving branches of greenery which had become the symbol of their liberation.'

Violent retribution began rapidly against the Tontons. A law unto

themselves, the Tontons were the Duvalier family's private terror machine. They are closely tied in with local business interests who use them as a cross between the mafia and a personal goon squad.

Attack

Crowds rapidly attacked any Tontons in sight and began looting and sacking stores and supermarkets belonging to business people associated with them. The Tontons have been retaliating, and the army has declared a curfew. But if the army defends them too vigorously such small popularity as it possesses will soon evaporate. The United States is pushing forward the army as the guarantors of the situation. Troops moved rapidly to try and protect the

Tontons, and acts of violence by the army against the people are increasing.

General Namphy has chosen an ex-Tontons head as Interior Minister and rules out election for five years.

Poorest

Haiti, with six million inhabitants, is said to be the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Seventy-seven per cent earn less than \$150 a year. But it has a long tradition. In 1808 it threw off the slave-owning colonial French yoke and established the modern world's first independent black republic. The long struggle for independence was organised by Toussaint L'Ouverture.

Haiti has been a



playground of the USA since the beginning of this century. Papa Doc took power with their blessing and when he died in 1971 they sent a war ship, the *Guadalcanal*, to Port of Prince just to make sure this guardian of western democracy could pass the succession safely on to his son 'Baby Doc'.

Salted

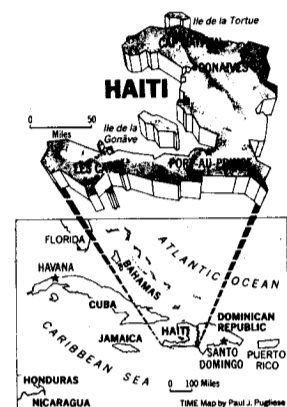
Since then US aid had risen to \$54 million a year. The US government was fully aware that most of this was salted away in foreign bank accounts and foreign property holdings by Duvalier. In a country where illiteracy is around 90 per cent, and where malnutrition and disease is rife, Duvalier spent \$3 million on his wedding and his wife Michele chartered Concorde to fly to Paris for shopping expeditions for furs.

Unrest

The United States only became concerned about the excesses and oppression of the Duvalier regime when widespread unrest against the dictatorship began to rise over the last few years. By the end of last year it had developed into rioting and mass demonstrations against Duvalier. The US then decided to step in and remove the dictator in an attempt to keep opposition

within pro-capitalist channels, rather than risk the type of upheaval which

America and the Caribbean has become a decisive goal of US foreign policy.



took place in Nicaragua or Grenada, or which is developing in the Philippines. Stability in Central

Initially there are reports of popular support for the United States role. But the US has nothing to offer Haiti. While Duvalier has gone, those who surrounded him dominate the government which remains. The Tontons Macoutes are being dismantled by the people but those who had links with them remain the rulers of Haiti. But Haitian people have conquered an invaluable extension of their right to begin to organise and fight.

The flight of Duvalier is likely to be the beginning of the drama in Haiti, not its end.

The Black Jacobins



CLR James masterpiece on Haiti's struggle for independence: How the slaves of France created the first black republic in the world.

Available from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Price £4.95 plus 52p p&p.

Nicaragua debates abortion

ARTICLES IN *Barricada*, the Sandinista newspaper, have sparked off an intense debate on abortion in Nicaragua. Abortion is still illegal. The only exception is a 'therapeutic' abortion for which the women must get approval from a three-doctor ethics committee and permission from her husband or parent. The law dates back to the Somoza government.

The *Barricada* articles began in November last year, exposing the fact that many Nicaraguan women are dying from backstreet abortions or suffering permanent injury. Most are working class women: only those with money can afford safe private clinics.

Since the articles appeared there has been discussion in *Barricada*, in the two other dailies — *El Nuevo Diario* and *La Prensa* — and in many of the mass organisations.

Policy

Arguing in favour of legal abortion in the 9 December issue of *Barricada* Commander Doris Tijerino, a FSLN leader and national police chief, said the current law restricted women's civil rights. 'As a woman, I think the law making abortion a crime ought to

be changed,' she said. 'But to arrive at new legislation, a broad educational campaign on this question must be carried out first.' She said the police would not prosecute women who had abortions.

The catholic church, which is very influential and still has a large following, released a statement in mid-December titled 'Thou shalt no kill'. It accused women who have abortions of murder, and supported the existing law

The statement also committed the archdiocese to a battle against birth control, which is legal. The abortion plague, it said, begins with letting women use contraceptives. This was prominently featured in the capitalist-controlled *La Prensa*, which also ran a series on the 'abortion is

murder' theme.

More sophisticated or confused arguments against abortion included a column in *El Nuevo Diario* by Gaspar Calderon. Calderon argued the Sandinistas should not legalise abortion because the idea came from the capitalist world along with other 'extreme feminisms'.

'If we establish in Nicaragua an abortion law like those in countries that are "advanced and progressive" — and also bourgeois and oppressive,' the column said, 'then there's no need for a Sandinista revolution ... we shouldn't let bourgeois countries dictate the stance of the revolutionaries.'

A *Barricada* staff writer, Elsa Gomez, also ran a column on the paper's editorial pages which called for massive resources to be put into housing, child care, education and services as an alternative to legal abortion.

