

# **A** **SOCIALIST** **ACTION**

**Launching  
Campaign Forum**

## **LABOUR'S ALLIANCE**



## **FOR SOCIALISM**

**by TONY BENN**

**THE DECISIONS** taken in Chesterfield to set up a Campaign Forum bringing together the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the broad left in the unions, the hundred or so Campaign Groups now being formed in the constituencies, and the organisations in Labour Left Liaison represents a major development for the Labour Party as a whole.

In particular the fact that the women's demands and the campaign for Black Sections have been officially and explicitly endorsed will open up the Labour Party to those who have been inadequately represented in the past.

In addition the decision to endorse every year the candidates for the women's section of the NEC chosen by the shadow elections at the women's conference puts the Campaign Group firmly alongside the women's movement, making it central to what we are together trying to do.

We also agreed on two other important changes. First to abandon the negotiated left slate and go for clearer political nominations for the NEC next year. And also to invite all Prospective Parliamentary Candidates who are in sympathy with our aims and objectives to make contact with us, in place of the old system, which was by invitation only.

These decisions, taken together, offer the Labour Party as a whole a broad non-sectarian alliance for socialism that can stretch out to the millions of people who we seek to represent but who have felt excluded by the structure of the party, and some of the statements made on its behalf.

We need a strong socialist Labour Party to win the election and strong socialist policies to carry that to success. And above all we need to make the Labour Party truly representative and democratic in its own structure and purpose. ●

# Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

# 'Politics is not only about winning the next election'

## Campaign Forum

THIS WILL, of course, be Neil Kinnock's Labour Party conference. Denouncing the previous Labour promises that will be broken at Blackpool, and explaining the right wing policies that will be adopted, could fill up this entire issue of Socialist Action. And indeed the attacks on free trade unions, sabotage of struggles against Thatcher now, abandoning the rights the unemployed, embarking on building up Britain's conventional weapons, support for repression in Ireland, the witch hunt and many more issues are of the greatest seriousness.

But the issue which confronts the left is not to denounce Kinnock — we take that for granted. The real question is to find a way out of the situation. That is why the decision taken on 20 September in Chesterfield to found Campaign Forum, An Alliance for Socialism — bringing together the Campaign Group of MPs, Labour Left Liaison, and left wing figures in the trade unions — is an event, in its very different way, just as important as Kinnock's role at Labour Party conference. These two developments, Kinnock and Campaign Forum, will in reality sum up the two orientations of Labour Party conference. Kinnock's will be the majority. But what is really vital for the future of the labour movement is what will take place with Campaign Forum.

For anyone who has any experience of the Labour Party what is happening today with Kinnock is just familiar. It is the same path of taking Labour to the right which was pursued by Wilson and then Callaghan. It will end in disaster. That is already certain.

As for those that are going along with Kinnock — the 'realigned left' — all they are doing is sealing their own fate, and damaging the labour movement. It will all end in a disastrous debacle. And it will be Labour and the working class movement that will have to pay the price.

What is crucial about Campaign Forum is not that it will be the largest and most serious left wing in the party — although it will be that. It is not simply that it will rapidly produce a network of Campaign Groups throughout the country — although it will achieve that. What is crucial is its politics.

Campaign Forum is not an opposition to anyone. It sets out a basic strategic line of march for the labour movement. That is to tie Labour's traditional base to a massive extension of its social alliances. And through that to create a majority for socialism.

What that means in practice was shown more than anything by the miners strike. It was the way that the Campaign Group of MPs stood with the miners that allowed it to become a political centre point for a revived left inside the party. It was the stand the campaigns in the party took with the miners which radicalised many of them.

The campaigns which came together in Labour Left Liaison, the other crucial component which came together with the Campaign Groups of MPs to establish Campaign Forum, were also those in the party which stood with the miners — although each radicalised under the impact of its own concerns.

But the whole is very much more than the sum of the parts. Bringing together the leadership of the miners strike, the Campaign Group of MPs, and the crucial campaigns in the party is not just organising a pre-existing left. It is creating a new basis for the left. One that stands on making absolutely central the demands of women and black people, of using the class struggle methods of the miners, of defending the democracy of the labour movement against both the courts and the bureaucrats who try to stifle it, of linking that to those who are fighting for their freedom internationally — whether it is in Ireland, South Africa, Central America, or any other country.

The only left worthy of the name is one that takes up every example of injustice everywhere it is found. That is what Campaign Forum begins, just begins, to do. That is why it is such a profoundly important development.

This Labour Party conference belongs to Neil Kinnock. But the future belongs to the left. That is more sure than ever.

ON 11 SEPTEMBER Tony Benn spoke at a Campaign Group rally in Manchester. Also on the platform were Eric Heffer MP; Amir Khan; Joan Maynard MP; Ann Pettifor from the Labour Women's Action Committee; Graham Stringer, the leader of Manchester council; John Tocher, the left's candidate in the last AEU presidential election; Mike Wongsam from the Labour Party Black Section. Tony Benn's speech set the scene for Labour Party conference by explaining how the fight for a Labour government is inseparably connected to the labour movement defending now those it represents.

POLITICS is not only about winning the next election. It's about here and now. It's no good saying to people at the Wapping picket line that it will be alright when Labour's in power. It wasn't alright at Grunwick, and we were in power then. The Labour government never supported the Grunwick strikers and Mrs Desai in the way it should have done.

By Tony Benn MP

The first lesson we have to remember is that if we're really going to represent the people we were established to represent, we've got to fight alongside them now. We've got to be on the picket line now. We've got to support the Silentnight workers now; be at Wapping now, at Greenham Common now; with the GCHQ workers now, with the South Africans in struggle now.

If we forget the 'now' then people won't be so interested when we come along as candidates on polling day. They'll say 'where were you when we had a struggle?' That's the lesson we've got to learn, a very simple lesson: the rediscovery of solidarity.

### Solidarity

The rediscovery of solidarity is essential. We cannot climb into power on the backs of people struggling now by telling them to stop in case they interfere with our election campaign. That's got to be said, and it's got to be made clear.

The second thing we've got to do — part of what might be called the 'analysis' of socialism — is to connect the issues. We can't fight the issues in penny packets. We can't say the pensioners fight is different from the women's struggle; or that the struggle in South Africa has got nothing to do with

the miners.

That is elementary. I'll give you a simple example.

Why does Mrs Thatcher support Botha? Because he sends her uranium. Where does it go? To our nuclear power stations.

