

# A Socialist ACTION

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## ★ TRADE UNIONISTS BEWARE! ★

# MURDOCH'S SECRET WEAPON!

AS WE go to press, it is still not known what is the outcome of the ballot on Rupert Murdoch's 'final offer' to settle the Wapping strike. What is clear is that Murdoch and the Tories are in a frenzy to turn around the impact of the militant rank and file campaign to get a 'no' vote. The burning down of Murdoch's paper warehouse has been used for all that it is worth to divert attention from the real issues and convince the uninvolved waverers to cast a 'yes' vote.

The 2000-plus News International workers who attended the mass meeting last week have no need to further prove their determination and capacity to sustain the struggle. Without the collaboration which has been given by the TUC and SOGAT leadership, Murdoch would not be able to win — even given the support of the Tory government, the rest of Fleet Street and the riot cops.

Those workers who have voted for the deal concocted by Brenda Dean and Norman Willis have done so mainly because, witnessing the disgusting behaviour from those who should be supporting and leading them in battle against Murdoch, they do not see how the struggle can be won.

Murdoch has been forced to increase his bribe to the sacked workers because, despite Brenda Dean, the dispute is becoming more militant, the ranks are getting more involved, and their actions are beginning to have more impact. During the course of the ballot this week, 400 workers were able to close the Wapping gates for over two hours — forcing the scabs to skulk in by side entrances, and even turning some deliveries away. These sort of undiminished actions, against the advice of Brenda Dean, are demoralising scabs and for-

cing Murdoch's hand.

Flying picketing has been increased, creating distribution problems for Murdoch outside London. The determined stance of the London wholesalers branch from the beginning of the dispute has already created a cash flow problem for Murdoch of over £20m.

There is to be a mass meeting on the Saturday after the results of the ballot have been announced. Whatever the ballot's outcome, the rest of the labour movement must take the lead from the News International workers themselves. This meeting is the voice of authority, not the cringing defeatism of Dean and Willis. As the miners explained nobody has the right to vote another worker out of a job. The SOGAT leadership has done everything to go over the heads of union democracy and secure a 'yes' vote.

Whatever the outcome of the ballot, any decision to continue must be coupled with relaunching an offensive into the rest of the labour movement. For a decision to vote 'no' will bring an as yet unheard of hysteria from the Tories, Murdoch and their media supporters as they try to secure an abandonment of the dispute. All the powers of the state will be brought further into play, from the courts through increased police repression.

Each union conference must be faced with a militant lobby of supporters of the printers fight and conference decisions for support won. The Labour Party and TUC conferences must be won to full backing of the key non-negotiable demands of the printworkers.

If the vote is 'yes' the fight to gain SOGAT/NGA recognition at Wapping still has to go on.

- Full re-instatement of all sacked News International workers
- Print Union recognition at Wapping
- Mass meeting for News International workers: Saturday 7 June, York Hall, Bethnal Green, E9



# Socialist ACTION

LAST THURSDAY the launch of the new Black and Asian Advisory Committee at a press conference in the House of Commons ended up being a distressing spectacle for Labour. Jo Richardson, undoubtedly one of the most left-wing MPs in the PLP, was even portrayed in the *Guardian* as accused of being a 'racist' for agreeing to chair the committee.

The Labour Party Black Section in a letter to the *Guardian* taking up this allegation, clearly rejected any description of Jo Richardson as a 'racist'. There is no doubt that Jo Richardson involved herself in the Black and Asian Advisory Committee with the best of intentions, and accusations of racism are quite out of place. However, anyone agreeing to chair this committee, places themselves in an impossible position.

Any black committee in the party must be chaired, and composed of, black people. Furthermore this committee is itself appointed — not elected. A black person chairing the committee would have been selected by whites. This is also unacceptable. The only way a black committee in the party can be accepted is if it is elected by black members. That means accepting the demands of the Black Section for officially recognised, elected, black self organisation in the party.

The present committee, selected by whites, is correctly described by the Black Section as 'colonialism', classic white paternalism.

The same issue is posed by the struggles of women. Women do not need men to 'look after' their interests, they need the labour movement to start listening to what women themselves are saying.

Jo Richardson understand this perfectly well, and therefore will find herself in an impossible contradiction if she continues to chair this committee. The fact that a contradiction has arisen between what women and black people know to be Jo's views on this issue, and the fact that she is chairing a committee established on the basis of a completely counterposed principle, shows just how wrong this committee is, and why it must go. It must be replaced by democratic organisation of black people in the party electing their own representatives.

In fact the whole issue of Black and Asian Advisory Committee raises a general problem that has to be confronted in the Labour Party.

Neil Kinnock has adopted the slogan of 'democratic socialism', and yet he is unable to take on board the most elementary questions of democracy inside the Labour Party itself.

Democracy has to be based upon the fundamental right of people to control their own organisations and their own lives. Inside the Labour Party this aspiration to build a democratic party has found expression in the attempt by black people to build a democratic black section of the party, accountable to black people, with real say over the anti-racist policy pursued by the party and the demands, repeated year after year at the women's conference, that women should elect the women's places on the NEC, and that the women's organisation should be democratically accountable to women, with real power in determining party policy. Similarly a youth organisation of the party has to be built that is controlled by young people and reflects their views, whatever the views of the party leadership — or anyone else.

Until these elementary steps to ensure the democracy of the Labour Party itself are taken, then all talk about democratic socialism is simply hot air. Rather than building and creating a democratic Labour Party, Neil Kinnock is building a party which denies the right of women, black people, and youth to control their own destiny.

A related issue is raised by the expulsion of supporters of the views of *Militant*. A democratic party has to be built on socialist debate and discussion, where all views can be expressed and developed, and fought and defeated where they are wrong. The bureaucratic expulsion of *Militant* supporters cuts totally against that. It is also worth noting that those most in favour of expelling *Militant* supporters are most against the demands of women and black people in the party.

The left has to learn the lessons of what is going on in the party, and take to heart the rising tide of protest, from women and black people in particular about the lack of democracy in the party. The demands of women and black people, building a strong youth organisation, and opposing expulsions must become and remain among the key items in the agenda of the left. This will both deal a blow to the frightening attack on democracy being spearheaded by Kinnock, and provide an agenda for new steps forward for the left.

## Analysis

# A step forward for the left

SINCE THE end of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, following Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign in 1981, there has been no authoritative organisation coordinating the left in the Labour Party. But developments at last Saturday's Labour Left Coordination (LLC) opened up important possibilities. JAMES LARK reports.

THE reasons for the ineffective coordination of the Labour left since the early 1980s have been chiefly political, not organisational. It is politics which finally produces organisation, and not the other way round.

The left came together in the late 1970s around the demand for constitutional change in the party. It came together in a united fashion around the miners strike, in order to support the miners. But aside from these occasions the left has not had a clear agenda which would allow it to coordinate effectively.

### Crisis

The LLC was a body established prior to the last Labour Party conference, following the miners strike. However it had been undergoing an organisational crisis for the last months.

The apparent reason for this crisis was organisational. *Labour Briefing* supporters had been attempting to dominate the organisation by organisations and papers in agreement with it claiming three places on the LLC's steering committee as opposed to one for every other organisation.

### Politics

But behind the organisational arguments lay politics. The LLC had a potentially clear political basis. It had the affiliation of WAC, the Labour Par-

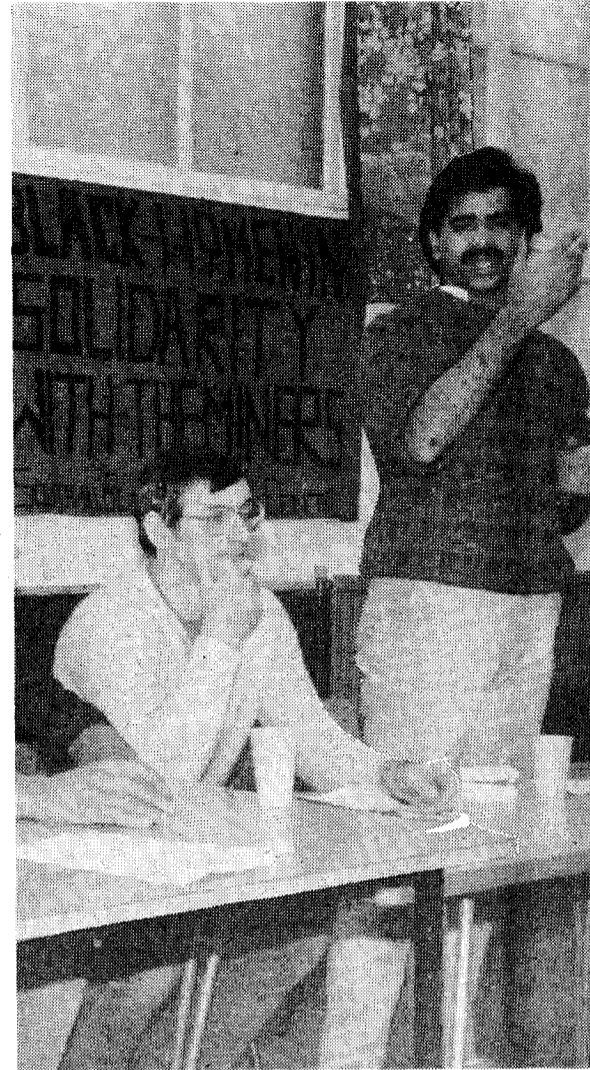
ty Black Section, CLPD, the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, a number of socialist newspapers, and observers from the Labour Committee on Ireland and Labour CND.

The basis for overlap and cooperation between these campaigns was obvious. CLPD, fighting for democracy in the party, has supported the demands of WAC and the Black Section as well as advancing its own demands. WAC and the Black Section, both standing for self-organisation in the party, have supported each other's demands. Every organisation on the left has an interest in opposing the witch hunt — and all have opposed it. While each campaign maintains its own autonomy each gains by coordination.

### Survive

But the basis of that campaigning has to be what the LLC positively stands for. No organisation can survive, or go forward, based on what it is against.

LLC's tasks were indicated by the fact it contained a number of the most important anti-imperialist campaigns in the party, the main campaigns for self-organisation of the oppressed, and the main organisation fighting for democracy in the party. All this gives it a clear positive platform, and made it obvious that the organisations supporting these demands should be the centre of the LLC —



The black delegation to support the miners — one of the key alliances the left has to build

thereby ensuring that their demands would be at the core of its attention.

To ensure this the CLPD executive had put forward proposals which, after amendments, were finally accepted by representatives at the meeting of WAC, the Black Section, and other organisations and papers. These sought to reorganise the LLC on a democratic basis and, by this, give it a clear positive programme for action. *Briefing*

however would not agree to this. A division therefore took place in the LLC.

### Agenda

Representatives of CLPD, WAC, the Black Section, Socialist Action and Socialist Organiser, and with observers from Labour CND, therefore met to agree, subject to ratification, a structure based on CLPD's proposals. These safeguarded

the autonomy of the campaigns and established a democratic structure. Vladimir Derer of CLPD was unanimously elected secretary.

An indication of the goals likely to be pursued was shown by an agenda which included model resolutions for party conference, the attitude to the Black and Asian Advisory Committee, and the question of US bases.

This development represented a major step forward for the left. A left coordination has emerged which is not based on 'oppositionalism' but on putting forward clear positive proposals for action by the party. It brings together the most important campaigns and issues which have developed in the party in the last years. It comes at the same time as the establishment of Campaign Groups in a number of areas — another indication of an upturn of left organisation in the party.

### Tactics

The long and difficult task of taking these campaigns and issues into the unions of course still has to be developed and deepened. Doubtless differences of opinion and tactics will arise.

But above all last Saturday's events represent a major step forward for the left. They create for the first time for many years an authoritative organisation of the left based on the rank and file of the party — one with a potential to develop. This will strengthen the work of the left in every way.

Despite the fact that *Briefing* were not able to agree to the proposals a place was left for them on the steering committee and we are sure they will fill it as soon as possible.

## Black and Asian Advisory Committee

# Press conference ends in chaos

LAST THURSDAY Labour's fake Black and Asian Advisory Committee held its first press conference which was widely reported. But far from achieving the objective that the Labour leadership has set — of heading off support for Black Sections — it was universally used by the media as an opportunity for an all-round attack: on black people, on the Labour Party and on Labour Party Black Section.

It was widely misreported that the press conference broke up in chaos because Black Section attacked chair Jo Richardson, as a racist. Black Section chair Marc Wadsworth explained to Socialist Action: 'Black journalists have told us that Walworth Road fed this information to the press as non-attributable quotes. This is totally reprehensible mischief-making. They have put it about that we are responsible for events at the press conference but that view cannot be defended. They are trying to pit black person against black person because they know that they can't win with their sham, bantustan committee.'

Labour Party Black Section has issued a statement in response to the calling of this press conference. We reprint it in full below.

THIS morning the Labour Party launches its 'still born' Black and Asian Advisory Committee in a climate of almost universal hostility. The committee

purports to be a national body, taking representatives from most of the regions. The London Labour Party region has

its representatives, the South East, Wales and the Northern Labour Party regions have nominated no one.

Even before the launch there have been a number of individual resignations including these of Keith Vaz, Black prospective parliamentary candidate for Leicester East and Trudie Dehaney, a senior trade union official. They were the two delegates from the East Midlands.

Excepting in the West Midlands, the areas of the country with the largest black populations are completely unrepresented (40 per cent of Britain's black population live in London alone, the West Midlands followed by the East Midlands have the second and third largest black communities respectively).

The Labour Party Black Section calls for the immediate disbandment of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. Black Sections have been

recognised by both the black community and most of the Constituency Labour Parties as the legitimate voice of black people. There are now 37 constituency Black Sections across the country, all making a valuable contribution to their parties.

Many of the nominees on the Black and Asian Advisory Committee won their places by zealously obeying the instructions of the hard right of the Labour Party by vociferously opposing Black Sections. We regard them as colonial appointees.

The Labour Party's approach to black people in Britain has been fashioned by the British colonial experience. On the one hand black people have been denied rights of representation by institutional racism which exists in the labour movement. On the other, advisory committees have been set up which pretended to take seriously the pro-

blems of black people. These committees largely comprising white 'race experts' have a long history of failure.

The Black and Asian Advisory Committee is the seventh such committee in the last 26 years. The last one, the Positive Discrimination Working Group, produced a report after wide consultation with the labour movement. This report recommended fully constituted Black Sections.

This report like those of other committees was ignored. Instead the Labour leadership propose yet another advisory committee.

The Black and Asian Advisory Committee has no muscle, represents no one and its terms of reference specifically exclude policy formulation. Its role is simply to advise on how to solicit the black vote. In other words it is no more than a cynical vote garnering unit for the Labour leadership.