Other writers have echoed the view that abor-



Comandante Tijerino, pro-abortion police chief

tion is primarily the consequence of poverty, and not an issue of women's rights.

Both Calderon's views and Gomez's arguments have attracted considerable opposition. One of the several women who wrote to *El Nuevo Diario* to contradict Calderon pointed out that in North America, abortion was under vicious attack from the right wing, with Reagan's support.

True

Arguing against Gomez and other opponents of legalisation who support the revolution, a group of nurses, interviewed in *Barricada*, in-

insisted that abortion was an issue of political right.

'In the course of the revolution,' said Sagrario Carvajal, a head nurse at a clinic, 'women have won the right to work, to be in combat, and in addition, we bring up the children. Why are we denied the right to decide about our own bodies? We're the ones who want to decide how many children we want to have.'

Row

The issue is clearly deeply divisive, including within the working class, which is one of the reasons the Sandinista leadership has refrained from raising it frontally. AMNLAE has still not taken a public position. However Maria Lourdes Bolanos, a member of its legal office, gave an interview to *Barricada* in which she said: 'Out of fear an error was made. The more general problems of the revolution were always pushed to the fore, and the problem of abortion was put on the back burner. We've always said that the laws of the past were class-biased ... but now we're putting aside abstract generalities and taking up a concrete problem.'



US Budget: guns not butter

President Reagan's proposed 1987 budget, which is about to be submitted to Congress, calls for an increase in military spending from \$286.1 billion to \$320.3 billion. Overall spending is projected to fall from \$994 billion to \$850.4 billion. Proposed cuts include food stamps, welfare, agricultural spending and federal assistance to states for health care, pollution controls, rail services and highway maintenance.

Reagan is fighting, against Senate and Congress opposition, to raise aid to the Nicaraguan contras to \$100 million, and to increase backing for South African-backed anti-government guerrillas in Angola. Jonas Savimbi, their leader, has just returned from a red-carpet reception in Washington with a promise of a minimum \$10 million covert aid.

Spain: Benn to address anti-NATO protest

Tony Benn is to address a series of meetings in the Spanish state organised by the Madrid anti-NATO commission.

The socialist government, according to a recent poll in *El Pais*, a left liberal daily newspaper, is in danger of losing its referendum on NATO which is scheduled for 12 March. 39 per cent said they were against staying in NATO and only 21 per cent in favour.

A further problem for the government is the right-wing parties' decision to call on its supporters to boycott the referendum. The right is in favour of NATO but against holding a referendum because, they say, parliament already decided the issue in 1982.

Hungarian, Austrian joint protest halted

Hungarian police have broken up a joint Austrian-Hungarian protest against the Gabcikovo Nagymaros dam complex in Northern Hungary. The protest was one of the first to involve activists from both sides of the Austro-Hungarian border. About 100 people took part including 60 from Austria.

The Hungarian government had ceased work on the dam, which environmentalists and Greens oppose, but last November the Austrian government announced it would lend Hungary £350 million to continue.

Earlier last year mass protests of up to 40,000 people swept Austria against a proposed new hydroelectric power installation in some of the country's most beautiful natural forest areas east of Vienna.

Justice for sale

Privatisation in the USA is being taken to its ultimate extreme. Its prisons are being sold off.

Correction Corp. of America was formed in 1983, in close association with Jack Massey who built the Kentucky Fried Chicken empire, and Hospital Corp of America, the USA's largest private hospital chain.

CCA already runs three detention centres for illegal immigrants in Tennessee, and a workhouse in Chattanooga. It now wants to build another work group and a maximum-security prison.

One objection from Tennessee's pinko liberals is that the owners of private prisons have a vested interest in increasing the number of criminals.

Saying of the week

The US played a constructive role in providing transportation so that Baby Doc and his retinue could leave with him. I think we could play a comparable constructive role in the Philippines — Congressman Steven Solarz, interviewed on *World at One*.

Reviews

Nelson Mandela

SOUTH AFRICA's black majority doesn't have the right to vote, but Nelson Mandela is undoubtedly the country's most popular leader. Mary Benson's newly published biography of Mandela, called simply *Nelson Mandela*, explains why Mandela has become such an international symbol of the determination and commitment of all those fighting for a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Reviewed by Doreen Wepler

The book relies on interviews with Mandela before he went to prison in 1962 and a wealth of more recent material from his comrades, as well as his own works, including his detailed evidence at both the famous treason trial in 1956 and at the trial of the Rivonia defendants in the early 1960s. Above all, Benson has drawn from the autobiography of Winnie Mandela, *A Part of My Soul*.

It all adds up to an inspiring account of the life and evolving political views of a leader whose stature and authority increases with every day the Botha regime keeps him and his comrades in prison. But the book is a must for everyone who wants to see the end of apartheid rule in South Africa on another count.

Because Mandela's story cannot be separated from that of his people's struggle, this biography offers an overview of the history of the African National Congress itself: from its founding in 1912 right up to the leadership role it has won in the anti-apartheid struggle today.

Nelson Mandela opens with his early life as part of the royal family of the Thembu people, when Mandela was being groomed as a tribal chief. His decision to escape from an arranged marriage and move to Johannesburg when he was 22 years old marks the beginning of a new stage in his

life.