The uranium is bought by British Nuclear Fuels, turned into plutonium when it goes to America, and comes back to Britain in the form of nuclear warheads to the Greenham Common base. That is why Botha and Reagan and Thatcher are working together to suppress the blacks in South Africa and the miners in Britain, as part of the American world-wide empire.

### Chernobyl

Take another case. Arthur Scargill warned that they would close the pits, and he was right. After Chernobyl, can anybody doubt that he's right about the dangers of nuclear power? And who took the lead on that? It was the women's movement at Greenham Common, who warned about this long before the Labour Party conference voted to phase it out.

It is the connection of issues — the connection of South Africa, Nicaragua, the bombing of Libya, the NATO alliance — that gives us strength.

Another thing that gives us strength is knowing our history. We are not the first generation to have these struggles.

### Peterloo

Here in the Manchester Free Trade Hall we are just a stone's throw from Peterloo, where the hussars cut down the people who were demanding what? The vote. Engels wrote about the conditions of the working class in Manchester.

The fight of our predecessors — men and



women, black and white — is part of our history. If we live just on the basis of daily headlines, what the polls say today and what Vincent Hanna has to say about it on Newsnight — the time-scale of the newspaper proprietors — we deny the allies that come from the past.

They are always telling us that the miners failed. Well, a lot of failures in our history have been the foundations of great victories. I think if Len Murray had been alive he would have told the Tolpuddle martyrs to go to Australia and not come back!

The reality is that out of struggle people learn. Education comes from experience.

We have to build on experience. It is no good saying to people what we want is power. If you are out of work, or your dad's waiting for a hip operation, or you're badly housed, you're not really interested in just helping someone else into office.

We must also look to the future. History won't stop on the day that Neil Kinnock steps into Number Ten.

What do you think is going to happen when he sends a minister to explain in words of one syllable to president Reagan that his missiles must go? Do you imagine that Reagan would say: 'Oh, thanks, Neil, I'd rather forgotten that. When would you like me to do it?'

### Pressure

It won't be like that at all. Look what they did in New Zealand. They threw New Zealand out of ANZAS, and began to pile the economic pressure on.

If you don't tell people what will happen when they do vote Labour, they won't be with you when the real struggle begins. If you win votes with balloons, and pop music and T-shirts, and then after polling day Reagan unleashes the full weight of America to destabilise this country, people will say: 'You never told us this was going to happen. We thought it was going to be more music and balloons. You never told us that this country would be under heavy attack from the most powerful country in the world.'

We have to look at today. We have to look at our past. We have to look at other parallel struggles. And we have to look at the future. Unless we fill in those gaps we won't have a correct electoral appeal.

We have to do something else too. We have to re-found the Labour Party to make it truly representative — of women, of black people, of others who are oppressed and of those who are in struggle. Unless the labour movement is genuinely representative of people whose causes we seek to espouse, how can we win support?

### Truth

We must tell the people of this country the truth. We've got to build on what is strong in them, and not tell them to relax and leave it to a handful of people in parliament or in the cabinet. We have a huge job of work to do.

That is the historic role of socialists. That is why we want to buttress our prospects of victory — with some real strength that can only come from the movement and from the people as a whole.

## a piece of the ACTION



**Labour NEC 1985-86**

# Witch hunts and attacks on party policy

**LABOUR'S BEST** chance of winning the next election is by raising the political temperature, by advocating policies which represent a real alternative to the Tory Party. But the party leadership seems to want to take us into the polling booth wearing carpet slippers. To prepare the ground for this, the 1985-86 national executive committee has presided over witch hunts on a massive scale and the dilution of party policy. More time, more paper, and more energy has been spent on a purge than at any other period during the nine year's I have been on the Labour NEC.



Victims of the purge: Amir Khan...

Once you start a witch hunt against a section of the party on ideological grounds the Tory press will ensure there's no end to it. The media are weeping tears of joy at the prospect of the Labour Party having non-stop internal enquiries.

The witch hunt has a chemistry all of its own, like the case of Khan and Scally where some people in Birmingham decided to take it a stage further. The same is true in Central Fife, Scotland.

There have been scores of others who have been expelled in the wake of the Liverpool hearings. Now the witch hunt has been widened even further by a 200-page report on St Helens, as a result of which the officers of the party have been suspended.

## Organisation

That enquiry wasn't initiated by the local party. It was started at the top, by the national executive, as in the case of Liverpool. And once the flood gates are open of course anybody can launch a further attack.

Now a new disciplinary body, the National Constitutional Committee, is being proposed at this year's conference. This takes the witch hunt one step on by including in its terms of reference the fact that anybody who indulges in 'conduct prejudicial to the party' can be subject to expulsion. A very wide reference — you can catch almost anybody on the left with it.

It is a very sad state of affairs, when we should be concentrating on driving the Tories out of government, that the NEC majority — the right wing and the 'cuddly left' — are joining hands to expel

socialists from the party. That is why delegates at Blackpool must use all their endeavours to argue against setting up this body, and must support all the appeals and resolutions against expulsions.

## Power

This witch hunt goes hand in hand with the NEC's systematic dilution of policy. Once the purge had begun the right wing was able to start watering down policies. Several policy documents of that kind will be placed before conference this year.

One in particular, which already has the TUC's backing, would allow the future Labour government to impose rigid legal conditions on balloting in trade unions. After the Wembley decision of the TUC a few years back it is incredible that we are now approaching a general election with a policy document that paves the way for state interference in the unions, with the intention of curbing trade union activity and industrial action. That is the most staggering lurch to the right that has occurred within the trade union movement since the end of World



...and Tony Mulhearn

War II.

There are other documents produced in the last 12 months that are very weak on socialism. For instance public ownership has been dropped for more cosy terms like social ownership. Those decisions would not even have been contemplated at a Labour conference a few years ago.

On crucial decisions on the expulsions there have been nine, sometimes 10, NEC members who have taken a principled position. By and large the nine have stood firm. But that's out of a total of 29 NEC members.

## Reforms

With the exception of Eric Clarke of the NUM, on most issues the other 11 members from the trade union section have block voted for the right wing. There has been a massive right wing shift in the TUC and the trade union section of the Labour NEC. The 'cuddly left' in the last 12 months too has supported the right wing leadership almost all the way down the line.

Alongside the witch hunt and the attack on policy, the NEC right wing are also opposing democratic reforms demanded by women and black people, and they are planning further restrictions on the rights of CLPs. The party should be made aware that the goal of the right, without any doubt at all, is to change the method of reselection before the next round takes place. The NEC has set up a working party to prepare proposals on this.