# Lambeth's new black leader

**LABOUR PARTY** Black Section vice chair **LINDA BELLOS** has recently become leader of Lambeth council. She is one of three black council leaders in London. She and her fellow Lambeth councillors not only face waging the fight against racism and attacks against the black community in Brixton but have taken over from those recently disqualified in the fight against rate capping. The new council aims to deepen the policies pursued by the previous council as Linda explains, because a commitment to improving the conditions for the whole of the working class including the black community in Lambeth means expanding services and jobs and fighting police and other harassment. Linda discussed with **CAROL TURNER** the Black Section's fight to overcome racism within the Labour Party and how that meshes the difficulties which councils like Lambeth still face.

**BLACK** Sections came about when black people got together and said we are not going to put up anymore with being ignored and marginalised within the Labour Party. Black Section is a campaigning group in which we can talk about the issues of concern to us and make sure they are put on the party agenda.

That's what has happened in the last three years: black people's issues have been part of the Labour Party agenda. Reluctantly.

Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley are examples of that reluctance. There are many people in the party who still do not want to take on the issues we are stating, who in their neo-colonialist way still believe they know what is in our best interests.

What black people are saying is that we can actually speak for ourselves. That is what Black Sections have pioneered, and we have brought pressure to bear on other Labour Parties where there isn't a Black Section.

## Tribune

Lambeth is a good example of that pressure. Over the last two years, in a series of by-elections, we have increased black representation from two councillors to eight. This time round we start off with eight. And if there are any by-elections black representation in Lambeth I hope that will increase.

But the belief that black candidates are vote-losers is still on-going within the Labour Party. There are many people who absolutely resent the idea of black people speaking for themselves — including 'liberal' journals such as *Tribune*. After all, they are many of the 'experts' on black people, many of those who occupy places on working parties on ethnic this and multicultural that.

So I am not surprised that, after the local election results, such people are pursuing the hoary old chestnut of black candidates being vote-losers. I don't see any difference between those people and the establishment — an establishment which created colonialism and justified imperialism.

That has been given as the reason Labour didn't win control in Wandsworth. Tower Hamlets is another case in point.

The Wandsworth Labour Parties invited me and another comrade from Black Section to talk to them when they were debating whether or not they were going to recognise Black Sections. They still haven't. Some of the arguments they put up were frankly racist.

I think they have paid the price for that, the price of not addressing themselves to the needs of black people in Wandsworth. Had they done so they would have fulfilled the prediction that they were going to win the borough. The failure to address themselves to the needs and recognition of Black Section has cost them that administration.

## Lessons

On the other hand, all three parties in Lambeth have firmly stood by their original commitment to Black Section in the face of considerable pressure. That commitment has manifested itself in an increased support for black representatives.

After six black members of the last Labour group were disqualified another six came forward. There is no doubt that will continue to happen.

The lessons are that if you address yourself to the needs of black people, then black people will come out and vote. And if you don't want those votes, then you don't want to run the council. It's as simple as that.

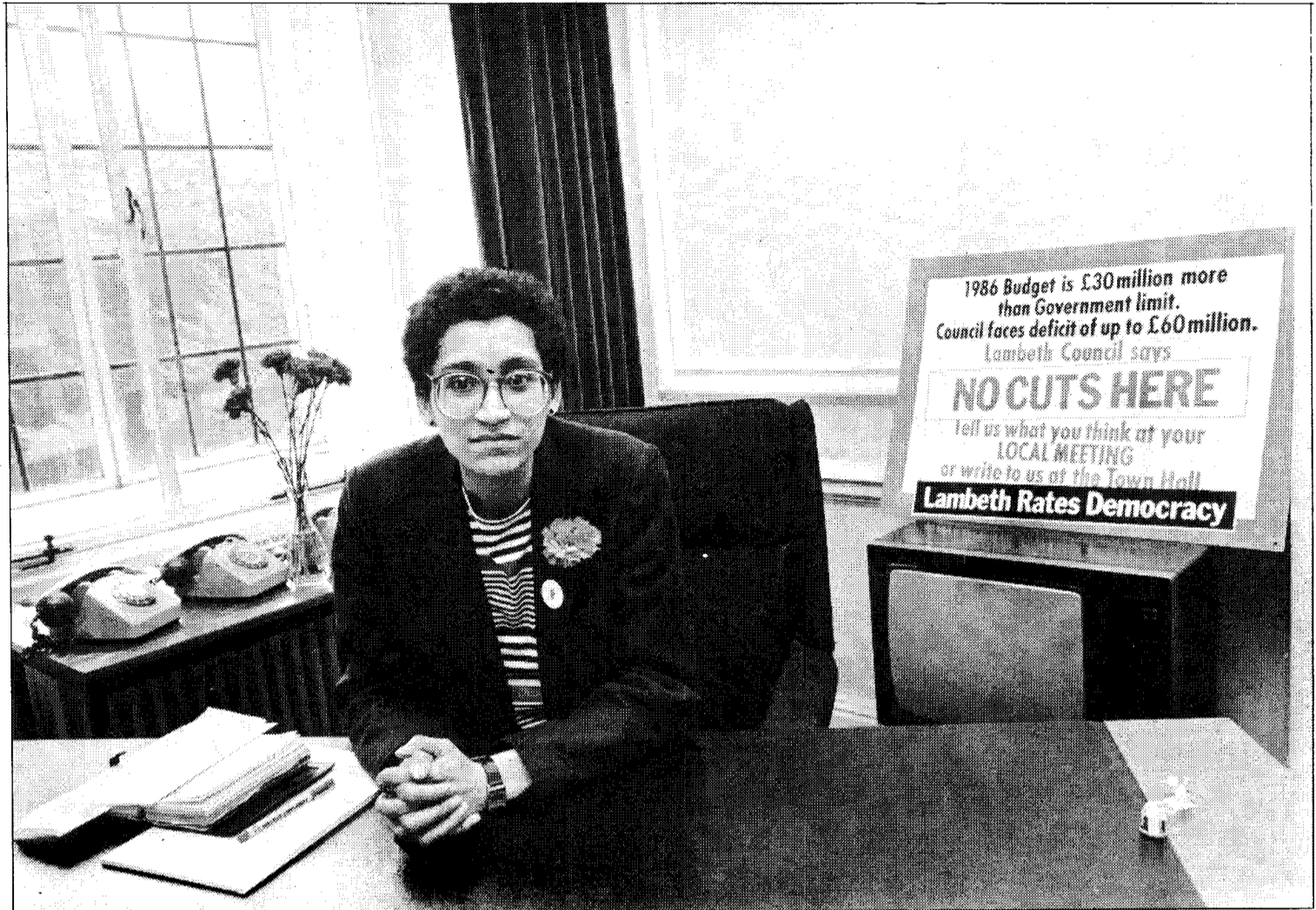
## Jobs

After the local elections in Lambeth, we have a mandate to maintain jobs and services. We also have a mandate — and a commitment — to improve services and to improve employment. We are the largest employer in the borough.

## Priorities

There are a variety of issues we are currently looking at: low pay strategy; harmonisation, that is how to rid ourselves of the disparity of treatment between manual and white collar staff; equal opportunities, which for me is a high priority, particularly explaining what those policies mean to the whole community so that we get full support.

Those are the priorities our manifesto commits itself to. And we want to see greater community participation.



Linda Bellos: newly installed as the leader of Lambeth council

But, speaking personally, my commitment is to the working class. I want to define what I mean by working class, because it isn't the same as what some other comrades in the Labour Party mean by working class.

I mean people who are male and female, black and white, able-bodied and with disabilities, heterosexual and lesbian and gay. When I conceptualise working class I mean the variety of us who are working class.

## Feminist

I do not mean white men — which is how the Labour Party has conceptualised working class. My own view includes white working class men, but it's not exclusively that. The kind of approach I have as a feminist, my understanding of class analysis, is broader — and, I think, more radical — than that which the Labour Party as a whole adopts.

## Demands

When we uncover the needs and demands of the whole working class in Lambeth, we are going to find that we do not have the resources to meet those needs. Currently we are not meeting the needs of the whole working class. The case for additional resources — in other words, against rate capping — will be as strong if not stronger in the coming period than it has been in the past.

## National

I believe if we have the support of the whole community we will be forced to demand a greater share of national resources.

## Building Black Sections in Wandsworth

**LAST WEEK'S** issue of *Socialist Action* carried an article by **AUBREY ESCOFFERY**, entitled 'Why Labour lost in Wandsworth', which explained how racism within the Wandsworth parties cost Labour the council. Far from an anti-black vote being responsible for that local government defeat, as *Tribune* and others claimed, it was the refusal of the local Labour Parties to support Black Sections and to prioritise the demands of the black community which let the Tories back in by one seat. This week **Aubrey** explains how the experience of black party members in Tooting led to the formation of a Black Section there.

**TOOTING** Black Members Group first met in 1984, as a group of black activists in the local party. At that time the national executive had just published its working group report on black people and the Labour Party.

It was the first major issue the Black Members Group tackled. In the process we suddenly realised that nobody else in the party was considering the report, even though the national executive had sent it out to all local parties.

So we wrote a letter to the Tooting party asking why. We passed resolutions through various wards asking if this represented a tacit acknowledgement of racism within Tooting Labour Party.

The response was quite horrendous. The only interpretation I can put on it was that they were saying that they didn't need to consider the report of the working party because there were then two black councillors in Tooting, the first in the Wandsworth borough. The operative word was *two* in an area with over 20 per cent black people.

This went on and on. Our group developed

under very severe circumstances.

By the end of 1985 we wanted Tooting to come out as a party which supported Black Sections. Resolutions were moved to change the rules of the party and so on.

Danny Stafford was chair and I was secretary-treasurer of the Black Members Group. As the two people deemed to articulate most consistently the problems and aspirations of Black Section, neither or us were reelected to the GC. Danny was also on the local government committee and convener of the anti-racist manifesto group, and I was on the executive, the finance committee and convener of the police manifesto group. Of course, once you're removed from the GC, you lose everything.

Both of us were active in all the affairs of the party. There was no reason on that score to remove us from the GC.

In fact I was replaced as GC delegate by another black who openly opposed Black Sections — he said they would fragment the party. My nice white friends were sympathetic

— but silent. They were not prepared to openly confront that kind of racism.

We had to have the backing of Black Section, but we found ourselves in the dilemma of not being able to participate nationally. So the Black Members Group passed a resolution changing our status.

We informed the secretary-agent of the Tooting party who duly wrote back saying we could not. We didn't respond, we simply stopped having meetings at the party headquarters and found other venues.

A few weeks ago we received another letter from the secretary-agent, admitting that we could now call ourselves the Black Section, and suggesting we can have two fraternal delegates on the GC. The party has decided to have a liaison officer for black and Asian affairs.

We hold the proposal in total abhorrence. When it was raised previously at an EC, I advised against it. The EC decided that such a proposal wouldn't be sent out to the party. But the secretary-agent did — with a footnote saying that the proposal had been withdrawn!

Now the proposal has been put forward as a resolution to the party. Such a resolution though would nullify any others which have already been passed. In fact putting it forward is against the party rules.

This situation is like that in South Africa. They are saying that we can have representatives but not representation. We can implore and beseech — and if they are nice people they might listen — but we can't raise our hands to vote.

That is the way things stand at the moment in Tooting Labour Party.

**CAMPAIGNING FOR SOCIALISM**  
The Chesterfield Experience

Sponsored by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs and published by the Chesterfield Labour Party with a foreword by Tony Benn, Campaigning for Socialism: the Chesterfield experience charts the course of the party over the last two years, especially drawing out the effects of the miners strike on the alliances which the Chesterfield party have been building. Price 70p, plus 18p p&p, the pamphlet is available from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP (cheques payable to Other Books).

# Black Section replies to Guardian lies

LAST Saturday, one day later than the rest of the media, the Guardian carried a report on the Black and Asian Advisory Committee press conference.

The report incorrectly accused Black Section of calling the chair, Jo Richardson, a racist.

In fact not only did the Guardian get it wrong, but its journalist couldn't even be bothered to turn up to that press conference and concocted the story from his desk.

On Tuesday, the Guardian carried a letter from Paul Sharma correcting the report. It said: 'We need to correct the mischievous report (1 June) on the Labour Party Black and Asian Advisory Committee press conference at the House of

Commons on 29 May.

'I was the only member of the Labour Party Black Section to attend the conference. Absolutely no intervention was made during its progress, let alone "calling Jo Richardson the committee chairwoman a racist".'

'A press release and not a leaflet was distributed after the conference had ended; this outlined our response to the Black and Asian Advisory Committee.

'The Labour Party Black Section has respect for Jo Richardson. Unlike some Labour MPs, she is most certainly not a racist. We regard Jo as a friend of our campaign.

'The Black Section disassociates itself from the unwarranted accusations of racism made against her by people totally unconnected with us.'



# Labour women and the trade unions

AT THE LABOUR women's conference an important debate began to unfold about the relationship between women in the unions and the Labour women's organisation. Prominent representatives of the right wing in the trade unions, like Mel Read of ASTMS, attempted to present this as a division between the 'middle class feminists' in the women's sections — who support the Labour Women's Action Committee (LWAC) and 'working class women' in the trade unions. This false division was echoed by Sarah Benton reporting on Women's Conference for the *New Statesman*.

She argued that: '...there is a conflict between a feminist consciousness — stressing women's autonomy — and class consciousness — which demands cross-sex class solidarity, and makes middle class women, despite the sisterhood, suspect allies.'

But the debate is not between 'middle class' feminists and 'working class' trade unionists. The battle in the women's

sections for women's control over the women's representatives in the Labour Party leadership has an exact parallel in a whole series of struggles waged by women in the trade unions against their bureaucratic and male dominated leaderships.

And across the labour movement women meet the same obstacles — the entrenched power of right-wing, male-dominated general councils and na-

tional executives.

Rather than a divide between 'trade unionists' and 'feminists', there is a political divide between those who are in favour of women's self-organisation and power in the labour movement, and those who are against it. In that divide Mel Read is on the one side, and LWAC, women at the STUC, at the TUC women's conference, and at many other trade union conferences are on the other.

Here we reprint an article from LWAC's bulletin at Labour women's conference. Chris Aldred of Aberdeen Trades Council details the struggle that women in the Scottish TUC have been waging for women's power in that trade union organisation. It's parallel with the struggle of LWAC is obvious.



# Women and the Scottish TUC

IN APRIL 1986 the Scottish TUC annual congress threw out a resolution which would have improved women's position in the labour movement. The resolution called for a commitment to creche and childminding facilities, for an end to sexist language in STUC publications, and for the STUC general council to prepare a report on the feasibility of taking three resolutions selected by the STUC women's conference for debate at the STUC annual conference itself.

Women are increasingly well represented at the STUC women's conference, and a wide range of issues is always discussed. Policy of women's conference for more power within the STUC is well supported. But women are still grossly under-represented in the STUC annual conference. There is no legitimate serious communication from the largest gathering of trade union women in Scotland to the debates at the STUC itself. No accountability or formal

links between the women in reserved seats on the general council, and the women's conference — still no arguments to counter the view that the reserved seats for women are just a way for the big unions to carve out extra representation for themselves on the general council. There is no adequate childcare provision for delegates — and none at all for conference visitors.