There he meets up with an old school mate, Oliver Tambo, and together they eventually decide to join the African National Congress — something encouraged by his new acquaintance, Walter Sisulu. However none of these 'young Turks', as they and their comrades were called, were happy with the ANC as it existed.

With other young activists, they formed a Youth League which became recognised by the ANC. Through this youth organisation, they set out to change the direction of the ANC from a rather conservative talking-shop into a powerful mass liberation movement.

The book recounts how, as these young leaders went through a number of deep experiences in struggle, their political views began to evolve. For instance, as Mandela later recounted, he recognised the power and indispensable role of black workers in the liberation struggle when he witnessed the 70,000 strong miners strike in 1946. Equally, after working with Indian activists during the successful work stoppage on May Day in 1950, the Youth League leaders began to appreciate the need for the oppressed black majority to make alliances in its fight for freedom.

A particularly interesting area covered by

NELSON MANDELA

THE AUTHORITATIVE AND MOVING LIFE STORY OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT LEADERS — ANTHONY SAMPSON



MARY BENSON

the book is the evolution of Mandela's views from a 'go it alone' Africanism to agreement with the principle of non-racialism. As Mandela put it, it was the system, not whites as such that should be the target for their attack. Through the experience of struggle these young leaders saw 'what had always been ANC policy: an absolute rejection of racialism, white or black'.

It wasn't an easy conclusion to draw. But as Mandela and his comrades clarified that their goal was fighting for political power then they saw the need to unite all those oppressed by the apartheid state. Only after much controversy did the basic policy statement of the Youth League state that: 'the different racial groups have come (to South Africa) to stay. But we insist that a condition for inter-racial peace and progress is the abandonment of white domination, and such a change in the basic structure of South African society that those relations which breed exploitation and human misery will disappear.'

None of these youth who, eventually came to form a leadership team in the ANC itself, forgot their roots. They correctly insisted on, and took pride in, the leadership role blacks would play in the struggle. These origins no doubt helped the ANC to reach

of a whole new generation of leaders that developed from the Soweto struggles. Steve Biko's decision to join the ANC before his untimely death at the hands of the apartheid state pre-dated the more recent decision by the ANC to integrate onto its leadership new young leaders drawn from this stage of the struggle.

But the evolution of Mandela's views on black nationalism is only a small part of this book. It covers many other aspects of the freedom struggle in South Africa.

For instance, if you want to understand why the Freedom Charter has such widespread support today, then the book tells its history — the campaign which led to its adoption, with real roots in the struggle of South Africa's oppressed peoples. In the face of the South African propaganda machine, if you need the facts about the ANC's evolving views on armed struggle, then this book will help you.

Nelson Mandela is an 'overview' book. If you haven't read much about South Africa, this will direct your reading. It is very much a companion volume to *Part of My Soul*. Taken together — and there is a considerable overlap — they provide two good sources of inspiration that is bound to get readers actively committed to the fight against apartheid rule in South Africa.

Nelson Mandela, Mary Benson, Penguin Books, 1986, £2.50

Nicaraguan ballet comes to London

The Ballet Folklorico Nacional de Nicaragua is to visit London for the first time ever from 11-22 February this year. They will be performing at the Shaw Theatre, Camden. The visit is arranged in association with the GLC.

The National Folk Ballet of Nicaragua was formed in 1971 by its current artistic director, Ronald Abud Vivas, who has researched the cultural and folk traditions of Nicaragua. The songs and dances which will be performed by the company convey that history, the mixed cultures of the Indian population and the influence of the Spanish conquerors of the sixteenth century.

Since the revolution in 1979, the folk ballet company has flourished, becoming professional in 1983. In Nicaragua it performs regularly in schools and factories and for the people's militia.

Among the artists appearing on the London visit, is Carlos Mejia Godoy, a leading member of the FSLN and a