## Advance

But despite all the attempts by the leadership to ignore the demands of women and black people, these issues have not gone away. They are still very much on the agenda. They will be coming up again at Blackpool.

I am absolutely convinced that the idea of positive action promoted by the Black Section, with all the support that got in many inner city areas, has resulted in a tremendous

number of black candidates standing — and getting elected — in the last round of local government elections. Black Section has given black party members the confidence to do that.

The ideas Black Section promoted, even though they got defeated at conference, were good in themselves. I support them all the way down the line.

The Black and Asian Advisory Committee was set up as a counter-weight to Black Sections. It has not proved an acceptable forum to the black communities.

Although the CLPs now send a lot of women delegates to conference, this has not yet been mirrored in the trade unions or at the TUC. Neither has it led to Labour Party conference adopting the demands of women in the party, or CLPs selecting women candidates for the parliamentary elections. There must be more positive attempts to ensure these issues are taken up.

When the issue of Labour women's conference electing the women's section of the NEC first came before the national executive many years ago, there were only five of us who supported



Photo: GM COOKSON

By Dennis Skinner MP

the principle. We have managed to get that number up into double figures at the last NEC pre-conference meeting. With odd exceptions, the same people who are pressing the witch hunt have taken a line against women's role in the party and at their own conference.

## Rule change

The aim now is to get a majority. This is one of the issues that has made progress in the NEC.

The NEC right wing are now launching an attack on the youth section of the party, trying to take power away from the Labour Party Young Socialists. What has become known as the Tom Sawyer paper, proposals for the reorganisation of the youth section, was recently won at the NEC with only seven of us

voting against it.

Twenty five has been found to be the acceptable age limit for a youth section in the party and in the unions. But the NEC want to reduce it to 21. The proposals also envisage taking away the right of LPYS conference to elect its own delegate to the national executive, and generally bringing the youth sections under much closer control by the leadership.

Despite the rightward drift of the leadership, it is clear that an important stirring is taking place in the ranks of the party. I speak to two or three gatherings around the country each week. There has been an emergence of groupings on the left, and the meetings they hold are very well attended.

One such meeting was the Notts NUM rally. In the heartland of the UDM, we saw the biggest turnout

for many years. That is a positive indication of the trends I'm describing.

Campaign Group News has played an important part in this. There have now been two well-publicised meetings of the Campaign Group and Labour Left Liaison in London and Manchester, both with big attendances. A third is planned later this year in Scotland.

There is serious support for socialist ideas and for the emergence of Campaign groups locally. Many people are beginning to realise that we cannot go into the next general election with watered-down policies and expect to win. There are a lot of people in the constituency parties who believe we have to put socialism back on Labour's agenda.

Winning the election is not about personalities; it's about putting over policies. As somebody who has done close on 150 meetings this year, I don't think I can be accused of not campaigning. I believe we've got to get out into the areas, including Tory seats and others, to spread the socialist message. I don't want to spend my time on witch hunts — but on developing policies and campaigning. The party as a whole must spend more of its time usefully, driving the Tories out of government.

## Miners

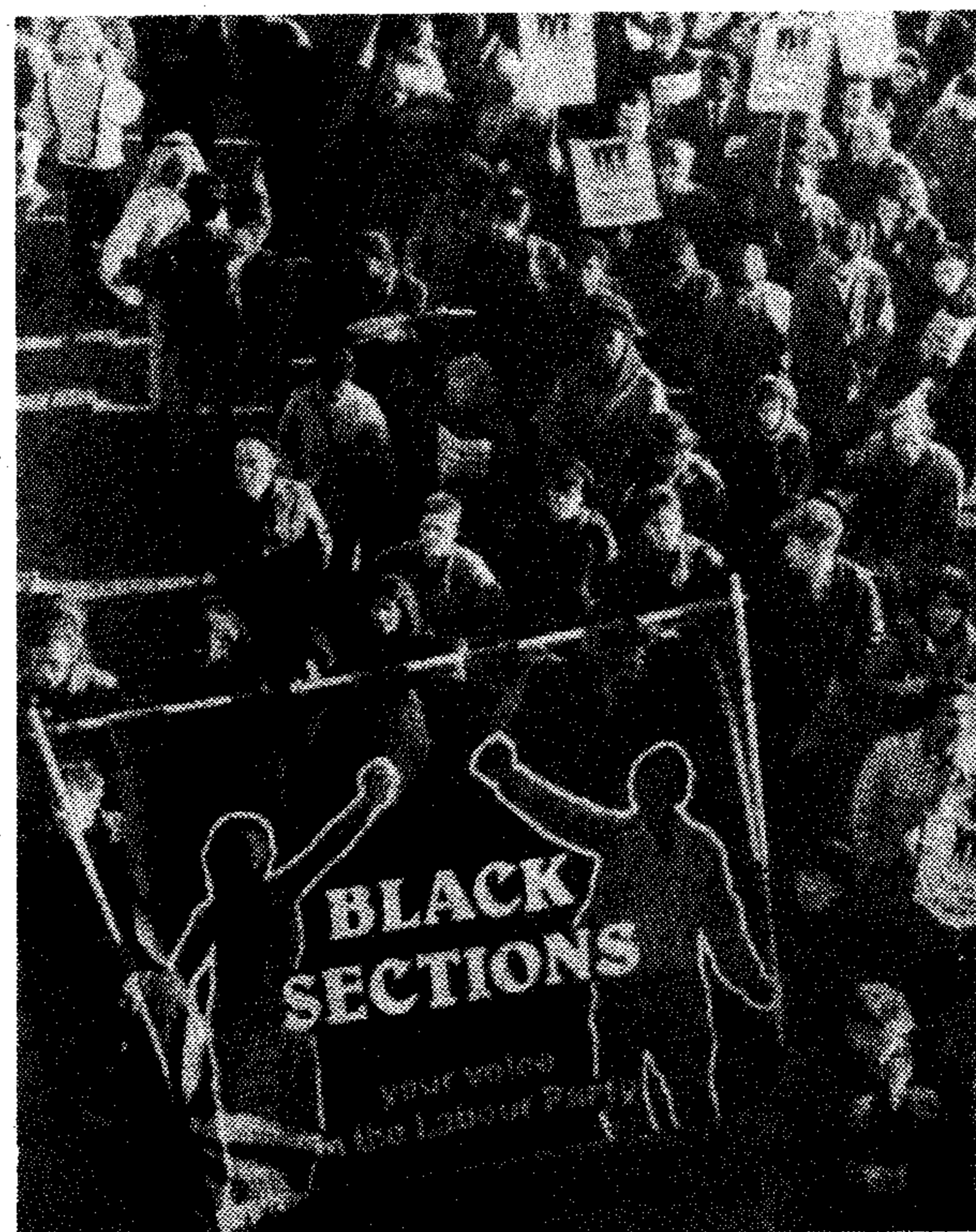
Despite all the diversions created by the national executive, they have still not stopped us spreading that message. The emergence of a left wing united around issues such as the demands of women and black people, supporting workers in struggle at Wapping, Silentnight and elsewhere, and campaigning for justice for victimised miners — fighting for socialist policies — show the way forward for the whole labour movement.