This year it was agreed that the women's committee can give an address to

the STUC conference, there should be another women's seat on the general council, and that the women's committee report be sent out to all STUC delegates. All small steps in the right direction — but not enough.

Women delegates have not given up yet!

The general council told us that everything has been done to encourage women's participation in the STUC. The women's advisory committee has been renamed the 'women's committee', it's still advisory though, and now has a small budget to work with. And we have a STUC women's bulletin and STUC women's badge.

The number of women attending the STUC annual conference has increased from 45 to 47 this year. Affiliated organisations were asked for the first time to consider submitting one of their three resolutions with the aim of raising issues of concern to their women members.

This has resulted in a spectacular increase in the number of resolutions which mention women, mothers, equality, equal opportunities or discrimination — from 5 per cent in 1985 to 19 per cent of the resolutions in 1986. But lots of organisations did not respond to that call from the general council and many of those who did opted for 'safe' issues such as women's health. Of course cervical cancer screening is important for working women — but what of all the areas which affect women's lives so much, yet where women don't get a mention: transport, local government, the economy, privatisation! We have a long way to go.

# London Labour Party ducks decision on bantustan committee

THE executive of the London Region Labour Party met on Tuesday night and decided to defer a decision on withdrawing its five representatives from the sham Black and Asian Advisory Committee.

Regional chair Glenys Thornton proposed that the item was put off in order that the policy and anti-racist committee of the executive could be given time to discuss the issue.

Madhiv Patil, Southall Black Section chair and a member of the regional ex-

ecutive, told Socialist Action: 'I know that Glenys Thornton is opposed to this resolution. She has told me so.'

'She argued at the meeting that the decision was an important one and every one needs time to consider it carefully before they vote. In fact she is a Kinnock loyalist and wants to avoid further embarrassment to the leadership by seeing London remove its delegates to this committee.'

The next regional executive will rediscuss the resolution calling on London Labour Party to withdraw its five nominees to the bantustan committee.

# NOLS attacks SSiN

THE WITCH-HUNT has permeated into the Labour student movement. NOLS National Committee is to complain to the CLPs of various members of the Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) pressure group

By Danny Nichol, Assistant Secretary CLPD (personal capacity)

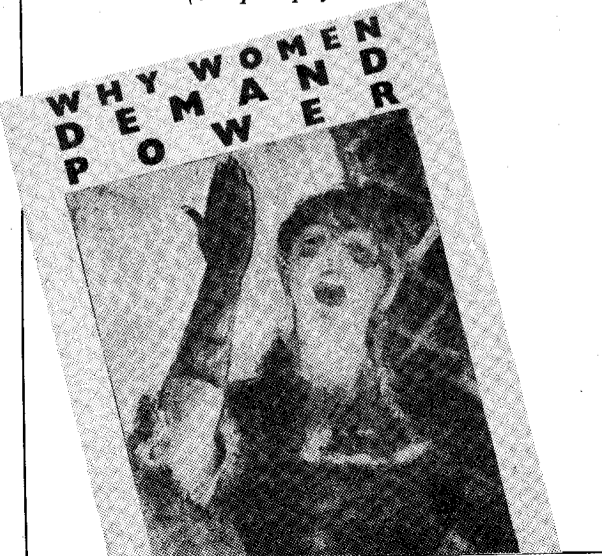
SSiN supporter Simon Pottinger is accused of 'ratting' on NOLS by standing in an NUS election against a NOLS candidate. In fact the person he stood against was not a Labour Party member and was standing as an independent.

In the past Labour Party members have stood against official NOLS candidates and no action has been taken.

The secretary of NOLS complains that SSiN supporters have stood against NOLS candidates in the NUS London region. However these NOLS candidates were selected at a meeting to which Labour Clubs unsympathetic to the NOLS leadership were not invited.

NOLS have also decided to write to Larry Whitty to complain about SSiN standing against official NOLS candidates.

Labour Women's Action Committee pamphlet, price £1, plus 18p p&p, from Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP (cheques payable to Other Books).



**Conference Against the Witch hunt**  
Saturday 21 June, 10 - 5pm  
Regents College, Inner Circle, Regents Park, LONDON

- Speakers
- Andrey Wise**  
co-author of the Minority Report
  - Linda Bellos**  
vice-chair Black Sections
  - Tony Mulhearn**  
Liverpool Councillor, expelled by NEC
  - Councillor Amir Khan**  
Black Section Sparkbrook, expelled
  - Kevin Scally**  
Labour Committee on Ireland, expelled
  - Pat Wall**  
PPC Bradford North
  - Campaign for Labour Party Democracy**  
**Elsie Horstead**  
surcharged Lambeth councillor

Discussion, workshops, creche, food, stalls invited.

Sponsorship and delegation forms available from CAW, C/o Hackney North CLP, 96a Stoke Newington High Street, London N16.

Sponsorship £10, (2) delegates from affiliated organisations £3. Observers welcome.

# How must the party fight racism?

Dear Socialist Action,

What an unpleasant, squalid and dishonest publication you have become. So *Tribune* prints 'vicious racist articles', eh? (SA May 30). Well how about some facts. You quote a *Tribune* editorial saying 'Several black candidates polled less well than their white colleagues'. Why do you not quote the next two lines: 'The Liberal-SDP Alliance exploited this racism quite unscrupulously. Nor was it averse to the anti-gay smear. Such attitudes must be tackled head-on and the hypocrisy, cynicism and sheer opportunism of the liberals and the SDP must be exposed for what it is.'

Racist and anti-gay attitudes must be tackled head-on — and you call that a 'vicious racist outburst'. Are you people serious or have you just escaped from Billy Smart's circus? You do not confront racism by denying its existence.

But your lies do not stop there. You criticise 'an open attack by *Tribune* on the demands of the Women's Action Committee'. Where? When? Do you mean a signed article by a contributor? Can you not bend your kindergarten minds around the concept of a newspaper which acts as a forum for debate and does not vet every article for ideological purity and dictate a democratic centralist line like yourselves?

It may have escaped your notice but a leading member of WAC's executive has a regular column in *Tribune*. That is the nature of the paper — free and open debate. It could never happen in Socialist Action which seems intent on turning itself into the left's answer to *The Sun*.

**NIGEL WILLIAMSON**  
Editor, *Tribune*

Dear Socialist Action,

How dare you selectively quote from my articles in *Tribune* and my paper for Islington Labour Party to give the impression that I support any kind of watering down of anti-racist and positive action policies. This is the exact opposite of the truth. Your publication is almost as contemptible as the scab sheets produced behind barbed wire at Wapping. I enclose a copy of my paper and I demand that you print it in full as my right of reply to your distortions.

We cannot fight racism unless we acknowledge that it exists, analyse what forms it takes and what its origins are. If I report that racist remarks are made to Labour candidates and canvassers why do you assume that I support this? How about the following quotes from my paper? 'The truth is we haven't done much for black people or for gays.' 'To sum up we lost in South because starting from a small base of activists we failed to build a party which went against the grain of a great deal which "Labour" in South Islington had stood for including white supremacy.' 'Priority must be given (by the new council) to anti-racist work. In particular housing policies need to be reviewed in the light of the PSI (Policy Studies Institute) report on discrimination in council housing in Islington. Efforts by TAs to combat racism should be fully backed. Neighbourhood offices should be made aware of their responsibilities, and independent advice organisations should continue to be funded for anti-racist activities which stress concrete work with tenants and members of the public.'

You are right to suggest that in the wake of the setback in South a new right has emerged in Islington calling for the watering down of radical policies. My paper was intended to alert comrades to this danger and I am happy to say that it has succeeded. The claim on your masthead that you are building an alliance for socialism sounds extremely hollow when you attack fellow socialists in this fashion. I see that you don't have a letters column in your paper, so I doubt whether this will ever see the light of day. (Or could it just be that no one bothers with writing to you?)

I suggest you stop trying to cram everything you don't like into the mould of a 'Kinnockite conspiracy'. Such delusions run clear against the first task for socialists; to understand what is happening in order to be able to effect events. But I suspect you will prefer to go on fighting with your eyes shut.

**PHIL KELLY**

The paper which Phil Kelly demands we reprint as his right of reply is approximately 2000 words long — more than a page of the paper. Unfortunately space does not permit its reproduction on the pages of Socialist Action. Anyone who would like a copy of this however should contact us, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP, enclosing 37p to cover the cost of photocopying and postage and we will supply a copy — Editor.

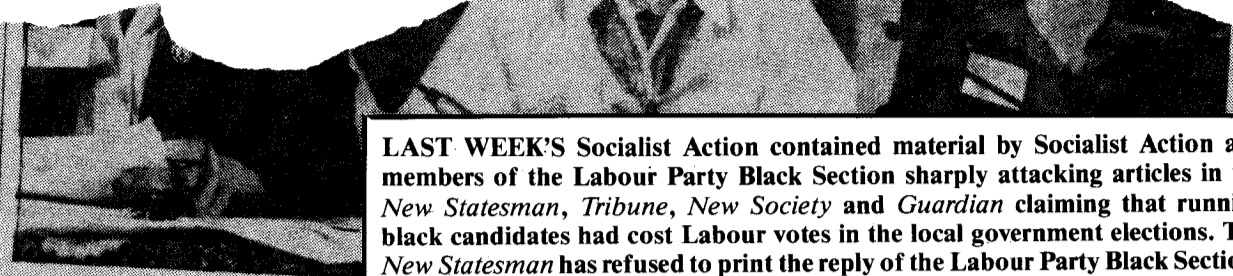
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**THE SOCIALIST** campaigning is running out to tackle the pr Kinnock, and her colleagues, the arms race, aid and political said that One World called for expansion of Third World coun Union of Communication Workers, promised that members would work hard to support One World's efforts. Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

LAST WEEK'S Socialist Action contained material by Socialist Action and members of the Labour Party Black Section sharply attacking articles in the *New Statesman*, *Tribune*, *New Society* and *Guardian* claiming that running black candidates had cost Labour votes in the local government elections. The *New Statesman* has refused to print the reply of the Labour Party Black Sections to these articles — although *New Society* has.

Socialist Action has received replies from Nigel Williamson, editor of *Tribune*, and Phil Kelly, author of the article we criticised in *Tribune*. We print these in full with a reply by Socialist Action. Marc Wadsworth, national chair of the Black Section has also taken up another aspect — the question that *Tribune* fails to support the demands of the Black Section. We anticipate this debate will continue and invite contributions.

## ELECTIONS

BY PHIL KELLY

# Did anti-black prejudice cost Labour crucial seats?

LABOUR'S strong showing in last week's local elections may not have been quite enough to ensure a majority at Westminster because of an unexpectedly good Alliance showing in some areas, and some voters' apparent prejudice against black and openly gay Labour candidates in the inner cities. Labour won control of 12 councils: Brent, Ealing,

districts Blackburn, Brighton, Bristol, Great Grimsby, Hyndburn, Rossendale, Tamworth, Worcester and York, and Lothian.

In four others which appeared to be within reach, Crewe, Chorley, Milton Keynes and Peterborough, losses to the SDP offset gains

by one seat, white Labour candidates were successful in two seats where their black and, in one case, gay running mates polled slightly fewer votes and were eased out by Conservatives.

In one ward Labour and the Tories each won a seat which had been held by the

# Socialist Action replies to Tribune

1 Evidently we do not accuse Nigel Williamson and *Tribune* of conscious racism. If we did that we would write very different articles indeed.

What we state is that the articles appearing simultaneously in *Tribune*, *New Statesman*, *New Society*, and the *Guardian* following the elections on the theme 'black candidates lose votes' aided racists and racism inside, and outside, the party.

Nor are we isolated in that view. The Labour Party Black Section has also strongly replied to, and attacked, the articles carried in *New Society* and *New Statesman*.

2 The way in which this occurred can be seen clearly in the title of the article we referred to in *Tribune*. This selectively referred to cases where it was claimed that black Labour candidates did worse than white.

It referred specifically to Wandsworth — where there has been the biggest publicity for this claim.

But *Tribune's* article was totally cavalier factually. It did not deal with the cases where, on the contrary, black candidates did better than white — for example Duncan Braithwaite who had the highest Labour vote of all Labour Party candidates in his ward. It did not deal at all with the situation in Wandsworth where it is clear the party had not adequately fought racism seriously or selected black candidates — as black Labour candidate Aubrey

Escoffery outlined in detail last week.

*Tribune* could have dealt with what is undoubtedly a real problem of racism here by a headline stating the truth: 'Labour failures to fight racism cost seats'. But instead we have a *Tribune* headline 'Did anti-black prejudice cost Labour crucial seats?'

The problem therefore appears, on this analysis is not the Labour Party's failure to fight racism, which certainly will lose seats, but running black candidates. This rubbish aids every racist inside and outside the party.

By not dealing with the core of the matter, which is the failure of Wandsworth to select black candidates in safe seats, and the indifference which their proposals for fighting racism received, *Tribune's* article covered over the problem — which is the failure of the party to fight racism effectively. Where this was done — in Haringey, Hackney, Brent, and Lambeth — excellent results were achieved.

3 On the women's conference *Tribune* ran whole series of articles leading to women's conference. The one chosen for selling at women's conference itself, however, was spread over nearly half a page, and was entitled, and argued, 'Constitutional change will not win women's votes'.

The editor of *Tribune* knows perfectly well that what is politely termed 'constitutional change' —

and which in reality is the right of women to control their own organisations in the party, and not have them controlled by men — is exactly what WAC fights for.

Nigel Williamson knows how to edit that type of material, and such series, as well as we do. If three or four weeks before the conference *Tribune* had run an article 'Constitutional change will not win women's votes', and at the conference one entitled 'Support WAC's demands', then *Tribune* would have been carrying on a debate in which it was intervening in favour of WAC's demands. Instead the choice and timing of articles was such as to cut against them.

This was made even clearer in the Diary column of 23 May which accused WAC of lining up alongside *Militant* at women's conference

4 Nigel Williamson can of course prove us wrong very simply. He can, for example:

- Run articles explaining the failure to adopt black candidates in areas like Wandsworth which is the real problem.
- Support the demands of the Black Section.
- Call for a Labour Party campaign against racism, including centrally the call for more black candidates and mechanisms to achieve this.
- Clearly support the demands of WAC.

Finally, we hope

*Tribune* will band together with us to overcome one rather shocking point. The *New Statesman* has refused to print the reply of the Black Section to their articles on the local government elections even as a

letter. We hope that the editor of *Tribune* will vigorously demand that the *New Statesman* print this reply. The issues under discussion are far too serious to be dealt with by bureaucratic suppression.