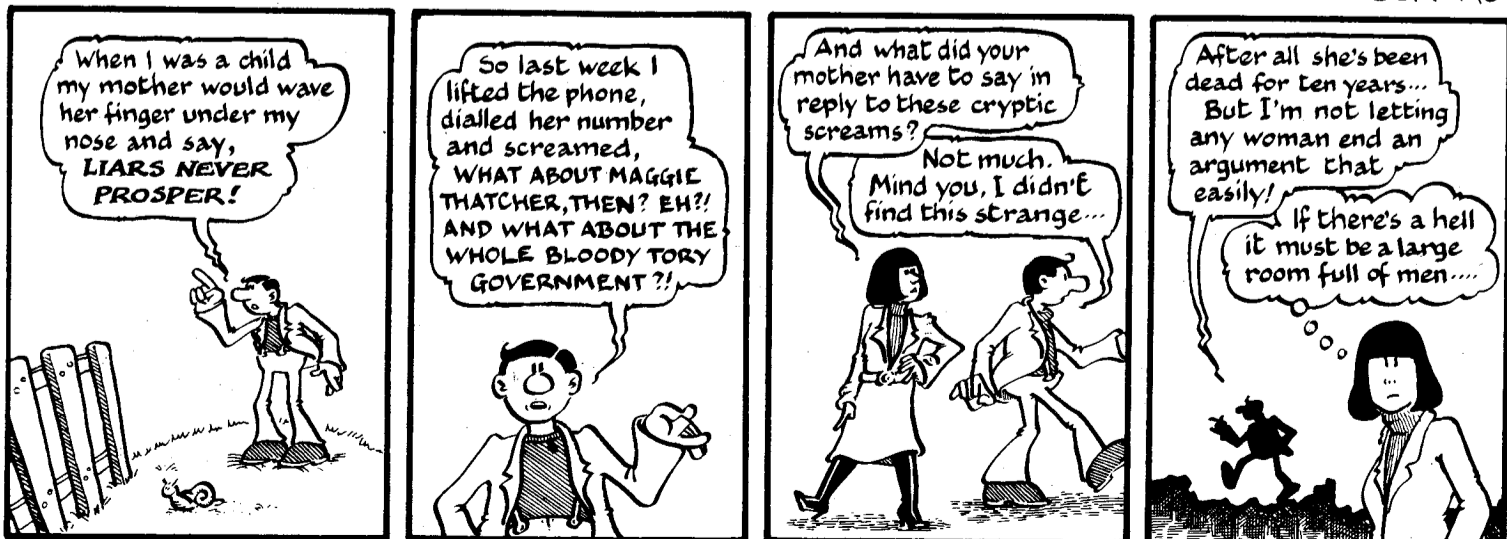
member of the Nicaraguan national assembly, where he represents the Nicaraguan Cultural Workers Association. His popular songs of Nicaragua, which were influential during the revolution, are known throughout the world. During the February performances at the Shaw Theatre, Nicaraguan coffee and rum will be on sale in the foyer. There will also be a photographic display on the country and its people.

Ballet Folklorico Nacional de Nicaragua, performs at the Shaw Theatre, 100 Euston Road, London NW1 2AJ, between 11-22 February (except Sunday 16), at 7.30pm each evening. Tickets are £5 (£3 concessions). Box office: 01-388 1394.

Other Books

Mary Benson's *Nelson Mandela* and many other books on South Africa are available from Other Books. The Other Books mail order service provides a wide selection of socialist and radical literature on many topics. For details, contact: Other Books PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to IMRS. All payments should be sent with orders. *Nelson Mandela* costs £2.50 plus 28p p&p.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION



INSIDE THE UNIONS

The left in the CPSA

THE ATTACKS on the left inside the Labour Party have been mirrored by similar events inside several unions. Inside the CPSA the Broad Left split at the end of 1984, leaving a membership still determined to fight but lacking an effective leadership.

In 1984 the CPSA Broad Left was one of the biggest in any union. The Communist Party and its allies, influenced by the ideas of the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) and *Marxism Today*, split at the beginning of the Broad Left conference that year. The reason given for the split was the dominance of the *Militant* tendency within the Broad Left.

By Robert Johnson, Branch Secretary CPSA, Department of Employment, South Glamorgan (personal capacity)

Those who split were likely to have faced a rough ride over their handling of the Newcastle DHSS shiftworkers dispute — where their failure to back the strikers resulted in the Newcastle workers being driven back to work under very unsatisfactory conditions.

The split in the Broad Left led to the victory of the 'Moderate' grouping in the 1985 national executive elections. The right wing swept into 23 out of 26 executive places — as well as winning the presidency and two vice presidents posts.

The nature of this right wing group has been known for some time. However a recent split among the 'Moderates' has provided some interesting revelations. Links with Trumid a shadowy right wing grouping, have long been suspected. The dissident faction alleges that the group has received secret funding, funding dependent upon the right nominations being made by the Moderates.

The Moderates are also marked by a willingness to ignore conference policies and by indiscriminate use of ballots — the more the better to undermine disputes.

In a staffing dispute centred on Glasgow unemployment benefit offices, the national executive and Alistair Graham — our infamous general secretary — have subjected the members to innumerable ballots to confuse and undermine the dispute.

Those who split from the Broad Left formed themselves into a new grouping known as Broad Left '84 or BL '84. This new grouping was instrumental in the CPSA first cooperating with the anti-union ballots. They fudged existing policy during the 1985 pay dispute — holding a secret ballot under threat of legal action from the government. This retreat was later defended by the BL '84 leadership at the 1985 conference — thereby allowing the present national executive and full timers to justify the use of ballots ever since.

Since its formation the BL '84 group has been moving to the right. The failure to support the DHSS Newcastle strikers, and the retreat in the face of the Tories' anti-union laws are merely major milestones recording this retreat. In the DHSS section, the '84 group were responsible for the acceptance of an inadequate new technology agreement at the 1985 section conference. This threw away the chance to force through improvements during the implementation of the programme when management were most vulnerable.

A similar advantage was thrown away by the Department of Employment section executive (SEC) — which is controlled by the '84 grouping — in their negotiations with TRES. TRES is a major new computer project going into all unemployment benefit offices.

The SEC railroaded an agreement through, despite major shortcomings in terms of protecting pregnant women and in securing a guarantee of no job loss. The department wants to lose 1900 jobs to pay for this project. Despite pressure from management, the SEC, and attempts to muzzle the opposition, 45 per cent of members voted against it.

The SEC also failed to build the many staffing disputes that have occurred over the last eight months. This is in complete contrast to the leadership given by the DHSS section executive, where the Broad Left majority has attempted to build on individual staffing disputes to build a nationally coordinated action on staffing.