# London rejects Black and Asian Advisory Committee

**ON 22 SEPTEMBER** the Greater London Labour Party rebuffed the Black and Asian Advisory Committee (BAAC). The Regional Executive voted for a motion to 'withdraw all of its representatives from this undemocratic committee' and called upon 'all socialists to boycott it'. The motion considered it an 'insult to Labour's black supporters to relegate the demands and needs of the black community to a toothless body which will achieve no more than all the previous and now defunct race committees.'

By Paul Sharma, Labour Party Black Section

Monday night's decision was taken despite an intense campaign over the last months by full-time Labour Party officials and the Labour leadership in support of the committee. The BAAC was set up as an alternative to the Black Section at the last Labour Party conference. The London region's move to withdraw wrecks the



Labour Party's 'official' race policy. It makes it more urgent than ever that Labour recognises democratic black sections in the run-up to the next general election.

The BAAC is made up of Labour's national executive committee members including Roy

Hattersley, national trade union figures and appointees from nine of Labour's eleven regional parties. But half of Britain's black population live in the area covered by Greater London. Effectively half of Britain's black population now have no representation on this

purely appointed and non-elected committee.

The BAAC already suffered a major blow earlier this month when its chair, Black Section supporter Jo Richardson MP, announced that after the Labour Party conference in one week's time she will refuse not only to chair the committee but will also not take up membership of it.

Jo Richardson's decision brings the number of members of the committee who have either resigned, refused to attend or publicly stated they will not seek reappointment to 11.

At next week's Labour Party conference there will be a major debate on motions calling for disbandment of BAAC submitted by CLPs supporting the Black Section.

The BAAC will slowly limp to conference — at conference we urge the labour movement to put it to sleep humanely. There will be no peace in the Labour Party on this issue until the right of black Labour Party members to form democratic black sections is constitutionally recognised. That is the alternative to the BAAC which must be adopted by this year's party conference.

# Black Section platform for NEC elections

THE LABOUR Party Black Section is presenting three candidates for election to the NEC at this year's Labour Party conference — Diane Abbott in the women's section, and Narendra Makanji and Russell Proffitt in the constituency section. The following platform has been issued by the candidates and the Black Section for their election.

WE DEMAND the immediate recognition of all Black Sections established in Constituency Labour Parties around the country. The recommendations of the NEC's special working group in favour of Black Sections being set up where Black party members want them should be incorporated in the constitution. This means Black Section representation at all levels.

The party's national leadership has adopted a two-pronged attack on the substantial gains made by the Black Section campaign. The first front has been the setting up of the neo-colonialist 'Black and Asian advisory committee'. The second has been the expulsion from party membership of two

leading Birmingham supporters, Amir Khan and Kevin Scally. These tactics are well-known to us and have been perfected over many decades of 'divide and rule'. We totally oppose the witch-hunting of Socialists from the Labour Party. Furthermore, we would refuse to serve on the Black and Asian advisory committee or any other body aimed at Black people but not elected by and accountable to them.

We are committed to furthering the Black Section's anti-imperialist intervention in politics. This means stepping up the fight for Black national liberation in Azania (South Africa), support for the demands of the Palestinians and support for British withdrawal



BLACK PEOPLE AND THE POLICE

from Ireland. Britain must withdraw from NATO. The grip on developing countries of neo-colonialism and big business has to be broken. The Labour Party must replace its patronising approach to international aid and development with policies relevant to Black people at home and abroad. But the most urgent priority is to isolate racist South Africa. We

restate the Black Section's demands for:

1. Immediate disinvestment by unions and Labour authorities;
2. A national Labour Party fund to provide aid for Azania's freedom fighters supported by a national publicity campaign spearheaded by the trade unions and Labour Party;
3. An officially-backed refusal by trade unionists

to handle South African goods;

4. The unconditional release of all South African political prisoners;
5. A manifesto commitment that a Labour Government will break off diplomatic relations with Pretoria's racist regime and rescind rights to residency in Britain of the one million White South Africans who currently have this entitlement.

Labour must back up its anti-racist statements made in opposition with bold action in government.

Labour's economic policies must be geared to full employment. Ownership by the workers of the commanding heights of British industry must be swiftly achieved. There must be a national minimum wage. Youth Training Scheme slave wages must be ended. Trade union rights for all workers must be guaranteed. Positive policies

aimed at ending racism — including contracts compliance and employment equality targets — must be implemented.

The health service workers — many of whom are low-paid and Black — must be properly valued and rewarded. The NHS should be adequately resourced.

Education for all means a crusade against racist stereo-typing by the British school system. The culture, achievements and history of Black people must be positively portrayed.

Racist immigration laws must be repealed. The police must be freed of racist practices and placed under the democratic control of elected representatives. We fully support Black Section policy on policing in that the next Labour government must:

1. Repeal the 1984 Police Act, the Public Order Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act;

2. Enshrine in law the duty of the police to prosecute perpetrators of race attacks;
3. Set up a fully independent police complaints body;
4. Ban the manufacture, stock-piling, and use of firearms, CS gas, plastic bullets, water cannon and other life endangering equipment.

Representatives on the NEC supported by the Black Section campaign will be accountable to Constituency Labour Parties and affiliates who nominated them and will regularly communicate with these bodies. We are fully committed to advancing the gains of those who have fought for greater party democracy and lesbian and gay rights. We support the onstitutional demands of the Labour Women's Conference.

There will be report backs and discussions with the Labour Party Black Section National Committee, its annual conference and duly elected officers.