## Mark Wadsworth:

*Tribune* have a long record of excluding black people from writing on their own behalf in their pages. Having one column by a black Prospective Parliamentary Candidate is not how you genuinely reflect a plurality of black political opinion in the party. Black Section is a legitimate voice for black members of the party — but all black people get from *Tribune* is white people writing about us. How about Black Section having a regular column to write about ourselves? They want to choose which individuals' views they carry. We want support for our campaign and our collective demands — as a group and not as individuals.



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**RAPIDLY DEVELOPING** events in the Labour Party are potentially creating the most unified agenda for its left since the late 1970s and the unity achieved around the miners strike. REDMOND O'NEILL reports.

It is not enough for the Tory party to lose the next election. The Labour Party has to win it. In a three party electoral system the two are not the same thing.

To be successful Labour has to exploit the present acute crisis of the Tories and drive back the Alliance. To achieve that Labour has to deliver real gains, a better life, for those it represents and who are its potential supporters.

But this is exactly what Labour has failed to do. Each episode in the Tories recent problems was not used to drive forward Labour's positions, and adopt policies which would solve the problems revealed, but to hold back that advance.

The Westland affair produced no Labour campaign for the removal of Thatcher and was a wasted opportunity. The air raid on Libya from US bases in Britain provoked no Labour campaign for the removal of all US bases. The Chernobyl disaster saw Cunningham and Kinnock way out of line with public opinion, and Labour conference resolutions, in refusing to call for scrapping nuclear power altogether.

The result is that Labour has been drifting to the right and to a potential disaster. Labour's vote, and position in the opinion polls, has been at around 37-38 per cent — marginally less than the vote needed to win an absolute majority at a general election. This means most probably that Labour would not win a majority at a general election and, at best, would win a narrow overall majority, proceed to implement right wing policies, demoralise its supporters, and collapse in another debacle of the type of 1974-79.

Everyone knows, also, what is the alternative being canvassed by some forces inside the party to this course.

Namely that Labour should prepare itself for a coalition with the Alliance. This process would lead to an even greater marginalisation of Labour, as well as any radical policies, and would lead to a still greater demoralisation.

The alternative, obviously, is to go out to build an alternative socialist majority to any deal with the Alliance or to the narrow base of a right wing Labour government.

Kinnock and Hattersley will not fight for such a majority because it would involve leading the Labour Party on the basis of precisely the radical policies which they most violently reject. It would also mean basing Labour's advance on the social forces most committed to fighting the Tories — those fighting in the unions, the mining communities, the black communities, women, the cities, the anti-imperialist campaigns against US bases and British support for apartheid, the movement to free and unify Ireland. Among these issues are forces that do constitute the majority of society. But these are exactly the issues Neil Kinnock has attempted to head off, and has attacked. But what Neil Kinnock has not been able to do however is break up the forces that are fighting for these demands. They are based on too strong social forces.

This is what is new about the situation in the left. There is increasingly developing a left which is not 'oppositional', which does not start off by what it is against in the party, but which knows what it is positively fighting for. To secure women's liberation, to eradicate racism, to defend the mining communities, to reunify Ireland and remove the British, to defend Nicaragua, to end apartheid, to secure the withdrawal of US bases, to create a democratic party, to end unemployment, are among the most important of these demands.

The organisations supporting these demands have not been bought off, or crushed, by Kinnock. They are fighting for a majority in the party and in society. It is on these forces, and these demands, that the Labour Party, and the Labour left, must base itself.



## The left before the miners

**IN ORDER** to judge the new type of left which is emerging in the party it is worth going back and looking at some previous developments.

The left of the 1950s and early 1960s might rightly be termed a 'protest left' — the old *Tribune* left. It placed itself in opposition and complained about the ills of the party as well as supporting some progressive demands. But it had no programme to take power in the party. It had no programme to seek to lead and mould the party itself. It was by its very nature oppositional.

The final peak of this type of left developed in the early 1970s. 'Bennism' emerged as a current accompanying the trade union battles against the Heath government. The key figures on the left in the unions were Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones. The political driving force was the Communist Party which propelled forward the Broad Lefts in the unions and the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions. Tony Benn based himself on these forces to create a Labour left which, unlike those since the 1920s, had a direct base not only in the constituency Labour Parties but crucially, via Scanlon and Jones, in the trade unions. As a result in 1973 Labour adopted an undoubtedly 'left' programme.

This development was broken up by two processes. First Wilson, using the unlimited power of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and leadership, simply overruled the conference. This led to the formation of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD).

The second step, still more decisive was that in 1975, after the EEC referendum, Jones and Scanlon, the key leaders of the Broad Left, allied with Wilson to introduce wage controls. This broke up the movement almost entirely.

The Communist Party, which had allied itself totally with Jones and Scanlon, began its dramatic crisis and

decline. The trade union bureaucracy, backing up the PLP, stepped in to break up the left.

The decisive thing which CLPD introduced into the left at this point was that it was not based on 'protesting' but on changing power within the party. The next development of the Labour left, was the drive to democratise the party to ensure that the disasters of the 1974-79 Labour government could not be repeated. This broke out in full force immediately after the fall of the Labour government in 1979.

This struggle achieved the election of the leader by the electoral college and mandatory reselection of MPs. At the same time the Labour Party adopted policies of opposition to nuclear weapons, for withdrawal from the EEC, and opposition to incomes policies. The SDP split from the Labour Party as a result.

CLPD, and later the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, was the umbrella under which this left was organised. It peaked with Tony Benn's challenge to Dennis Healey for the deputy leadership in 1981. This was only blocked by the votes of MPs who later left to join the SDP — and by the abstentions of individuals such as Neil Kinnock.

This movement was once again halted by the trade union bureaucracy — the most powerful force within the party leadership. They were in particular alarmed by the tremendous impact of Tony Benn's campaign within the unions — which showed how the position of the union bureaucracy could be challenged by developments in the Labour Party. In 1981 the right wing took over control of the NEC. The so-called Bishop's Stortford compromise, in reality a victory of the right, was installed. In 1982 the editorial board of *Militant* were expelled from the party. The coalition of forces within CLPD subsequently broke up. The left passed into a period of fragmentation.

## The left after the miners strike

**THE MINERS** strike gave rise to the present development of the labour movement left — and raised it to a new higher state. It also overcame the fragmentation of the previous period. But in doing so the miners strike brought together forces that so to speak summarised the entire political crisis of British society which has been developing since Thatcher came to power in 1979. The elements which existed previously were drawn together and given a new shape by the miners strike.

The leadership of the NUM itself emerged as the first class struggle leadership since the 1920s. Not only did it wage a gigantic strike against the full weight of the state, but to do so it tied together in support of the strike a whole series of social forces — most spectacularly the role of women in the strike, but also a whole series of other layers. It was able to do so because these forces had themselves been developing with their own dynamic.

It is also clear, in retrospect, just how significant the year 1981 was in British politics. It was the year of the depth of the economic recession, the year of the split from the Labour Party to create the SDP, the year of the first round of black uprisings, the year of Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign, the year Livingstone was elected leader of the GLC, the year of the hunger strike in Ireland, the year Scargill was elected president of the NUM, in early 1982 the Campaign group of MPs was created. 1981 was the year British bourgeois and working class politics was blown apart.

In effect it took two years for Thatcher to so to speak, 'compress' British society. After that time it exploded —

with the fragments being created then coming together at a new qualitative level in 1984 to create the miners strike and its impact. The entire shape of British politics today is a product of that explosion. The development of the SDP, and the forces around the miners strike created a new shape to British politics.

It is therefore worth briefly outlining the developments that came together in the miners strike and post miners strike left.

- The greatest wave of radicalisation of women since the suffragettes had begun to develop from the late 1960s. It succeeded in defeating all attempts to repeal the abortion laws including under Thatcher. The TUC made history by becoming the first major trade union movement in the world to call a demonstration in the defence of abortion rights.

Within the Labour Party the Women's Action Committee became independent of CLPD in 1982 and women's demands exploded onto the floor of Labour Party conference.

In this period the Labour women's conference developed to become the most radical national body of the labour movement. In the trade unions a parallel radicalisation for demands of women developed. Women Against Pit Closures developed as the most advanced women's movement in Britain since the suffragettes.

- In the summer of 1981 the youth of Britain's inner city black communities rose up against racism and police harassment. Battles went on for weeks in Liverpool and for days elsewhere.

The failure of Labour to select a single black candidate for a safe seat in

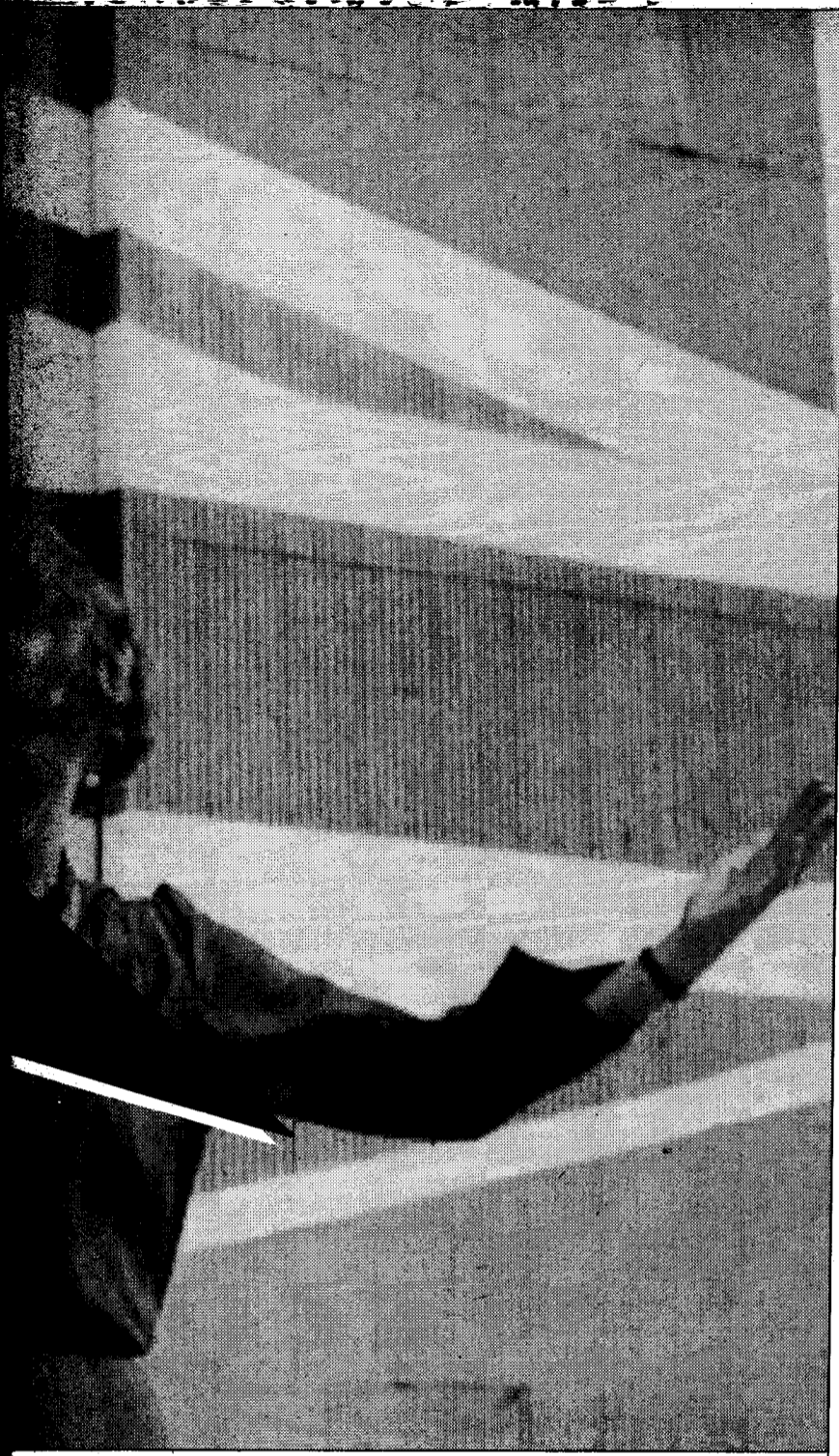
the 1983 general election dovetailed with this explosion of black youth to create the basis for the Labour Party Black Section — the most developed national black organisation in British history.

- On 9 April 1981 Bobby Sands, on hunger strike in the H blocks, was elected member of parliament for Fermanagh and South Tyrone with 30,492 votes. On 5 May 1981 Bobby Sands MP starved to death. He was followed by nine other martyrs. Over 100,000 people marched at Bobby Sands funeral — the equivalent of a march of two million in Britain.

The hunger strike transformed the Irish national liberation struggle. The courage of the hunger strikers created a 32 county struggle. In the Labour Party a movement of revulsion against Labour Party's support for Thatcher against the hunger strikers resulted in the development of the Labour Committee on Ireland and the opening of a dialogue with Sinn Fein.

In Ireland the hunger strike propelled Gerry Adams supporters into the leadership of Sinn Fein.

- In May 1981 Labour won the GLC election and Ken Livingstone became leader — inaugurating the GLC's dialogue with SinnFein and a wave of struggle by left Labour local authorities against Tory attacks on jobs, services, and democracy. A swilling out of corrupt racist local Labour mafias was deepened. The GLC itself was the most popular exercise in local government ever staged by the Labour Party —



government left collapsed in 1985, as right wingers 'emerged' under the test of a confrontation with the government, Liverpool and Lambeth, based on two of the most deprived areas of the whole country, stood and fought. In 1986 a major influx of black and left wing councillors took place in the local government elections.

The post-miners strike left, in short, made a link with a whole range of mass social struggles. It was a far deeper left socially than that which existed in either the early 1970s — focussed on trade union struggle and the Alternative Economic Strategy — or that in the late 1970s focussed on constitutional reform. It also developed in a huge upsurge of international class struggles — those in Nicaragua, South Africa, and against nuclear weapons being the most important.

The post-miners strike left represented an enormous deepening compared to anything that had gone before. Its cutting edge was the miners, but they were linked to far wider forces. Even where there was a continuity in organisation the entire left was reorganised and developed by the miners struggle and following events — particularly the second round of black uprisings in 1985.

This social deepening of the left has also meant that while Kinnock has been able to mount a serious offensive against it, he has not been able to buy it off or break it up. The NUM was defeated in the strike and weakened but Kinnock was unable to smash and remove Scargill. Women Against Pit Closures still exists and massive support for the miners continues to exist throughout the labour movement.

The Labour Party Black Section has significantly increased in strength. Despite considerable efforts Kinnock has not been able to break the women's movement in the party. Imperialism attempted to derail Sinn Fein's support in Ireland with the Anglo-Irish Accord, but Sinn Fein remains massively stronger and more politically developed than before the hunger strikes. A series of 'left' councils were split and defeated but two, Liverpool and Lambeth, did fight — Ted Knight may have been removed by the courts in Lambeth but he has been replaced by Linda Bellos and the Black Section who have a still firmer potential social base than Knight did.