The '84 grouping hope their witch-hunting and smear campaign will be a diversion from their likely support of Graham in the election against the Broad Left candidate — another sign of their political collapse.

The '84 group have shown their true colours. Now is the time to build for victory in the DHSS staffing campaign, and to build for a Broad Left victory over Alistair Graham and his stooges in the '84 group.

Justice for Miners launched in Notts

THE JUSTICE for the Mineworkers campaign has been enthusiastically welcomed by sacked miners, Women Against Pit Closures, NUM members and all their supporters in Notts.

The national Women Against Pit Closures committee affiliated to the campaign at its 26 January meeting in Sheffield. Now Nottingham and Nottinghamshire WAPC have followed suit.

Wellbeck amnesty group was already a part of the campaign, and on Saturday the Notts sacked miners group voted to affiliate.

From comments from individual NUM members, there is every reason to suppose that many Notts NUM branches will also be joining the campaign.

For the Notts WAPC, this is a natural development of their campaign in support of sacked and jailed miners, and against the UDM. Once more Notts WAPC has seized the initiative in defending the NUM.

They have circulated all organisations which supported them during the strike with leaflets con-

By Mary Donnelly and Helen Arthur

taining model resolutions and a letter explaining that the Notts NUM is still a thorn in the side of Thatcher and the Coal Board.

Gradually NUM members are eating away at UDM support, in spite of intimidation by the NCB and great financial difficulties.

Local NCB management are going to extraordinary lengths to starve the

NUM of funds. Although there are 4-5,000 NUM members in Notts, they are having great problems in getting union dues paid to the NUM rather than to the UDM. Miners loyal to the NUM are being prevented from signing out of the UDM. And Notts Labour Parties are far from helpful in providing resources such as meeting rooms.

A recent meeting between Campaign group MP Jeremy Corbyn and members of Notts WAPC, also brought out that many in the labour movement outside Notts are unaware of the severe difficulties facing the new NUM in the area. NCB refusal to recognise the NUM, harassment and victimisation of NUM members, lack of funds to meet the most basic expenses, mean that help from outside is greatly needed.



Notts WAPC are asking that organisations 'adopt' individual NUM branches in the area. The WAPC secretary will coordinate this. They also welcome any financial donations to help in their campaign against the UDM. Support outside of the area is a tremendous boost to everyone in Notts as it publicises the situation and breaks the isolation.

The struggle in the North Notts Labour Parties are also becoming more and more crucial as the NUM, WAPC and their supporters fight to exclude the UDM and ensure that all mine workers in the Labour Party are members of the NUM.

Many Labour Party members who have chosen to go along with the UDM out of self interest may find themselves obliged to make another choice between the UDM and the Labour Party/NUM. It is important that the Labour Party nationally supports Notts NUM loyalists in this struggle.

The Justice for

Mineworkers Campaign, backed by the Campaign group of MPs, and members of the NUM executive, will give a real focus to these struggles. Notts WAPC will be discussing with the sacked miners the setting up of a Notts area Justice for Mineworkers Campaign which will coordinate the efforts of the NUM, WAPC and their supporters in Notts.

A contingent from Notts will be at the lobby of parliament on 27 February when the Justice for Mineworkers Bill is being presented. Buses are

also being organised from all over Notts for the campaign's rally and concert at the Albert Hall.

In addition, a fringe meeting of the Justice for Mineworkers campaign is being organised at the East Midlands regional Labour Party conference at Skegness. This will be on the Saturday evening, 15 March at 7pm at the Manhattan Suite in the Parade Hotel. There will be a WAPC speaker from Notts and NUM speakers from Leicestershire and Notts. Tony Benn and Peter Heathfield have been invited.

Open letter from Notts WAPC

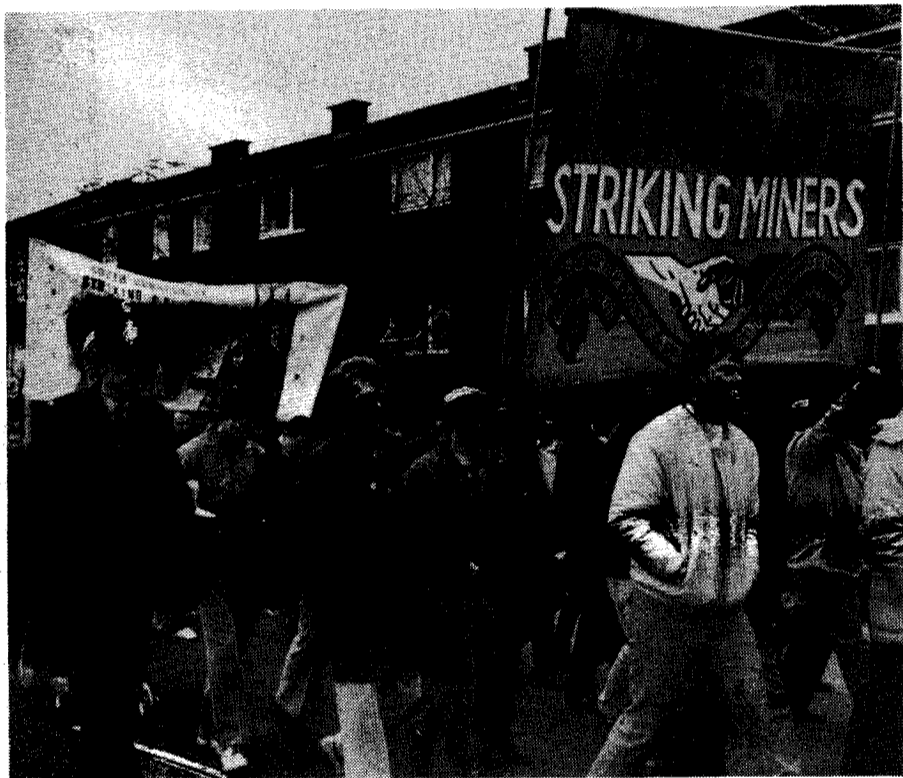
*Yvonne Woodhead,
3 Park Avenue,
Blidworth,
Mansfield,
Notts.
Tel: 0623 796751*