## Racist police riot in St. Paul's, Bristol

ON THURSDAY 11 September 600 police, most in full riot gear, raided the St. Pauls district of Bristol — the centre of Bristol's black community. It was a direct police attack on the black community which has been condemned not only by black organisations but by the Bristol labour movement. SALLY JONES outlines the racist attack on St. Pauls.

The police codenamed it 'Operation Delivery'. Whether this was because they arrived concealed in furniture lorries and hired vans isn't clear. 'Operation Saturation' would have been a more appropriate name. The fact that they handed out letters from assistant chief constable Malcolm Poplewell, saying they were there to search for drugs and apologising for the inconvenience caused (!) simply added insult to injury.

The police arrived at 4.15 pm. At 4.30 the canvass sides of the lorries were rolled back and about 140 cops swooped on target addresses. One of

the targets was the Black and White Cafe — made famous as one of the flash-points of similar events in 1980.

At about 5pm, the police started putting on their riot gear and lined up along Grovenor Road using the pretext of a little ston-throwing in response to the raid. Local people urged them to withdraw quickly as their heavy presence and behaviour was bound to create a response. But they stayed for more than three hours.

Even when they did 'withdraw' at 7.45 it was only from the immediate Grovenor Road area. And

they left 20 cops in riot gear by the Grovenor Road flats, even then. Inevitably people gravitated towards them jeering. Meanwhile police vans raced down Grovenor Road at high speed. It was a clear attempt to provoke the community into a response. A couple of petrol bombs and stones were thrown and a car set on fire.

Lines of police quickly returned. From then on 600 police saturated the area in military formation. Grovenor Road was sealed off. People were not allowed to walk down it.

Ted Fowler, Avon Labour county councillor for Ashley ward, which covers the St. Paul's area, told how he was 'terrified at the scale of the raid. There is nothing more frightening than being surrounded in a small place by people armed to the eyeballs'.

The so-called anti-drugs raid recovered no hard drugs at all, just a small amount of marijuana. Out of the 85 people arrested, dragged out of their homes in handcuffs, charges have been brought out against just 18 most of them for alleged minor public order offences.

The following night the area was once again saturated with police, again using the pretext of stone-throwing at police cars. Inevitably their occupation of the area led to further clashes. This hasn't led to a withdrawal, however, despite the urging of local community leaders. Over a week after the operation, St. Paul's feels like a no-go area, — not because of a 'violent community' as the police allege but because everywhere you go there are vanloads of police, 650 in all in support units from seven forces.

## Bristol Labour Parties call for emergency debate

BOTH BRISTOL CLPs have backed an emergency resolution to party conference condemning the police action in St. Paul's. Vigorous lobbying of the Conference Arrangements Committee will be vital to ensure the resolution gets discussed.

By Anne Lemon, delegate Bristol West CLP

The emergency resolution comes as part of swift response by the local labour movement and Community Association condemning the police raid and defending the community. The widespread response reflects the shock of people in the area to the clearly well-planned police invasion. It gives the lie to the media's claim that a so-called 'silent majority' supported the raid.

The night after the initial raid saw Avon assistant police chief, Malcolm Poplewell, subjected to a barrage of angry questions at a meeting of the police liaison committee. Why had St. Paul's been singled out for such brutal treatment? Why were so many police involved?

Why were they still in the area?

Jagun Akinshogun is the coordinator of the local Community Association. The Association has been the subject of a tremendous media witch-hunting and its chairperson, Kuomba Balogun, has been vilified in the national as well as local press.

Jagun explained that 'Operation Delivery' has produced the opposite effect of what the police wanted. The raid came out of their desire to show their strength and prove St. Paul's is not a no-go area to them. Ironically they have made St. Paul's a no-go area for foot patrols. Before the raid police could walk up Grovenor Road but now



Police begin St. Paul's operation

## Bristol West emergency resolution

THIS CONFERENCE condemns the police raid on St. Paul's Bristol on Thursday 11 September 1986 involving 600 officers, the majority in riot gear.

The police operation was totally unjustified and represented a direct racist attack against the community of St. Paul's. The subsequent occupation by riot police despite pleas by local labour councillors and community leaders that they should withdraw, only served to heighten the tension and fuel confrontation. The police action has irretrievably damaged their relationship with the local community.

The attacks made by the police shows similarities to tactics used in South Africa. This St. Paul's operation follows the pattern of increasingly repressive police actions during the last year in Brixton, Toxteth, Broadwater Farm etc.

This conference:

- 1 Demands a public enquiry to look into the sequence of events and the policing of St. Paul's.
- 2 Affirms its support for any local labour movement/community enquiry involving the community of St. Paul's.
- 3 Calls upon the next Labour government to abolish the present police complaints procedures and to replace them with a democratically elected body not controlled by the police.



# Women, Labour, and the left



**THIS IS** the sixth year that the Labour Women's Action Committee (WAC) will be organising a strong presence of women at the Labour Party's annual conference. Six years after its formation WAC is now an autonomous organisation of women with thriving regional groups and over 500 members. Its strength derives from three sources:

★ A strong commitment to uniting with and supporting all women in struggle, and in particular women in those trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party.

★ Self organisation of women.

★ A determination to remain 'above factions', ie above the rivalries of men's factions within the party.

At the same time of course we have welcomed positively all forms of support from men within the mass movement or around campaigns.

Two key issues will face WAC at this year's party conference. The first is the next round in the struggle for women to control their own organisations in the party. The second is the alliances women should make to achieve their goals.

## Advance

WAC's demands — the right of the women's conference to elect the women's places on the NEC, a woman on every shortlist for selection, and women's conference to have the right to submit resolutions to party conference — have made major advances in the last year. A further two unions, the NUR and UCATT, have been won to support its demands. This is reflected in conference agenda. This year, unusually, there will be no composite attacking

WAC's campaign to strengthen the women's organisation.

By Ann Pettifor

isation.

The composites likely to go to party conference will probably deal with the following areas:

★ A proposal for a weighted vote at women's conference which will reflect the number of women trade unionists, and for reserved seats for women trade unionists on the National Committee and the Conference Arrangements Committee.

★ A proposal for a special rules revision women's conference to discuss the issues relating to the women's organisation.

★ The election of the women's section of the NEC by women's conference.

★ A constitutional change which will ensure that there is at least one woman on every parliamentary short list.

★ The proposal that the National Conference of Labour Women be given the right to submit its resolutions to annual conference.

The critical debates will take place around composites based on resolutions from APEX, the UCW, the 19 resolutions and amendments submitted by constituencies in line with WAC's demands, and amendments submitted by Putney and Glasgow Hillhead.