The massive social forces that were compressed by Thatcher in 1979, which broke up the existing structure of British politics in 1981, and were brought together by the miners in 1984-85, continue to work themselves out.

The present, fashionable, 'doom and gloom' on the left is completely misplaced. Taken in a historical perspective the social roots of the left today are far deeper than they have ever been. It is simply an illusion to believe that the capitalist class would respond to the emergence of these new forces without the most violent attempt to destroy them — using Kinnock as one of their chief instruments to do this. The offensive which has been seen against the left represents one of the inevitable attempted reactions against what has developed. It is a sharp damaging counter-offensive against the rise of the left — not the beginning of the end of the left wing of the labour movement.

What has taken place since 1981, qualitatively deepened by the miners strike also shows, an implicit developing agenda for the left — one indicated by the very developments which have been outlined. The task is to render that development conscious — to bring together in a serious, conscious, organised way the forces that the miners strike could bring together spontaneously through its sheer power and, most importantly, to link these to an international strategy and struggle.

The new forces and organisations which erupted in 1981, and came together around the miners strike, have to be organised in the campaigns and organisations that embody them, in the CLPs where they are strong, and to

prepare the decisive and difficult task of taking these developments through the trade unions. The key guiding threads of that development are anti-imperialism, self-organisation of the oppressed, class independence and working class democracy. Put in a word they amount to creating an anti-imperialist current in the British labour movement — one based on the fight not only against the international policy of British imperialism but all its internal ramifications as well. The massive entry of women and black people into the working class since World War II gives an unprecedented opportunity to do this.

Summing up some of the goals which have to be achieved in such an agenda for the left they are:

- The creation of an alternative socialist political majority to either the

to organise and respond to the demands of women, black people, and young people.

The demands of the Black Section, of WAC, the necessity to build a mass LPYS, the need to develop black and women's self-organisation in the unions, a fight for lesbian and gay rights, are not 'secondary issues' but at the core of any socialist perspective.

- Developing the fight back for jobs, to defend services and living conditions, is today a brutal struggle. Thatcher has consciously set out to divide the working class and labour movement and achieved considerable success in this. Conditions where, on the one hand, four million people are out of work and, on the other, average real wages have gone up by 10 per cent, creates tremendous problems for uniting the labour movement.

The fight for the shorter working week, for a national minimum wage,



Tories or any deal with the Alliance. This includes rejecting any form of coalition government with the Alliance or other capitalist parties.

- The creation of international alliances in the fight for socialism. The most urgent of such struggles today are those in solidarity with those fighting US imperialism in Central America, with the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and with the international struggle against nuclear weapons.

The possibility to launch a serious campaign for the removal of all US bases from Britain will powerfully deepen this.

Such an internationalist perspective also means linking up with those fighting for socialist democracy in Eastern Europe.

- A specific decisive place in the fight against imperialism for socialists in Britain is represented by Ireland. Ireland is Britain's oldest colony. Uniquely six of its counties are held within the British state. Total British withdrawal from Ireland has a uniquely important place among the tasks of British socialists.

- Developing and deepening self-organisation of the oppressed within the labour movement is a decisive axis of advance today. It is a vital part of overcoming what Trotsky described as the 'aristocratic' character of the British labour movement — its failure

against YTS and the other cheap labour schemes, for health and safety at work, to defend jobs, all have to be the core of an alternative socialist policy for the economy. Without this, socialism appears either as impractical, not linked to the direct concerns of the working class, or as simply abstract plans produced by academics.

- Finally none of this will be successful without a continuing drive to democratise the labour movement — both the Labour Party and the unions.

This of course is an enormous agenda for the left — one that would revolutionise British society and its labour movement. But it is one which, as a minority current, is beginning to emerge — and one that is coherent and interrelated. What it would mean in practice was revealed in its full scope in the miners strike and, in a more fragmented form, in the campaigns and struggles which have emerged before, during, and after it. They give the beginning of an historical opportunity to transform the nature of the British labour movement.

The task today is to thrash out a common agenda for this task across the left and to organise these forces across every part of the labour movement — the CLPs, the unions, within the parliamentary party, in the black community, and in every other area where they exist. What was achieved for one year 'spontaneously' by the miners strike through its sheer power, now has to be achieved by the left as a conscious worked out policy.

whatever the final outcome. The road to the battles in Liverpool and Lambeth was started.

- CND had developed massively after 1979. In 1982 its left wing led the opposition to the Malvinas war — as it led again, in 1986, the opposition to the US attacks on Libya and Britain's complicity in this.

- In December 1981 Arthur Scargill was elected president of the NUM — commencing the movement which culminated in the 1984-85 strike — and the emergence of the first class struggle leadership in the British labour movement for sixty years.

The great historical contribution of the NUM, as we have noted, was not simply the sheer scale of that strike — the longest mass strike in the history of any imperialist country. It was that in this struggle, with an increasing degree of consciousness, the NUM knitted together for the first time all the forces which had been created in the previous period. That strike began to show, in embryo, the type of alliances which alone can bring about a socialist transformation of Britain.

- The Campaign group of MPs had come initially into existence in early 1982. It was formally launched in November 1982. As the Campaign group explained its own formation: The reasoning behind the establishment of the group within parliament was principally borne out of dissatisfaction among PLP members with the inactive role of the Tribune

group within parliament and also the need to establish a more positive campaigning role for MPs outside parliament with and on behalf of the labour and trade union movement.' For the first time in recent British history a group of MPs began to attempt to systematically link up with struggles going on outside parliament.

The occasion, and the testing, of that came with the miners strike. The Campaign group turned into the strike and became, in the words of Tony Benn, the parliamentary support group of the miners. Campaign group MPs spoke to over 1,000 meetings in support of the miners and raised tens of thousands of pounds. Campaign group MPs such as Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner became totally identified with the strike.

The result was that the Campaign group emerged out of the miners strike far to the left of the positions it had entered it — with the group as a whole, or leading members, calling for an end to British membership of NATO, the removal of all US bases, support for the demands of WAC, defence of the black youth, voting against the Anglo-Irish Accord. The campaign group began to establish closer links with the party outside parliament.

- The Lesbian and Gay movement was developed by the miners strike. Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners was a spectacularly successful and significant campaign. The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) developed and strengthened itself.

- While a large part of the local

**THE LABOUR Committee on Ireland (LCI)'s submission to the Labour Party NEC represent one of the most comprehensive statements ever made of the case for total British withdrawal from Ireland. It is a major contribution to the discussion taking place within the party on Labour's policy towards Ireland.**

**Last week we carried major extracts from the statement on why Britain must withdraw from Ireland. This week we carry the conclusion of the statement — on why and how the Labour Party should prepare a policy of total withdrawal from Ireland.**

THE argument often used against withdrawal — that it is 'more of a slogan than solution', or that it is 'too simple' — we find unconvincing. Much hostility against the demand for withdrawal comes from the fact that whereas up till now it has not been advocated by any major political party in Britain, opinion polls show it to be overwhelmingly the most favoured solution in the minds of the British people as a whole.

Essentially the slogan 'Troops Out!' embodies an approach which is for a unilateral withdrawal of Britain from Ireland and a recognition of the right of the Irish people as a whole to democratically determine their own government as they see fit. Militarily, this means a withdrawal of British armed forces; politically, it means a termination of sovereignty.

In supporting the principle of the reunification of Ireland, we are agreed that British political and military withdrawal must come eventually. The argument which revolves around the timescale for such a withdrawal essentially involves an implicit set of preconditions that must be met in order for this to proceed.

The consequences of maintaining partition, are not an accidental phenomenon. Partition cannot be maintained by anything other than undemocratic, authoritarian methods. Such methods themselves exacerbate the situation increasing polarisation and requiring even more severe measures of repression to maintain what a Conservative spokesperson once referred to as an 'acceptable level of violence'.

The longer the present situation continues, the greater the obstacles to a peaceful transition become. Labour's policy for peace must mark a radical break with the status quo and establishment concerns on the need to maintain partition.

## Dublin

The most commonly expressed 'precondition' within the Labour Party is that before Britain can withdraw it must first modify partition creating unity between Catholic and Protestant workers. Such unity is ruled out within the parameter of the sectarian Six County State.

The most commonly expressed 'precondition' within Conservative circles is that a future Irish Government should be acceptable to the British establishment. This acceptability refers to the sum of economic, political, social policies to be adopted by such a government.

It implies membership of NATO as much as a firmly repressive policy to suppress republicanism. It requires guarantees for the future of British economic exploitation as much as measures to restrict the power of a fully unified trade union movement.

It is the inability of the Dublin Government to be able to offer such a package (which essentially cedes sovereignty to the City of London) which accounts for the lack of support for withdrawal from establishment sources.

Far from it being the case that an enlightened British government should create the conditions for a united Ireland; it is our view that British presence and the border *themselves* are an obstacle to social, political or economic progress.

Britain has, through preservation of its own interests, mismanaged



# Why and how Labour must withdraw from Ireland

Ireland for hundreds of years and created the problems faced today. It is Ireland's sovereign right to determine its own form of government and through its democratic institutions to decide all questions of national and international policy, free from outside interference. As socialists, we would look upon the possibility of a united working class, the separation of church and state, the opportunities for an Irish government to create national economic planning with optimism. Whatever government is elected in the aftermath of a British withdrawal will be an *Irish* government and judged by the Irish people.

Although it is sadly inevitable that loyalist politicians will *resist* a united Ireland, it is by no means certain they could rely on popular support from the mass of Protestants. The possession of arms by itself is not a sufficient condition for a 'blood bath' scenario, for armed resistance or a prolonged civil war.

Comparison can be made between the Ulster Workers' Council strike (which succeeded in mobilising loyalist workers round an obtainable demand of bringing down the Power Sharing Executive) in 1974 and the Loyalist Workers' Strike of 1977 (which was unsuccessful in mobilising the same people to impose a return to majority rule). The degree to which loyalist demagogues can rouse the Protestants is in proportion to the perception of the obtainability of the goals of the action and the amount of overt/covert support obtained from Britain itself.

## Home Rule

The historian Michael Farrell (author of *Arming the Protestants*) has shown that widespread Protestant opposition to Home Rule was determined by three factors; the private assurances given Unionists that Home rule would not be conceded, equivocation of the government, and the arming of the Protestants.

The strongest measure which can be taken against future reaction is to remove the argument that resistance by the Loyalists can be successful in reversing British policy. It is perhaps telling to remember that those who live in most danger from the threat of Loyalist reaction — the nationalists of the Six Counties, are those who are most persistently calling for British withdrawal.

Whereas the Unionist regime had

a material interest in the denial of civil liberties and democratic and religious rights to the minority in the six county state; the reverse is true for the government of a united Ireland. The first steps in consolidation of legitimacy of the new regime would automatically be to avert the threat of reaction or civil war. Every party pushing for the reunification of Ireland has been at pains to point out that civil rights and liberties would be guaranteed for all.

The reactionary ideology of loyalism has been sustained through the existence of the sectarian state. Whilst that state continues to exist, there is no question of 'consent to a united Ireland' being forthcoming. That is why Ireland was partitioned as it was in the first place. What the government of a new Ireland will rapidly have to achieve is the raising of the aspirations of the mass of Northern Protestants beyond that of the siege mentality.

## Mutiny

Since the security forces have been engaged in a sixteen year war of attrition against the forces of nationalism in Ireland, they will not welcome the return of a Labour Government committed to Irish reunification. The danger of individual breaches of discipline or more general mutiny was indicated both at the time of the Curragh Mutiny and in 1974 when senior army officers dictated policies to an elected government. It is a high risk area.

The UDR as a unit of the British Army must be disbanded and disbanded immediately. Other units of the British Army should be withdrawn to Britain immediately. The timescale of this should be one of emergency evacuation procedure and elected representatives should be assigned to work alongside key army personnel until the process is complete. These representatives would be directly accountable to the Cabinet and be vested with the authority to veto Army commands.

We consider that the ability of a Labour Government to control its own state apparatus to be the most dangerous aspect of a withdrawal policy — we do not underestimate the threat to parliamentary democracy if it were not to prove possible.

Ernie Roberts MP presented a Private Member's Bill in 1985 which supporters claim satisfied legislative requirements for a termination of

British Sovereignty over Northern Ireland. We note that termination of British jurisdiction over Hong Kong was achieved with legislation of a mere one paragraph.

It would be necessary to supplement such a measure with a further Bill which would abolish all Emergency Legislation, Plastic Bullets etc. and declare an amnesty for all political prisoners.

A number of outstanding financial arrangements would have to be cleared up, and the Labour Party should look sympathetically upon claims for compensation for personal and economic damage made against the government.

Although payments to personnel employed by the state would cease on termination of jurisdiction, payment should be made direct to the appropriate agencies in Ireland. Existing social security/pensions should be paid for an interim period and appropriate authorities would have to be established on a decentralised basis to administer this. The aim should be to minimise hardship. The British Government should remain open to negotiation with all political representatives of Ireland and draw up a treaty of friendship and non-interference with a new government as soon as possible.

## Currents

It should not be excluded that the immediate aftermath of British withdrawal would see a very rapid transformation of the political spectrum. We could expect a very quick differentiation in the Unionist camp as political options of participation/co-operation/resistance were adopted by different currents (although strictly speaking those in favour of participation or co-operation would, by that point be ex-Unionists). It is also likely that the existing parties in the 26 Counties whose parameters are defined by reference to the civil war might also undergo a transformation. Trade unions might have a strong case for their own political representation.

All such conjecture is speculation. The important thing for the Labour Party to do is to state categorically that a future Labour Government would not seek to interfere in such a process but would recognise a government which received legitimacy from a majority of the Irish people.

For such a radical policy to be suc-

cessful, it would be foolhardy to think that it could be implemented immediately a Labour Government were returned to office *unless* the time prior to such an election were not used to prepare the ground. Labour's preparation should start as soon as policy has been agreed at Conference and consist principally of a 'hearts and minds' campaign.

The long term objective of such a campaign would be two fold. *Firstly* to convince Unionists in the Six Counties that Labour was absolutely committed to carrying out the policy of immediate withdrawal. *Secondly*, to build such a popular movement of support in this country behind that policy that the security forces will not refuse to carry it out.

The Labour Party should set up a Commission charged with responsibility to oversee our fight against abuses of civil liberties which result from government policies on Ireland. Such a body should reach out to involve local parties, councils, women's organisations and the trade union movement in public education about plastic bullets, the PTA, Diplock Courts, the 'supergrass' system, army shoot-to-kill policies and strip searching. This should aim to discredit direct rule and British involvement in Ireland.

The Labour Party should establish a Commission charged with responsibility to monitor and combat censorship in the media. Its role should be to involve and promote consciousness of media workers, journalists and consumers of their responsibility for fair reportage and to fight anti-Irish racism.

The Labour Party should immediately recognise the Irish in Britain as an ethnic minority and seek to promote the organisation of Irish people in their own organisations for political and cultural purposes.