The Notts area NUM is still a thorn in the side of Thatcher and the Coal Board because the UDM hasn't had the total effect necessary to threaten the NUM as a whole. We have an NUM branch at every pit in Notts, but they need to continue campaigning for more and more members if the UDM is to lose all credibility.

To do this, the branches need support and money which is not available because of the sequestration of NUM funds. To help then to continue campaigning, we are asking you to take up our plan for the adoption of Notts pits NUM branches. This will simply mean that trade unions and Labour Parties are willing to: adopt a Branch of the NUM in the Notts Area, and support that branch in any way possible. Financial support can be used by the branches to pay for meeting rooms, to pay expenses for speakers, and for stationery and stamps. Doing this will reduce the immediate hardship being experienced in Notts, and give new hope to the fight against the UDM, by making it financially a more equitable one.

If you are interested in this idea, please write to me, and I will contact the Branch secretaries concerned, and set up the adoption. Any support outside of the Notts area is a tremendous boost to everyone here. It would be greatly appreciated also if you would pass this proposal to other unions and Labour Parties in your area, so that we can make it work and rebuild a strong NUM in Notts.

Yvonne Woodhead



Notts NUM

The fight to reinstate sacked miners goes on, including in the heart of Notts. On

Tuesday, 11 February, Welbeck NUM and the Welbeck sacked miners campaign, has called on all miners to support a demonstration called in working hours to protest against the visit to the pit of Coal Board chairman, Ian MacGregor.

The NCB in Notts, as elsewhere, is taking no notice of the courts and industrial tribunals which in most cases found the victimised miners innocent of all charges brought against them.

A sign of the concern of local management at the possible effect of the call has been their suspension on full pay of leading NUM activists at Welbeck, Tony Geddes and Mark Hunter for distribution of a mobilising leaflet at the pit head.

Silentnight

Murdoch is not the only boss resorting to the courts over boycotts in the last week. The strike of Silentnight workers at Barnoldswick, Lancs is now in its ninth month. The effects of the solidarity campaign are beginning to affect Silentnight boss Tom Clarke.

A campaign calling for a boycott of the Silentnight shop in Huddersfield has been going on since Christmas with increasing success. Huddersfield trades council received a solicitors letter threatening libel action if their leaflet calling for a boycott was not withdrawn and court action under the Tories secondary picketing laws if the picket of the shop isn't lifted.

The FTAT solicitors advised supporters to comply with the letter in order to forestall personal liability. But a new leaflet supporting Silentnight will be available for future leafletting.

'We are not going to win or lose a strike over one line in a leaflet,' said Terry Bennett, FTAT 92 branch secretary. 'We will only win by building mass support, stopping supplies of raw materials, and mass picketing. We are winning this fight.'

'We estimate production down by 40 to 50 per cent. Beds are being returned from stores because they are not up to standard. The Coop, among other stores have stopped selling Silentnight beds until after the strike. But this attack on supporters of Silentnight could set a dangerous precedent for all solidarity movements.'

★ A mass picket of the Silentnight Barnoldswick and Sutton factories is planned for the near future. For more details contact: FTAT, 9 Frank Street, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs (0282 603055 or 814556).

Teachers fight ACAS deal

THE MAJORITY of teachers are opposed to the sell-out deal struck at ACAS by five of the teachers organisations. Members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), whose union opposed the deal, have acted quickly to reintroduce the guerilla strike action which has resulted in many schools being closed for weeks on end.

At the same time the leadership of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT) is balloting its membership recommending acceptance of the deal. Opposition to the deal inside the NAS/UWT is appearing all over the country.

Despite the case being presented in person by Fred Smithies — the union's general secretary — Brent NAS/UWT members voted to reject the sell-out. Reports are coming in from NAS/UWT branches in Wales, Cheshire, Lancashire, the West Midlands, and other regions of anger at the line adopted by the union leadership.

In teaching, rural areas tend to have a less militant reputation but a recent survey for ITV's TV Eye 33 per cent of NAS/UWT members in one North Yorkshire school were opposed to the employers

package. Even a minority of this size, combined with the



By Bernard Regan, NUT Executive personal capacity

215,000 members in the NUT, would be sufficient to constitute a decisive majority of teachers opposed to the deal.

Desperate to hold their members together the NAS/UWT membership are forced to resort to wild statements: 'If you decide

not to support the national executive recommendation, you are voting for industrial action to continue. The result of this will be no 1985 pay award.'