## Demands

It is clear that the party as a whole is no longer able to ignore the demands which are being put forward by women within the party — and which have been repeatedly endorsed by women's conference. This year's party conference will therefore be a critical one for women and for the Labour Party. Without being serious about women's rights within the party Labour will not be able to appeal to women.

The issue of alliances for women will be especially important given the launch of a major new umbrella group, Campaign Forum, in Chesterfield on 20 September.

The first, and for women most refreshing, aspect of this new Forum is that it is the only alliance on the left which has not 'added on' women's rights to its shopping list of demands.

Instead women's rights, and the practical and organisational steps needed to empower women embodied in the demands of the Labour women's conference, are at the centre of the demands of Campaign Forum — as they

were of Labour Left Liaison before it.

WAC, and women will continue to work with all those who support their demands — and welcome support from all sections of the party. But the existence of this new Forum, which has at its centre the Labour Women's Action Committee and Black Section, is an important departure for the left. It allows women to participate in an organised way to defend their own interests — the only basis on which principled alliances can be made. This alliance is therefore committed to forging unity between oppressed groups, with respect for their independence and autonomy.

The second important aspect of this new Forum is that it pursues an objective first introduced into the Labour Party left by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. CLPD was the first ever campaign in the left of the Labour Party which saw power as its single minded objective. Surprisingly no one on the left of the Labour Party had ever seriously thought of, or planned to empower the powerless before. They wrote about it in newspapers or proclaimed it in speeches and then left things at that.

## Power

CLPD set about achieving power for the powerless — in particular the rank and file of the Labour Party, which since its formation had been forced into a position of subordination by a domi-

nant and privileged group within the parliamentary party. It did this without resort to gesture or rhetoric. As a result it was successful — something which is almost unique.

This is a third aspect of Campaign Forum. Women, and WAC, do not make the politics of style, or the politics of protest, a priority. Instead they demand an alternative structure of power.

## Unity

The internal unity of the working class, of the oppressed, is an essential prerequisite if the power of the dominant and of the privileged is to be challenged. Women, black people, the unemployed, the unskilled, the low paid, and the vulnerable — have for years been urging Labour to unite and to include within their ranks more than just those skilled employed workers active in the industrial unions — and they demand to be included as equals and not subordinates.

The affluence of the 50's and 60's, the deeply entrenched dominance of white over black, of men over women, the arrogance of the parliamentary Labour Party has made Labour scornful of the need to unite the whole of the working class, and then to extend a hand to oppressed groups everywhere — in the North of Ireland, South Africa or Nicaragua.

## Hostile

Seven years after the advent of a hostile government Labour — and indeed large sections of the left — remain weak and ineffective with a confused and reluctant electorate hesitating before a socialism that seems to have little substance. This will not be turned round by style but only by changes in power within society and within the party. WAC demands that the right of women to control their own affairs is recognised within society, within the party, and within the left. This is the sole principled basis on which it can make alliances.

Labour Left Liaison, and now Campaign Forum, have taken the first steps down the long road pioneered by women. We will see next week whether party conference is prepared to follow suit.

# Bases out of Britain, Britain out of NATO

THE UNITED States air-raid on Libya means that Britain's international alliances will be high on the Labour Party conference agenda next week. With 14 resolutions calling for all US bases out, that policy is certain to get debated, and it looks as if the majority of CLPs will be supporting this demand to strengthen Labour's policy.



By Carol Turner, Labour CND (personal capacity)

As the outcry which followed the attack on Tripoli and Benghazi launched from bases in this country showed, there is no doubt that this would be a popular issue for Labour to fight an election on. But the NEC will oppose the resolution calling for the removal of US bases, as the voting record on Tony Benn and Eric Heffer's paper demonstrated earlier in the year.

Reagan's attack was aimed at forcing Libya into line behind the interests of American imperialism in the Middle East. What also came to light was the fact that there was no military necessity to launch it from Britain. That decision was motivated by US desire to knock its European allies into shape and gain support.

Libya too demonstrated the real role of NATO. In the past few years discussion on NATO withdrawal has revived within the CLPs, but there is no movement whatsoever by the trade union block vote. Raising the question of the bases is one of the ways to begin to break this log-jam.

A huge majority still exists in the party for Labour's policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament. And there is a significant commitment from sections of the party rank and file for getting out of the North Atlantic Alliance. But the question is how tactically to fight for this — especially at a time when the leadership's retreat on the whole policy front, including on some of the nuclear disarmament issues, leads comrades into defensive battles. Neil Kinnock's 'unity' appeal has helped disorient campaigns within the party to strengthen policy.

The issue for the left is to find the way of fighting against Britain's imperialist alliances and to find a way of breaking into the debate within the labour movement, especially within the unions, that leads to discussion — and action — inexorably against Britain's foreign policy. The removal of all US bases is one such issue.

Fighting for the removal of US bases is also one of the key routes to taking up the question of NATO. A Labour party committed to throw American bases out, and a leadership campaigning into the election on such a policy, would bring to the fore the question of NATO membership. Such practical issues are necessary alongside resolutions on the subject of withdrawing from NATO.

The NATO edifice is a central feature of US and British imperialism. Bringing it down is no mean fight. Developing a strategy concretely to put withdrawal from NATO on the agenda is of crucial importance in developing the anti-imperialist stance for the left in the labour movement. Fighting for the removal of all US bases from this country is a practical first step towards that. It also aids all those struggling against imperialism throughout the world.