Not only do the Irish in Britain potentially provide the firmest base of support for a radical policy on Ireland, but they will organise a most effective transmission belt to convince the wider public of its attractiveness.

The Labour Party should constantly monitor and challenge discrimination against the Irish in all walks of life and encourage through financial support, where appropriate, Irish cultural events.

## Discussion

Education officers and departments of trade unions will be encouraged to promote the widest possible discussion of Labour's Irish policy in the constituencies and unions. Full opportunities will be given for delegations wishing to travel to Ireland and find out more and for Irish delegations to tour in Britain. Particularly important will be exchanges of trade unionists, women's organisations, disarmament groups and civil liberties campaigners.

The Parliamentary party should use every opportunity to focus public attention on the debates in the House of Commons and impose a three-line Whip against all proposals which even implicitly recognise partition or direct rule.

The Labour party will campaign in the European Assembly and throughout the international labour movement to focus attention on the injustice of British rule in Ireland.

The importance which we give to a high profile for Labour's commitment to withdrawal makes it obvious that such a policy would form a centrepiece of any manifesto. It is also vitally important that Labour starts with a pledge that all negotiations and discussions be made public. Any threats which we might expect both from the Unionists and from the security forces and secret services must be immediately made public.

**Read and distribute the Labour Committee on Ireland's submission to the NEC.**

**Available from Labour Committee on Ireland, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX, 40p + 20p postage.**



## International

## Why Reagan is scrapping SALT II

LAST WEEK, on Tuesday 27 May, the Reagan administration announced its intention to abandon the two Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties, SALT I and II, at the end of this summer. SALT I was agreed between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1972, SALT II in 1979. The latter was never ratified by the US. Instead, the White House announced, it will continue the SDI (Strategic Defence Initiative) allegedly aimed at making all 'offensive' missiles 'obsolete'.

This latest move is in line with repeated claims by the USA that the Soviet Union is violating the SALT II treaty. Reagan claimed that only the US is adhering to the SALT agreements.

Making the announcement of his intention to abandon SALT, Reagan said: 'In the future the United States must base decisions regarding its strategic force structure on the nature and magnitude of the threat posed by Soviet strategic forces and not on the standards contained in the SALT structure which has been undermined by Soviet non-compliance.'

But this claim by the US administration is not believed even within NATO itself.

White House spokesperson Larry Speakes gave two reasons for the USA's announcement: reversing what he called an 'unprecedented Soviet build-up', and putting pressure on to make 'progress' in the Geneva arms control talks.

By last weekend the Soviet Union had responded. In a statement issued by Tass, the official news agency, the Soviet Union said that as soon as the United States exceeded

It has two options to achieve this.

The first is simply to try to out-build the Soviet Union. The US economy is twice as big as that of the USSR — and far more technologically advanced. Reagan calculates that in a straight forward arms race the United States will win — as well as doing great damage to the Soviet economy as it is forced to divert resources from civilian to military uses.

The second tactic is to combine Star Wars with so-called 'deep cuts' in strategic missiles. The latter proposal sounds reasonable. But it is important to understand that the combination is an aggressive move by the United States.

No one believes a Star Wars system can be built which can knock out all incoming rockets. Reagan also calculates that the USSR does not have the technology or resources for a Star Wars programme that will rival the American one.

The USSR's only response to Star Wars therefore is to increase its own number of missiles to make sure that they would penetrate the US defences. By coupling Star Wars with 'deep cuts' Reagan is in fact demanding that the Soviet Union reduces its forces to a point where they could not penetrate the Star Wars system but where the US could attack the USSR with a full

nuclear attack.

Hence Reagan's proposal to combine Star Wars with 'deep cuts' is the exact opposite of Gorbachev's proposal that Star Wars be abandoned and a radical reduction be made in the number of missiles as a first step to eliminating nuclear weapons altogether. Gorbachev's proposals would reduce the arms race and move toward eliminating nuclear weapons. Reagan's are an aggressive move against the USSR.

The United States scrapping of SALT II is yet another step in its aggressive military policy. It leaves no doubt as to who is responsible for the escalation of the nuclear arms race.

the SALT II limits, the Soviet union would take 'the necessary steps to prevent the military-strategic parity from being upset'. In other words, they will increase their own nuclear arsenal commensurately with that of the United States.

By Carol Turner

The SALT agreements put ceilings on the number of long-range strategic weapons developed and deployed by the USA and the Soviet Union. The USA has announced that it will still go ahead with scrapping the out-of-date Poseidon submarines. But this decision is just as likely to be entirely for economic reasons. They would cost \$300 million each to convert to a hunter-killer role and the US navy prefers spending the money on other options.

At the same time, the United States will continue rearming its ageing B-52 bombers with air-launched cruise missiles. This is expected to take only two months to exceed the SALT II limit.

The reason the United States has decided to scrap SALT II is clear. It is aiming to secure nuclear superiority over the USSR.



## Nicaragua rebuilds its economy

THE WAR being waged by the US backed contras, as well as the United States economic embargo, continues to weigh down heavily on the Nicaraguan government. The FSLN has been replying by deepening the agrarian reform, cracking down on the flourishing illegal market, and taking urgent steps to increase production. MARIA MERRI reports.

THERE are estimated to be 40,000 illegal traders in Nicaragua. The repressive side of dealing with this illegal trading includes cleaning out the markets in the capital city, especially the infamous 'Eastern Market', the bastion of illegal trading; the selective renewal of trading licenses in January; and the 'iron fist' price control operations by the Ministry of Internal Trade (MICOIN).

The other side of this attack includes the creating of 'people's inspectors', named by the Sandinista Defence Committees (CDS) and the unions. They are to serve as auxiliaries for the MICOIN's inspectors so that supervision can be stepped up.

Another measure is the establishment of regional garden farms. These are intended in time to supply the cities and prevent the black market prices, at least for fruit and vegetables.

An increase in agricultural and industrial productivity is crucial for the country. This is a major means of reducing shortages and therefore speculation. But there are and will remain many obstacles in the way of

achieving this. On the objective level first of all, there is a chronic shortage of spare parts and raw materials, which has been aggravated by the US blockade.

But there are also subjective obstacles. In agriculture, for example, the workday is around four hours. In fact, it has gone up a bit. After the revolution, it is estimated that the workday fell to two hours.

This is a phenomenon inherent in any revolutionary process. It happens when the old constraints on workers are removed, especially on those doing the hardest jobs. It has to be understood as a natural thing. But it obviously poses some economic problems.

While waging an ideological campaign to explain the importance of rising production for developing the country, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has decided to give priority to the productive sectors of the working class and the peasantry in dividing up what is in short supply. This is to the disadvantage of other sectors, such as

the services and administration.

Moreover, this year almost all social investments — as in education, housing and health — will be earmarked for the countryside. The objective is to stimulate a sector vital to Nicaragua because of what it exports but also because of its production of food crops, and in this way to stem the rural exodus that has swollen Managua out of all proportion.

However, this measure is as much political as it is economic. With the turn taken in 1985 in the application of the agrarian reform, the distribution of land en masse and individually to the peasants, it is necessary to firm up the 'workers' and peasants' alliance' and the backbone of the revolution, according to the expression of the national leadership of the FSLN.

This choice, which involves consciously favouring some sections of the population to the detriment of others, automatically incurs dissatisfaction among those momentarily left out.

A number of measures have not exactly brought cheers from those affected. That goes for the increase in prices in Managua, which is higher than in the rest of the country. It goes also for the new working hours in the capital.

The workday has been reduced and working time has been spread over the

week. But workers in the tertiary sector and administration now have to work Saturday mornings. The reason for this was to try to solve the bottlenecks in mass transit in Managua.

The target of the 1986 economic plan is to achieve a growth rate of 5 per cent over last year and to raise gross domestic product by 4.9 per cent which would make it possible to bring the economy back up to the level of 1983.

The Sandinista government hopes that the measures taken since January-February 1985 will bear fruit and that it will be possible to achieve an increase of 13 per cent in industrial production and 4.3 per cent in agriculture.

However, the shortage of labour in the productive sectors is undoubtedly a substantial obstacle to achieving these ambitious objectives, even leaving aside the unknowns of the military situation.

The war has exacerbated the deformations of the country's economic structure, artificially swelling the tertiary sector. According to the Ministry of Planning, in 1985 the primary sector accounted for 25.1 per cent of GDP; the secondary sector, 27.3 per cent and the tertiary sector, 47.6 per cent. This breakdown reflects the extent of unproductive activities.

Will 1986 be a better year than 1985? A certain number of positive factors

indicate that it will. The price of coffee, the country's main export product, has soared on the world market, stabilising at around 150 dollars per 100 kilogrammes as against 145 dollars last year. Moreover, this year the contras were unable to interfere with the harvest which was excellent.

On the other hand, the prices for some other traditional export products, cotton and sugar, are in the doldrums. This year, Nicaragua intends to reduce the land under cotton by 20 per cent in favour of nontraditional crops.

On the military front, the defeat of the contras is becoming more pronounced. But for that very reason the possibility of a direct intervention by US imperialism may be reinforced. Everything seems to suggest that the anticipation of such an eventuality influenced the economic choice that the Sandinistas made, in particular their giving priority to relaunching the agrarian reform.

Of course, the measures that have been taken have reinforced discontent, apathy and indifference in some sections of the population toward the government's policy. But if major developments occur, the attitude of the peasantry will no doubt be decisive.

• From International Viewpoint



## Poland

General Jaruzelski's military government has captured and arrested Zbigniew Bujak, former leader of Warsaw Solidarity and one of the leading figures in the underground temporary coordination commission. He has escaped arrest for over four years. The authorities have also captured Konrad Bielinski and Ewa Kulik, two other leading Solidarity activists.

Demonstrations against Bujak's arrest were broken up on Sunday in Warsaw with tear gas and batons.

## Taiwan

The United States 'showpiece of democracy' which for 20 years held China's seat at the United Nations, has just had its first opposition demonstration in 37 years. A dictatorship has ruled Taiwan's 19 million people since the Kuomintang fled there after its defeat in the Chinese revolution. All parties are banned and martial law, declared on 19 May 1949, is still in force.

Last week 400 people marched to the presidential palace where they were met 1200 riot police to be told that 'marching is forbidden because of the need to retake the mainland'. 'They have had 37 years to retake the mainland and they haven't done it yet,' said one of the organisers. 'It's just an excuse to stomp on us, they treat us like pigs.'

## South Pacific

Thirteen countries have signed a draft pact to make the South Pacific a nuclear free zone. It is proposed to combine it with a treaty covering South America and the South Eastern Pacific, and a pact prohibiting all weapons in Antarctica. The pact, which must be ratified by its signatories, is expected to be endorsed when the states meet at the South Pacific forum in August.

The treaty prohibits nuclear testing, dumping nuclear waste, and the basing or storage of nuclear weapons. China and the USSR have indicated their willingness to sign. France, which regularly tests nuclear bombs in the Mururoa atoll, is almost certain to refuse. Britain and the US are 'studying' the proposals. The US is already concerned with the effects of New Zealand's non-nuclear policy, which has led to US warships being banned from New Zealand's ports and waters.

## Belgium

On Saturday Brussels saw one of its largest demonstrations since the war in protest against the right wing Martens government's austerity policies. Around 150,000 marched in the culmination of four weeks of strikes that have paralysed many of Belgium's services. But at the rally union leaders announced that the union was going to join talks with the government and that the strikes will be suspended.

## Mexico

Organisers of over 5000 people who are still homeless from last year's earthquake in Mexico are threatening to invade the pitch during the World Cup. The Mexican government is spending \$6 million on security plans involving 30,000 police.

Ticket sales are slow. The average Mexican wage has sunk, thanks to IMF imposed austerity policies, to less than \$30 per week, while speculators have driven prices up to twice this for a ticket. But the organisers won't lack money. The 12 multinationals who have reached the exalted status of 'official sponsor' are thought to have paid a minimum price of \$7 million for the privilege. The exact figure is secret and in many cases greater.

For example, for a paltry \$10 million — enough to rehouse all the remaining earthquake victims — Coca Cola will get four billboards on the pitch and the right to call itself 'the official drink of the World Cup'.

# International VIEWPOINT



## FORTNIGHTLY NEWS REVIEW

Subscription rates: 6 months £9 (95FF); 1 year £16 (175FF). Payment in French francs if possible. Personal cheques to PEC and mail to: IV, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil.

Postal orders to PEC, CCP Account no. 2-322 42T Paris. Bank transfers to PEC BNP Robespierre, 153 rue de Paris, 93108 Montreuil, France.



## Spies like us

ON RELEASE for some time now, *Spies Like Us* was not a film I was particularly keen to see. How I ended up seeing it is another story that I won't dwell on. However, after viewing the film I found my initial misgivings were misplaced and that the film was an enjoyable and, and in one way at least, refreshing experience.

The spies of the title are two Pentagon burglars sent on a mission by the CIA, unaware of what it is they have accomplished. They are in fact unwitting decoys for two other agents whose purpose is to track down a stray soviet missile in Siberia.

The plot, such as it is,

takes second place to the various misadventures these two expendables find

Reviewed by Terry Luke

themselves caught up in. Part homage to, part send up of those old Hope and Crosby road movies (it's even corny enough to

feature Hope in a cameo role) and littered with references to other movies, *Spies Like Us*, is funny enough to entertain even the most cynical, including the people I saw it with.

Taking swipes at Star Wars may not be the ultimate statement a film could make, but with its good humour, its portrayal of the Russians as human, and with our heroes refusal to be blood-thirsty Reaganites — when they refuse to kill their adversaries a compromise is reached whereby they tranquilise them instead — I could think of a lot worse ways to spend a couple of hours. Sitting through a Stallone film, for instance.

It is in fact the first genuine detente movie for some time. And in these days of Rambo and Chuck Norris that's got to be good, even if only cinematically.

Hopefully there might yet be an American film that presents the Nicaraguans as regular people who listen to the old Stax records. Too much to ask?

Directed by John Landis and starring Dan Aykroyd, Chevy Chase and Donna Dixon, *Spies Like Us* is on general release across Britain.

## Other Books

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

**Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950,**

Jack and Ray Simons, International Defence and Aid Fund, 702pp, £5.00 plus £1.33 postage.

**Part of My Soul**

Winnie Mandela, Penguin, 159pp, £2.95 plus 25p postage.

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

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

**Nelson Mandela: The struggle is my life,** IDAF, 208pp, £1.85 plus 46p postage.

**The Freedom Charter,**

African National Congress, 106pp, £1.95 plus 22p postage.

**South Africa: the struggle for a birthright** Mary Benson, IDAF, 314pp, £4.00 plus 59p postage

**Whirlwind before the storm,**

IDAF, 365pp, £4.00 plus 66p postage.

Make cheques or postal orders payable to IMRS.