The ballot of NAS/UWT members is due to finish in two weeks time. Eager to push the deal through Smithies has agreed to a meeting of the Burnham pay negotiating body on Friday 28 February at 11.30 am.

For the first time the deal struck — which leaves 168,000 teachers worse off than the employers offer in October — includes accepting a deal on teachers contracts. Confident of getting the deal through, the employers are pushing for a meeting of the Conditions of Service Committee at 2.30 pm on the same day as Burnham.

The package, if ratified, will result in the NAS/UWT calling off all action for at least six months, and forfeiting all negotiating rights — handing over the 'problem' of teacher pay and conditions to ACAS.

The task of militants inside the NUT is to approach NAS/UWT members to vote 'no' in their

ballot and encourage them to unite in a massive campaign of industrial action to defend teachers pay and conditions.

The leadership of the NUT however, whilst verbally supporting this line, in practice are already winding down the scale of strike action.

Despite a clear decision by the NUT's special conference on 18 January to support the Socialist Teachers Alliance call for a one day strike and demonstration, the majority of the NUT ex-

ecutive put the proposal on ice to be carried out in the event of the 'non-ratification of the settlement'.

Although the leadership of the NAS/UWT look likely to win, their victory is by no means guaranteed. What will determine the outcome is the determination and action mounted by NUT members.

However whatever the outcome of the ballot the agreement's declaration that teachers will return to 'normal duties' stands no chance of

being achieved.

Members of the NUT, and many NAS/UWT members have already declared that they have no intention of returning to 'normal duties'.

The campaign has been on the 1985 claim. The 1986 claim is due to be settled by 1 April. The fight is nowhere near over in the eyes of the majority of teachers.

● Burnham lobby. 9.30 am onwards, Church House, near Westminster Abbey, Friday 28 February.



Socialist ACTION

Marcos clings to power

THE PHILIPPINES elections have been a disaster for the USA. As we go to press Marcos and his cronies, disregarding worldwide exposure of their faked election victory, clearly intend to hang on using whatever deceit, repression and terror may be necessary.

The line pursued by the National Democratic Front and several mass organisation — including the KMU, the most influential trade union federation — has been completely vindicated.

The result is also probably the most serious foreign policy crisis the Reagan administration has faced. The Philippines, the USA's oldest colony, are 700 miles from Vietnam, and harbour the biggest US base outside America, at Subic Bay on Luzon Island.

The US pushed Marcos into holding an election in the hope that it could pressure him into 'cleaning up his act'.

It wanted the semblance of a clean election, army reform and some human rights concessions

Its tactics have backfired and the US ruling class itself is now divided and without a clear line.

The underlying problem is that the country's explosive social contradictions can only be contained by ferocious repression. The economy has been bled dry. It has been in decline for three successive years, foreign debts stand between \$26 and \$30 billion, and unemployment is over 20 per cent — in the slum areas, as high as 80 per cent.

For this reason Reagan has, as everywhere in the world, backed 'the devil he knows'. As he explained in 1984 'there are things there in the Philippines that do not look good to us. But what is the alternative? There is a large communist movement which will take over.'

But Marcos' own machine is fragmenting, and his own personal survival — he is very ill — is in doubt. A reform movement in the armed forces now counts on some 1500 officers, and the previously divided bourgeois opposition forces managed to coalesce, on the eve of the election, behind the candidacy of Cory Aquino and Laurel.

A large wing of US imperialism has clearly put its weight behind Aquino-Laurel. Senator Stephen Solarz, a New York Democrat, forced an enquiry into Marcos' family holdings in the USA, and initial disclosures show they own at least \$350 million worth in Manhat-

tan. And last month documents were 'discovered' in US archives disproving Marcos' claim to have led wartime resistance to Japanese occupation.

The White House has been preparing itself for an Aquino victory as an option. Aquino has made some radical noises but has been careful to make no firm commitments to repeal Marcos' repressive legislation, nor to kick out US bases.

The difficulty, however, is the complete absence of a serious alternative team around Aquino to take over the state. Marcos' 360,000-strong army costs 10% of his budget. She could only take over power if Marcos could be forced by US imperialism to relinquish, voluntarily, his formidable terror machine and pass it on to Aquino.

This is the reason the US has carefully refrained from using covert pressure to ease Marcos out. Hence the wonderfully guarded comment from Senator Richard Lugar, in charge of the US team of observers, which must go down in history as a masterpiece of White House-speak understatement: 'Clean, in its absolute form, is obviously not an appropriate word to describe what we have observed.'

South Africa Reform myth explodes

FOUR DAYS of in-fighting in apartheid's ruling National Party have blown apart the myth, assiduously cultivated by President Botha, that the racist regime is about to reform itself from within.

Public clashes between Verligte ('enlightened') foreign minister Pik Botha and hardline education minister F.W. de Klerk led to a decisive and open intervention by President

Botha in which he backed de Klerk, crushed Pik Botha and reaffirmed that apartheid was to be modernised, not abolished.

To cap off the crisis the

leader of South Africa's liberal opposition, Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, resigned in disgust. A second prominent Progressive Federal Party member, Dr Alex Boraine, may follow him.