# No to all nuclear power!

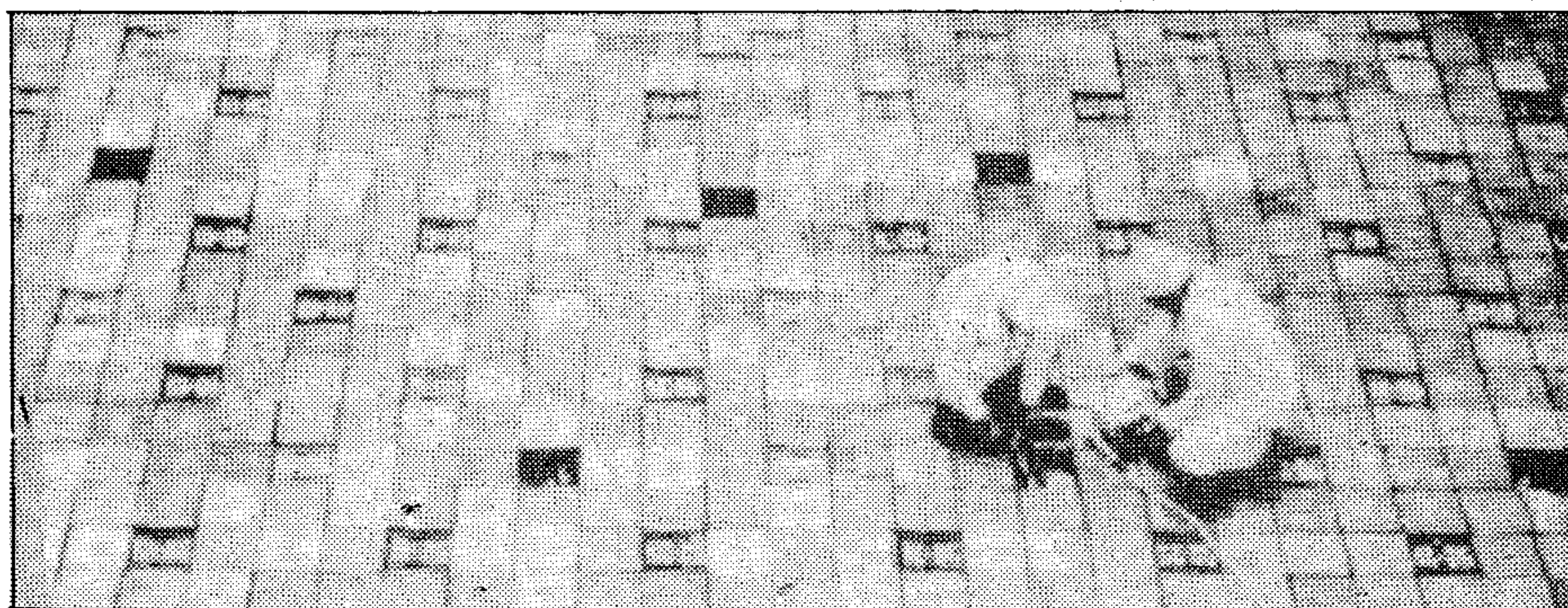
OVER 200 resolutions and amendments to party conference on nuclear power must be a record on any issue. Without a doubt, the demand to get rid of all Britain's nuclear power plants will be a central theme at Blackpool this year.

By Annie Brady

At the TUC earlier this month congress came within a whisker of passing a resolution that demanded the abandonment of all civil nuclear power, while a pro-nuclear resolution was overwhelmingly defeated. This shows the real prospects that exist at party conference this year passing a clear policy of phasing out all nuclear power, despite any reservations by the party leadership.

A recent Gallup poll published in the *Observer* showed 68 per cent of Labour voters in favour of phasing out nuclear power, 56 per cent of the whole sample. A commitment to a clear campaign around scrapping all nuclear power would be a massive boost to Labour's electoral fortunes.

Chernobyl has brought together the opposition to nuclear power which has been growing ever since the Windscale disaster in 1957. It has become apparent that there is no safe



way to generate nuclear power. In the United States, for instance, no new power stations are on order, and up to 100 existing orders have been cancelled.

Delegates must insist, in the words of the National Union of

Mineworkers resolution to conference, on 'an immediate halt to the nuclear power programme and the phasing out of all existing plants' and 'an integrated energy policy based upon coal' coupled with 'increased development of alternative energy sources

such as wave, wind, geothermal and solar energy'.

'We want to see this policy in Labour's election manifesto,' said Peter Heathfield. 'We believe that it would fantastically aid a Labour victory at the next general election.'

## Launching Campaign Forum

ON 20 SEPTEMBER the Campaign Group of MPs, holding its annual meeting in Chesterfield, met with Labour Left Liaison (LLL) — the umbrella organisation taking in many of the main campaigns in the Labour Party including the Labour Party Black Section, the Labour Women's Action Committee, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, and Labour CND. This meeting followed discussions between the Campaign Group of MPs and the campaigns in the LLL around the way forward for the left. It decided to launch Campaign Forum — An Alliance for Socialism. This will bring together the Campaign Group of MPs, the LLL and left-wing figures and groupings in the trade unions.

The political basis for Campaign Forum was created by the cooperation of the left during the miners strike. But two crucial steps were taken to its creation during the spring. First the Campaign Group became the first group within the Parliamentary Labour Party to formally endorse the demand for constitutionally recognised Black Sections within the Labour Party. Second the Campaign Group embarked on an editorial policy in its newspaper *Campaign Group News* of giving space to the major campaigns within the Labour Party to use in their own way to express their own views. The Campaign Group also went on to endorse the slate for the women's section of the NEC decided upon at the shadow elections at women's conference.

These decisions by the Campaign Group itself followed its own policy in supporting the miners strike, launching the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, supporting British withdrawal from Ireland, and demanding British withdrawal from NATO.

These decisions by the Campaign Group, taken together, represented a radical departure in the way groupings within the parliamentary party related to the party membership as well as important steps in policy. Many parliamentarians in the past, of course, had agreed to participate in struggles, and campaigns, outside parliament. But it had always been on terms which they dictated. They 'condescended' to place themselves at the head of movements.

The Campaign Group had already started to break with this tradition in the miners strike — during which they participated as one part of the enormous movement which supported the miners. The Campaign Group functioned, as Tony Benn put it, as 'the parliamentary wing of the miners support movement.' This began to change the Campaign Group's relation to the entire party.

A paper like *Tribune*, and the *Tribune* group of MPs, operated by picking out selected individuals who it chose to 'represent' the movement. It paid no attention to who the key campaigns and organisations in the party themselves think can best represent them.

For the campaigns in the party what is important is both policy and *empowering* all black people, or all women, or all party members, or the working class itself. That is why demands for the rights of women's conference, or the creation of Black Sections, have become so crucial. They are not 'arid', 'constitutional' issues but the very heart of whether the Labour Party exists for the benefit of an elite of parliamentarians and 'leaders' or for the benefit of those who created it.

The Campaign Group, through its role in the miners strike, began to open itself up to all progressive developments in the party. While other sections of the party were prepared to make token gestures, or engage in the 'politics of style', the Campaign Group endorsed the policies which the key campaigns in the party demanded. It began to function as a real part of an 'alliance for socialism' in the party. It was this which opened up the way to Campaign Forum and is why Labour Left Liaison sought a working relation with the Campaign Group. It meant the Campaign Group was now working as it had with the miners, with the key

campaigns of women, the black communities, and those demanding British withdrawal from Ireland. It was a massive political step forward which allowed the creation of Campaign Forum.