Orders with payment should be sent to: Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

## Weekly paper fund drive success

AFTER a tremendous last-minute effort, the fund drive to defend the weekly Socialist Action reached £14,414. Whilst this fell slightly short of our £15,000 target, the final figure represents a tremendous achievement. It should be recalled that since we launched the fund, we suffered a split in our editorial board. Despite this we made 96 per cent of our original target.

Just to end on a cautionary note. We did fall £586 short of our goal. This means that we will still, therefore, unfortunately miss two issues of our paper prior to the summer break. We need to raise £250 per issue over and above our income from sales to reinstate an issue.

From this week on, therefore, we are organising a regular fighting fund. As a result of the fund drive, we already have pledged through bankers standing order, £85 per month. That is the best way to boost the fund as it gives regular income. But we want donations large and small from readers and Labour Party activists, from trades union branches and other labour movement bodies. Please keep us permanently in mind.

The last minute effort deserves thanks to the following.

● The special appeal put

out by readers in the NCU to re-instate the issue of the paper last week in time for their conference, reached £475. This makes the total contribution of our readers in NCU a grand £675.

● As we indicated last week, readers in the NUR, not to be outdone, launched their own appeal. In the space of 10 days they raised £305. This added to their previous donation of £167 — giving £472 in all. All this was over and above what these comrades might have contributed as individuals or locally.

Others who made a last minute effort included readers in Brixton who donated £50, readers in North London who donated £135, and £10 from Michael Hindley, European Member of Parliament for Lancashire East.

In addition to such a wide range of individuals — supporters of a variety of political positions on

the left — many readers contributed a full week's wages to the fund. We received three large donations. The final sum included two £1000 donations, and one £500 donation. All the rest came in small donations from those who have very little to spare.

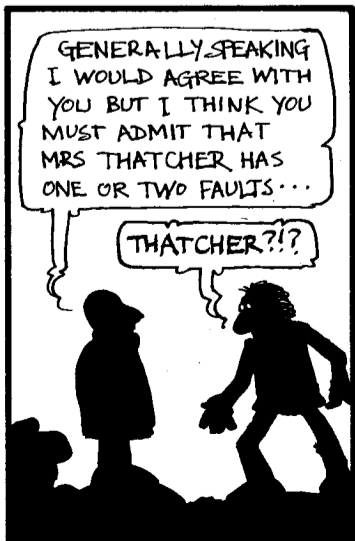
Here is the final score.

Area	Amount
Aberdeen	£50
Birmingham	£120
Bristol	£10
Cardiff/	
Pontypridd	£275
Coventry	£40
Huddersfield	£70
Leeds	£91
Leicester	£18
Liverpool	£8
Manchester	£333
Newport	£176
Notts	£205
S Yorks	£683
E London	£1813
N London	£1061
NW London	£539
SE London	£325
SW London	£199
OW London	£350

Individual contributions £6189

Supporters in NUR	£472
Supporters in NCU	£675
Supporters in AEU	£160
Labour Womens conf	£120
Public meeting	£75

## A PIECE of the ACTION



© CORMAC 5/86



ACTIVITY is stepping up around the country to build up the biggest possible mobilisation for the Anti-Apartheid Freedom March on 28 June in London.

Last weekend Arthur Scargill spoke at a conference in London organised by Liberation, where he shared the platform with speakers from Sactu and the ANC. Speaking for the NUM he said: 'We owe a debt to the people of South Africa. During our strike it was contributions from ordinary men and women that kept us going, and not least of all our sisters and brothers in South Africa. We will repay that debt.' He concluded his remarks by saying: 'The ANC are on the winning side. To the extent that we get involved, that victory will be sooner rather than later. Our sisters and brothers have suffered enough. I for one will not stand idly by. I won't rest until Nelson Mandela is not only free, but leads his people to independence and socialism'.

Other activities are taking place across London, and will culminate in a 'leaflet blitz' for the Freedom March. The blitz is planned for 25 June, and it is hoped all the main underground stations and bus terminals will be covered. If you are able to help, then contact the AAM in Mandela Street, or ring 01-387 7966.

Hackney Council is twinning with Alexandria township as the key note of its contribution to the local authorities' days of anti-apartheid action which begins on 16 June. The local anti-apartheid group will be picketing Barclays, Dalston Junction on the morning of 7 June.

A number of activities are being organised around Scotland. In Aberdeen the local authority days of action are being marked by a special activity on every day, starting with the declaration by the Lord Provost of Aberdeen as an 'apartheid free zone'. Events in the week following will focus on prisoners, Namibia, women, possible local authority action and the policies of the main political parties will be put under the magnifying glass. A proposal that the ANC's flag should be flown over the city's Music Hall during the week of action was defeated by a combination of SDP, Liberal and Tory councillors, despite the fact that the Liberal Group leader, George Thompson had stated that he gave 'unconditional support' to the ANC!

On 26 June, South Africa Freedom Day, there will be meetings in many areas, including in Aberdeen and Clydebank.

Similarly there will be a whole range of activities on 16 June to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprising. In Birmingham this will take the form of a vigil at the cathedral, in Bristol there will be a 'Soweto walk' on the 15 June — a 10-mile sponsored walk for the ANC. Bristol have a whole series of activities planned up to the St Paul's Festival on 5 July — St Pauls is an apartheid free zone.

In Manchester most of the activity will also take place around the local authority days of action. This kicks off with a local demonstration on 14 June, and takes in a joint meeting between the AAM and a local Constituency Labour Party on 27 June. The city is being extensively fly-posted, and the AAM is trying to get speakers into labour movement bodies and black organisations to build support for the march.

In South Yorkshire activity is focussing around the Yorkshire Miners Gala on 21 June in Doncaster, which will have a high profile on South Africa from the AAM locally and from support in the NUM itself.

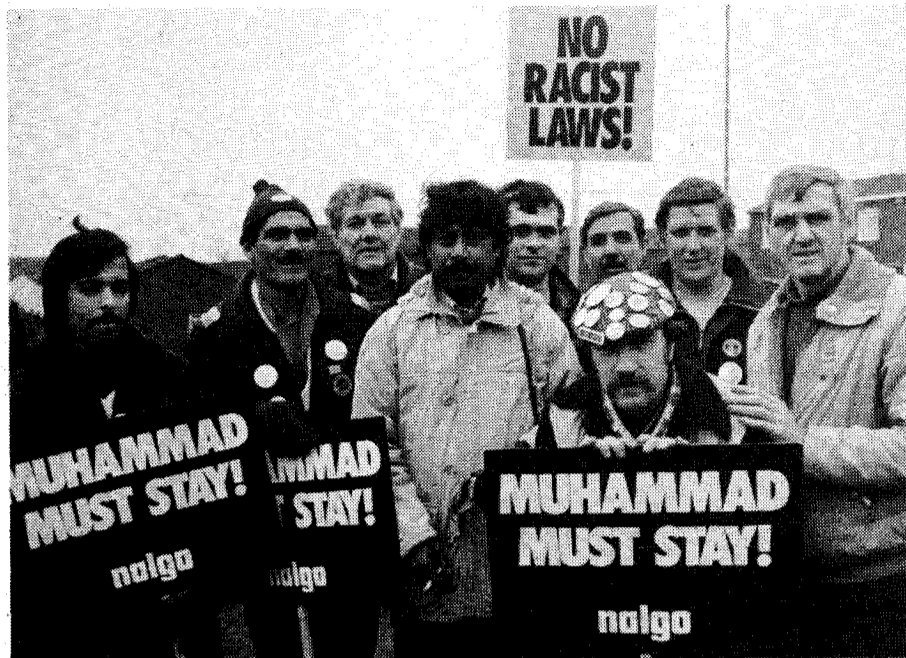
## Songs for Freedom

Tape of songs and music in solidarity with the South African freedom struggle featuring specially recorded material by Scottish folk singers and bands. Cheque/postal order for £4 to: AUA Cultural Committee. Send to Alasdair Johnston, 671 George St, Aberdeen. All profits to Scottish anti-apartheid's office appeal and AAM funds.

## Dates to remember

- 16 June 10th anniversary of Soweto uprising (South Africa Youth Day)
- 17 June Lobby for national parliamentary sanctions in London. Called by AAM at Houses of Parliament.
- 16 June to 26 June Days of action by local authorities
- 26 June South Africa Freedom Day
- 28 June National Freedom March for Namibia and South Africa. Assemble: Hyde Park, London between 11am and 12 noon.

# NALGO black workers hold first conference



NALGO supported Muhammad Idrish's campaign to remain in Britain.

'IT IS an historic occasion within the trade union movement,' said Azim Hazeer chairing the final session of the NALGO black workers conference which took place in London last Saturday. 'In building working class struggle against the issues we face today, the trade union movement must recognise the contribution of their black members. This conference is black self-organisation. We are proud of it.'

The conference was indeed significant in that it was the first one organised by and for black people within any trade union in the country. It reflects that growing determination of black people to speak with their own voice.

That strength was reflected by the fact that 400 black women and men attended from all over the country. These included strong delegations from Liverpool, Brent and

Camden, where black workers groups are already established. It also

**By Atma Singh**

brought together new people who will begin to build their own black workers groups.

Discussion at this first conference inevitably centered around the constitution and structure of the black workers group nationally. Various proposals were put forward.

Finally it was agreed that the present steering committee will continue until another conference is called in six months time.

This is likely to be a two-day conference to allow all the issues to be fully debated. Last Saturday did not allow sufficient time for all discussions.

The issues at the conference included more contact with all black workers within NALGO, circulation of information through a newsletter, training schools within NALGO and an education sub-committee.

Importantly conference reflected the campaigning role that the black workers group has taken on board within NALGO, especially on the deportation issue.

Shahid Syed and Rose Alaso spoke at the conference about their own deportations. As Syed said: 'The struggles against deportations are part and parcel of the trade union movement.' Rose Alaso pointed out: 'Today it is me, tomorrow it will be somebody else. We must build a campaign. It is the only way to win.'

NALGO have authorised strike action by branches in support of the 10 July national demonstration against deportation. Similar action should be called within other unions, trades councils, and Labour Parties.

On the issue of black representation within NALGO's national executive, there was unanimous agreement at conference that this situation must be changed. But there was little discussion on what role the black workers group had in this.

Unfortunately workshops planned on issues such as South Africa, youth uprisings, and others had to be cancelled through lack of time. Hopefully the conference in six months time will begin to take on board these issues.

It would also be useful to place the question of Labour Party affiliation on that agenda, so that the most advanced black self-organisation within the trade union movement can link up with Labour Party Black Section. A two-day conference will allow these wider discussions to take place in order that the impressive work of NALGO's black workers group can be deepened.

# BR's attempts to divide and rule

BRITISH RAIL management's productivity drive has been stepped up since the end of last year's dispute over driver only operation (DOO). Kings Cross station, because of its militant tradition, has been singled out for special treatment. Since the dispute, a substantial number of guards have left the station.

Kings Cross No 1 branch of the National Union of Railwaymen and the depot's shop stewards (staff side local departmental committee, LDC) have attempted to contain this situation.

The union insists safety standards and ticket inspection and sales should continue on DOO services. Vandalism has increased on those services since guards were scrapped. Guards have been kept on DOO services between Finsbury Park and Moorgate, since this is required by law at present. But they have new duties now. For instance, guards now operate the driver's radio to the signal box in the event of an accident to the driver or the failure of the radio in the driver's cab. A claim for payment for this extra-responsible

task, which requires special training, has been declined by the BR board at section council level.

BR's main tactic at Kings Cross during last year's dispute was to try to divide guard from guard. At Kings Cross, each guard belongs to one of four groups of guards, called links, according to their seniority and the jobs they do.

Jobs on many inter-city services are relatively safe in the short term. The guards in Link 1 are substantially better paid than guards in other links. According to Kings Cross staff side LDC figures, during 1985 there was a £300 difference in bonus earnings between Link 1 and Link 2 during 1985. A similar trend is occurring in 1986. No guard's job can be safe when groups of guards can be played off

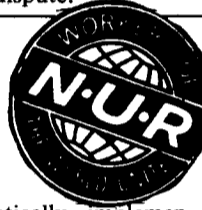
against each other. Only management profits.

Staff side LDC tabled a resolution to Kings Cross No 1 branch that this bonus work should be shared equally among all guards at the station. The resolution was passed and a significant number of guards turned up to show their support for it. This policy helps the negotiating position of the staff side LDC. It allows a more united approach to management.

The new duty rosters for May show management aim to continue to divide and rule. One group of guards had night shifts abolished, which is a wage cut, and can only work early and late shifts for the next six months. The work of guards on empty coaches has also been cut out.

The general activity of the branch and the involvement of staff side LDC has helped to rebuild some unity among guards who, overall, have increased their participation in branch work since last year's dispute.

# Fighting rail workshops privatisation



THE NEWS that 8000 jobs in British Rail Engineering (BREL) are to be slashed is further proof that British Rail are pursuing their course of shedding tens of thousands of jobs to prepare for privatisation. It coincides with the announcement that John Moore, the man behind over a dozen Tory privatisation schemes, is to become the new transport secretary.

Moore's asset stripping has already stolen £7 billion from public funds and transferred 500,000 jobs into the private sector. Since the Tories came to power, 12,000 BR workshop jobs have gone.

According to NUR general secretary Jimmy Knapp, the new threat 'follows the pattern of rundown in preparation for privatisation and sell-off' which was outlined in the BR corporate plan. BREL workshops at Doncaster, Glasgow, Wolverhampton, Derby and Crewe will be affected.

The regional maintenance workshops will also be drastically cut. Sixteen depots are due for closure, with 17 others reduced to only refuelling.

The excuse, which must be challenged by the rail unions, is that new electric trains require less maintenance. This is a cover up for the future privatisation of passenger service.

Nicholas Ridley was sent by the government to study private train services running on state-owned track in Switzerland. To make this a possibility in Britain, a rationalisation process involving driver-only operation, radio signalling, closure of maintenance depots privatisation of catering has to take place.

The privatisation of individual sectors of BR is part of a single plan to break up the railways as a nationalised industry. BR intend to split BREL into three sections, two of which will become part of BR — maintenance of locomotives and waggons, and supplies.

The third section, the building of new vehicles, will stay with BREL. Being

the most profitable it will be quickly sold off.

Glasgow BREL will be

**By Rose Knight, NUR (personal capacity)**

closed and turned into a maintenance depot with only 200 jobs surviving. In Doncaster, 1700 jobs — that is, 50 per cent of the workforce — are threatened over three years, despite a profit of £2.5 million last year.

Doncaster's unemployment rate is already 21 per cent, one of the highest in the country. It is this fact which has prompted the borough council and trades council to plan a march on parliament. As Alan Heath, secretary of NUR No 3 branch, said in an interview with the local paper: 'This is not just our fight, but a battle for everyone in Doncaster.'

The supplies shop at Doncaster BREL has already started an overtime ban. Other shops may follow suit in the build-up to the NUR ballot of workshops on industrial action. The mood amongst railworkers is different than at the time of the last union ballot, when BR guards voted narrowly against action to stop driver-only operation of trains.