Complaining that 'Old-style apartheid, is being exchanged for new-style apartheid,' Slabbert said it was futile to continue serving in parliament in which there was no prospect of reform. He denounced the tri-cameral parliament, through which president Botha unsuccessfully tried to co-opt black South Africans without any real voting rights, as 'an irrelevancy'.

The crisis in the National Party erupted within days of president Botha making a speech, aimed at world bankers renegotiating the country's external debt, in which he promised reform. Three days later education minister de Kerk was questioned on president Botha's veiled references to educational change. Would there be educational integration? 'Not while my government remains in power', he replied. In 1983-84 the government spent seven times as much on educating each white child as on each black child.

De Klerk spelt out the National Party's other non-negotiable positions: group representation and segregated residential areas. This means black

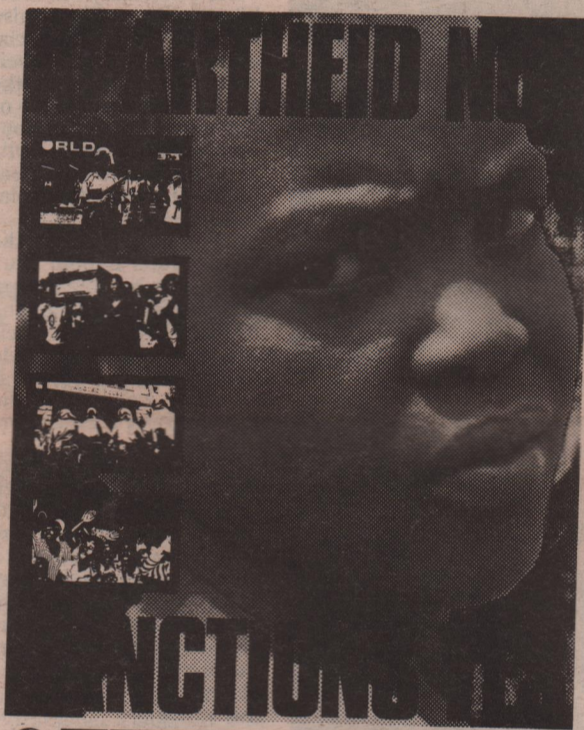
people would not have the right to vote on who governs them, but would only be allowed to vote for separate, subordinate and therefore powerless stogie bodies. It also means they would be kept in segregated residential areas to continue serving as cheap migrant labour for South Africa's rapacious capitalists.

De Klerk's speech provoked dismay among the minority Verligte wing of the National Party, which wants to ensure that any reform package is suitably dressed up to satisfy foreign bankers and, ideally, to co-opt forces such as Chief Buthelezi's Kwa Zulu movement into closer collaboration with the regime.

Shortly after, Foreign Minister Pik Botha put the cat among the pigeons with a speech holding out the eventual prospect of a black president of South Africa — under white control, of course.

President Botha was then obliged to deliver a stinging public rebuke to Pik Botha and to line himself up behind de Klerk.

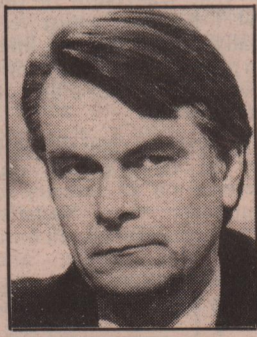
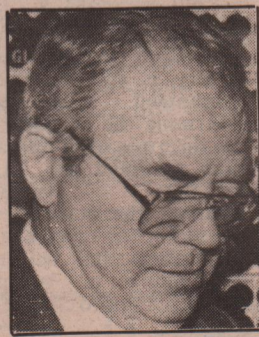
The true nature of the National Party's reform proposals are coming to light. Apartheid cannot be changed from within: Botha's racist regime and all it stands for must be removed. The fight to break all links with South Africa is more urgent than ever.



ANTI APARTHEID 13 Mandela St London NW1 01-387 7966

Anti-Apartheid's new poster for the forthcoming month of action in March. Events include a day of action to commemorate the Langa massacre on 22 March and the trade union conference on 1 March.

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With no apologies to 'Marxism Today'

Fund Drive

At least some monies continue to come in to our fund drive. Thanks are due to our South London supporters who sent in £70.00; our Cardiff supporters who sent £35.00 and two supporters in Chester who sent in £8.00. But what are the rest of you up to? We need £400.00 per week to ensure the weekly schedule of Socialist Action.

Everyone can and should help. Have you yet donated a week's wages to Socialist Action? Has your local supporters group organised a fund raising scheme — like our East London supporters who produced the 'Smash Apartheid' badge, or our Manchester supporters who produced the South African T-shirts?

This year is the 70th anniversary of the Irish Easter rebellion. It is also the centenary of James Connolly's arrival in Belfast. Looking further

ahead, 1986 is the 50th anniversary of the Spanish civil war. All these could provide a focus for political solidarity and fund raising activity by local supporters.

Our appeal is not simply aimed at our active supporters. We would also ask you, our regular readers, to consider sending us a donation. Every little helps.

The importance of Socialist Action continues to be underlined by the convulsions in our class.

What could be more inspiring than the mobilisation of the Women Against Pit Closures in support of the print workers last Saturday night? Yet Socialist Action is still the only weekly paper that is campaigning to draw together Women Against Pit Closures, militants in the unions, supporters of the Campaign group, the Black sections and many others.

Socialist Action is well worth your support.