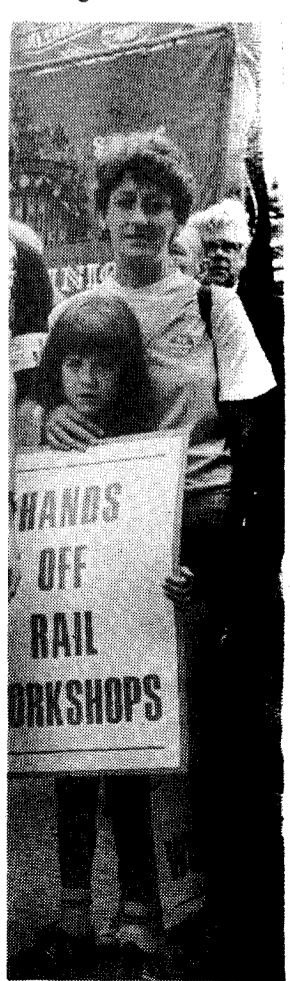
Thatcher's government is at its weakest point yet. This is illustrated by the recent local government elections — where deregulation of local transport services was an issue — and the announcement that unemployment in some towns is now one in five.

The NUR needs to ensure that all railworkers understand what is at stake, and what the alternatives are. BR are

systematically implementing their corporate plan, shedding thousands of jobs before selling off the remainder of the railway industry.

This is an attack on the entire rail industry, and the union must fight back. We have to stop them picking us off one by one: guards last years, shop staff today, platform staff tomorrow. Not one grade will escape this purge.

We know from the outcome of the miners strike that any struggle against the Tories will be long and hard. We need a perspective to win — and that is what the NUR and the rail unions confederation has to hammer out. That is the central question for this year's NUR annual meeting.



# Golding gets an executive to his liking

THE NATIONAL Communications Union conference, taking place this week in Blackpool, is dominated by the land-slide victory of the right wing in the executive council elections. The results of the eight clerical section seats have not been announced as we go to press. But of the 23 engineering seats, 22 have been won by right wingers.

However, there is a strong feeling that conference is even more im-

portant than usual in establishing clear policies which the new NEC must carry out.



JOHN GOLDING

**By Bridget Elton, London City Engineering (personal capacity)**

already announced to the press that if he got a right wing NEC he would be negotiating redundancy against union policy. Conference passed overwhelmingly composite proposition (CP) 5 from London City, Glasgow and Met South branches instructing branches to resist job cuts and committing the NCU(E) to a campaign including national strike action if necessary to prevent compulsory redundancies.

Socialist Action supporters have consistently argued that nothing less than national strike action will be adequate to defend our jobs. Now Glasgow, the branch which has so far taken the brunt of British Telecoms staff cuts

has come to the same conclusion.

In a leaflet to delegates headed 'Why national action is needed now', Glasgow says: 'We have negotiated. We have had overtime bans. We have had (local) strikes and still the cuts keep coming.'

'This branch has been involved in three major industrial battles in the last 15 months. We have mostly been undermined through isolation. The main lessons of the last two years is the overwhelming need for united action.'

This is the background to passing CP5. The deciding factor now will be whether the branches use it to campaign to win the membership to national strike action.

One of the best debates of conference so far concerned the witch-hunt in the Labour Party. Delegates pointed out that allegations about rule breaking were not the point — when the right wing break the rules nothing is done about it.

Many speakers said that the witch-hunt takes on its own dynamic. It won't stop at Militant. The right wing were



unable to counter these arguments, and resorted to witch-hunting slander. However, despite 'qualified' support from the engineering group executive council, Golding has done his work well. The motion against the witch-hunt was lost on a card vote, 78,674 to 36,852.

Conference also debated for the first time the demand that the five reserved women's seats on the Labour Party national executive committee should be elected by the national conference of Labour women. The NCU delegation to annual Labour Party conference has traditionally voted against this proposal. Delegates to women's conference have been mandated to vote the same way. On going to a card vote the motion was lost 60,208 to 55,835. The fact that the margin of defeat was so close means that this issue is not going to go away.

# A Socialist ACTION

## South Africa Trade ban

LAST FRIDAY Denmark became the first European government to impose a ban on trade with South Africa. The motion was moved by the Social Democratic minority in the parliament and carried against the opposition of the ruling Conservative party.

The Danish decision to impose economic sanctions must become the first step in the complete diplomatic, economic and political isolation of the apartheid regime. Britain in particular must cease using its veto at the UN to oppose sanctions against South Africa. Labour must pledge itself to end all links with South Africa.

Events of the last week in South Africa have underlined once more the barbaric and vicious character of the apartheid regime and society, most strikingly through the destruction of the Crossroads squatter township.

The events at Crossroads have also revealed a new, escalating, and frightening phenomenon in the situation in South Africa — the massive involvement of black 'vigilante' groups, with clear evidence emerging that these groups are in the pay of the regime.

Crossroads, where an estimated 30,000 people were made homeless and at least 44 killed in the last week, is a squatter camp, rather than an official township. Black people, often illegally away from the Bantustans and official townships seeking work, in this case in the area of Capetown, have settled in the squatter camps like Crossroads. They live under corrugated iron, in roughly constructed shacks, and only force of numbers gives them any right to stay in the area. It has long been a priority of the regime to clear Crossroads, and camps like it, that threaten to bring anti-apartheid protest too close to the whites of the rich

Cape province.

The emergence of the 'vigilante' groups in Crossroads follows a pattern that is typical in many of the townships, but reached particular levels due to the illegality of the squatter camp.

In the camp a de facto 'administration' had developed around an authoritarian leader who was charging squatters a tithe to live in the area. This fact has been confirmed in a number of sources. In the *Guardian* of 28 May, David Beresford explained that this 'leader': '... to protect himself and his followers from the challenge of more ideologically-orientated youths the "Fathers" emerged, acting ruthlessly to purge the camp of "progressive" elements.'

Vigilantes initially materialised in the homelands in a similar way, defending the authority of 'establishments' created under the Bantustan policy. Over the last three years the development of local vigilante groups has become a clear policy of the regime. The most well-known of these vigilante actions were the Durban killings last August where Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha organisation was clearly involved.

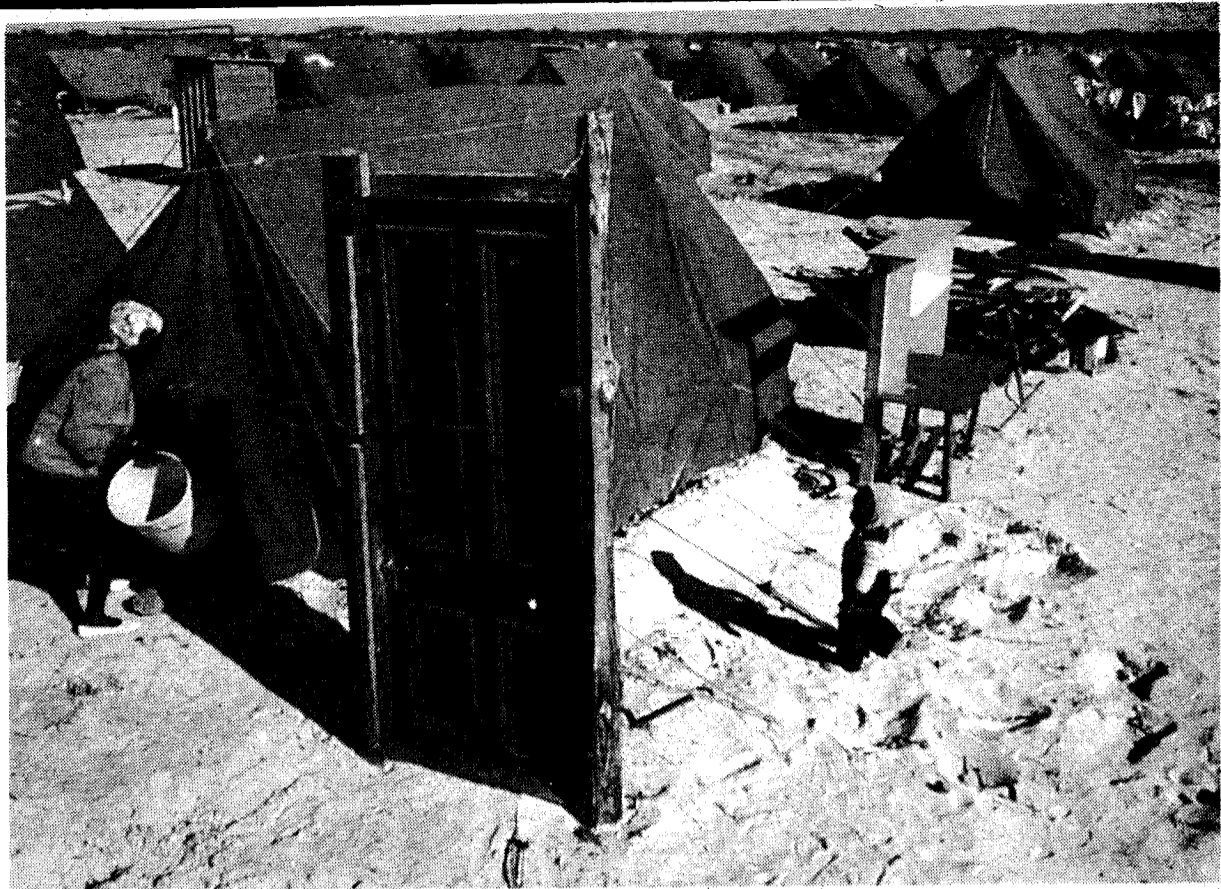
The vigilantes methods

are aimed at smashing and destroying the anti-apartheid movement. Their enemies are youth involved in school boycotts, movements to defend camps like Crossroads from eviction by the regime and from groups involved in anti-apartheid activity. They employ torture and terror killings — mutilations, castrations, dismemberment — in order to terrify the local population into quiescence and the acceptance of the authority of 'establishments' approved openly or covertly by the regime.

The open involvement of the apartheid regime in backing up this vigilante violence was exposed around the Crossroads events. The equipment used to fire the shacks and tents, leaving 30,000 homeless, was sophisticated fire guns rather than simple torches. These could only have been obtained from the regime.

The government is denying all charges, but resisting the growing calls for a parliamentary debate.

The development of the vigilante groups are the same as the use of 'death squads' in countries like El Salvador. Anti-apartheid militants now not only have to fear the death in a prison cell met by comrades like Steve Biko, or juridical murder as faced by Benjamin Moloise. They now face the increasing danger of fire and petrol bombing of their homes, vigilante murder and torture. The regime is attempting to claim this is 'black on black' violence. The exposure of the involvement of the regime in the destruction of Crossroads helped show what is really going on still more clearly.



## Wapping Fighting spirit strong

'WE'LL FIGHT or we'll negotiate' roared the front page headline of Brenda Dean's article in the January edition of the *SOGAT Journal*. Since that time all the fighting has been carried out by the rank and file members, whilst the leadership has been negotiating any price to find a way to rid themselves of this dispute. We have found ourselves battling on two fronts. Not only have we been faced with the repressiveness of Murdoch and his henchmen — and behind him the Thatcher government — but also the attacks of our own national union on its membership.

From the outset — with the 'low key' approach that was adopted — right through to the present situation of breaking all union rules to get the ballot result that they desire, we have seen nothing but one attempt after another to walk away from the dispute. And this, despite Brenda Dean's words that 'the members are more important than money'.

Because of this situation, the rest of the labour movement has found it very hard to have a real feeling for the dispute. The response from different sections of the movement has been spasmodic mainly because they have not had many rallying calls and they see a union that just wants to negotiate retreats. Hopefully this will all change if the latest Murdoch and Dean insult is rejected.

What is even more disgraceful is that our leadership has used Murdoch-style tactics on its own membership. The prime example of this was the as yet to be denied accusation that the letter explaining purging of the union's contempt was already written and placed in the envelopes to the members before the decision had even been taken!

The actual letter said that by purging the contempt it would enable us to step up the dispute. Yet in court, the union gave an undertaking to the judge that we would not intimidate News International's business. This included the ending of all flying pickets ... and this was stepping the dispute up?

We have seen nothing but secret meetings which have undermined the

strikers and the rest of Fleet Street. Who could blame any other proprietor if they said they

By John Lang, SOGAT Clerical Branch

were willing to accept what the union had offered Murdoch in the proposed NI national joint committee? This basically gave away the whole union structure to be replaced by a few national officials coming along for a couple of weeks each year to negotiate for us. It also gave Murdoch as near as possible, a legally binding document. These were amongst many of the points we originally came out against.

We have seen a demoralisation exercise against the members by the national union. This has resulted in the present disgraceful ballot situation. Last week, after another round of secret talks, we had the degrading situation of Norman Willis and Brenda Dean doing Murdoch's dirty work for him by announcing that this was the 'final offer'. To add insult to injury, national officials of the electricians union were part of these negotiations. It now seems certain that if the ballot is accepted, the electricians following their mere slap on the wrist by the TUC for collaborating with Murdoch to steal our jobs will in fact remain in Wapping. The TUC's already flimsy credibility that it opposes the electricians dirty work and that it is in business to defend unions not see them broken will then really be in tatters.

The ballot itself is farcical. The London branch took the national union to

court to make sure that the ballot took place, as laid down in the unions rule book. Brenda Dean turned things upside down by accusing them of trying to prevent democracy taking place. Yet full involvement of the membership and full presentation of the facts is indispensable to democracy. Brenda Dean's intention is to have the membership vote in isolation having only the facts of the biased media — this is what is against democracy.

Not surprisingly, the judge ruled in favour of Brenda Dean despite admitting that her postal balloting broke our rules. But there is worse. It has now been revealed that when the ballots were sent out to people's homes, with the accompanying letter on the details of the deal, one vital part was omitted.

The union had agreed with the management that there will be no action taken against those 'people' who did not take part in the strike. In other

words the only ones who will be represented by the unions in Wapping will be the scabs!

There are also real fears that the scabs have actually been sent ballot forms to vote on the deal. The whole exercise is a sham.

Murdoch says he is winning the dispute. Yet he has offered a packet of £50m. Murdoch does nothing out of the goodness of his heart. He states things are running normally. Yet is it normal to work behind steel fences and rolls of razor wire? Is it normal to go into work lying on the floor of a coach that has its windows covered by metal grills? How long can this 'normal situation' continue?

We know that Murdoch is being squeezed financially. We feel that we can gain a historical victory in this dispute. We will attain this victory with our leadership — or without them if necessary. Our motto is: we will fight and only then negotiate.

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## SOGAT

Journal SPECIAL ISSUE

SUNDAY TIMES



A message for Mr Murdoch ...

# WE'LL FIGHT - OR NEGOTIATE

... from Brenda Dean

General print, paper and board, books, newspapers