Following the meeting in Chesterfield the following press release was issued by officers of Labour Left Liaison. Tony Benn's comment is carried on our front page.

The LLL's statement declares: 'A major new umbrella group was launched at a summit of the Labour left in Chesterfield on Saturday 20 September. The immediate priority of the new group — Campaign Forum. An Alliance for Socialism — will be working for the election of a Labour government and the creation of a popular majority for socialism.

'Campaign Forum is potentially the most influential socialist umbrella group since 1981. For the first time in the Labour party's history it brings together constituency activists, trade unionists and parliamentarians.

'Campaign Forum will provide a united voice for grass roots organisation like the Labour Women's Action Committee, the Labour Party Black Section, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, and left wing groupings in the trade unions.

'What distinguishes Campaign Forum from previous initiatives like the Labour Coordinating Committee and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee is the central role played by campaigns for the rights of women and black people.

'The decision to set up Campaign Forum arises from joint work between the Campaign Group and the new Labour Party umbrella organisation Labour Left Liaison (LLL). Among the issues championed by the LLL have been, opposition to the divisive and undemocratic Black and Asian Advisory Committee. It has succeeded in winning near unanimous left support for the candidates for the women's section of the NEC that were adopted at this year's national Labour women's conference.

'The new group will oppose all expulsions, call for support of the constitutional demands of the Labour women's conference and Black Section, support British withdrawal from Ireland, demand the removal of all US bases from Britain, and defend reselection of MPs at the party conference in Blackpool.

'Campaign Forum will be launched publicly at major rallies of the Campaign Group and Labour Left Liaison at Labour Party conference.

'Following party conference Campaign Forum will be supporting the formation of local Campaign Groups and regional rallies and promoting the sales of its new newspaper *Campaign Group News* — which already outstrip those of its main competitor *Tribune*.

'The structure of Campaign Forum — An Alliance for Socialism, will provide for equal representation of the three wings of the left in the party — the Campaign Group in parliament, Labour Left Liaison, and leading trade unionist — and will also draw upon the experience of a number of prominent individuals.'

Ann Pettifor, of the Labour Women's Action Committee issued a statement: 'This is the first campaign clearly identified with the left which has not added women's rights to a shopping list of demands but instead has made support for women's rights a cornerstone of its campaign.'

Marc Wadsworth, chair of the Labour Party Black Section, said: 'What is clear is that when Labour wins the next general election there will be at least six black members of parliament. It is a virtual certainty they will be closely associated with the Campaign Group of Labour MPs as a result of its decision to support Labour Party Black Sections. However it will have to be a Campaign Group that is relevant and receptive to the black perspective in politics. This new initiative can ensure this happens through joint action based on support for the right of black people to self organise.'

Labour Left Liaison and Campaign Group speakers will be sharing platforms at Labour Party conference in launching Campaign Forum.

# THE POLITICS

ONE OF the major parts of the newly launched Campaign Forum is Labour Left Liaison (LLL). This is the liaison body of the main campaign in the Labour Party. Its chair is Ann Pettifor of the Labour Women's Action Committee (WAC). Its secretary is Vladimir Derer of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD). Other campaigns in the LLL include the Labour Party Black Section and Labour CND.

Since its creation during the summer Labour Left Liaison has been receiving major press publicity. The *New Statesman* devoted four pages to its creation and politics followed by an exchange between Vladimir Derer, Roy Hattersley and Michael Meacher. Neil Kinnock engaged in an attack on Labour Left Liaison in his speech in Manchester on 11 September criticising 'liaising' and 'foruming' on the left.

The public meeting held on 22 July in London by Campaign Group News, and supported by the LLL, attracted 700 people to hear speakers from the Campaign Group, Women's Action Committee, Labour Party Black Section, and Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. It received widespread national coverage in the *Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Financial Times*, *Observer* and other papers. More than 800 people attended a similar meeting in Manchester on 11 September. Labour Left Liaison will have a major impact at Labour Party conference as one of the most important parts of Campaign Forum.

JOHN ROSS looks at the politics of the LLL and the reason for the political impact it is making.

THE PROCESS that led to the creation of Labour Left Liaison represented in reality a sea change in the entire orientation of the Labour left. Labour Left Liaison is the first attempt to create what might be termed a *strategic left* within the Labour Party. The LLL did not aim to bring together 'all the left' on the existing basis. On the contrary it set out to *change* the basis on which the left was constituted. It is based implicitly, and increasingly explicitly, on a strategic line for the Labour Party — one that is not just looking to the next election, although it is totally committed to winning it, but to remoulding the entire Labour Party and embarking on a strategy for socialism in Britain.

As Neil Kinnock, and his supporters, manifestly lack any strategy for socialism, it is going to be the forces assembled in the LLL, together with currents in the Parliamentary Labour Party and the trade unions the LLL seeks to work with, that will be the strategic driving force of the Labour Party. This is why the campaigns in the LLL have come together with the Campaign Group of MPs in Campaign Forum. It is therefore worth spelling out what that strategy is — both as it is implicitly inscribed in the demands of the LLL and as it is increasingly explicitly being spelt out.

The first point about the LLL is that it is based on a *class struggle left*. It was the impact of the miners strike which first really brought the forces in the LLL together. The first 'prototype', on an enormous scale, of the alliances the LLL represents was the huge social movement generated around the miners strike. The ties of the NUM to the women's movement, to the black community, to the lesbian and gay movement, to other trade unions are exactly the social alliances the LLL is about creating. It was the alliance of the miners strike that in reality represented the 'model' of the LLL.

The LLL differs from the miners strike of course in that the campaigns which make up its core were often organised first through the constituencies and then went into the unions for support. But that does not alter the political core of the matter. None of the key forces in the LLL are content to remain in the constituencies. All are out to link developments across the entire movement — taking in the CLPs, the unions, women's sections, black sections, the youth section and all other parts of the party. What the LLL is in fact constructing, and by that helping define a political strategy, is a series of social alliances across the labour movement.

The second feature of the LLL, one that reinforces its character as a *strategic left*, is that it realises that while struggle, as with the miners, is an absolute precondition for success by itself it is not enough. The British working class has been struggling for its entire existence. What it has lacked is a socialist strategy — and any political organisation to embody that strategy.

A first crucial point in the strategic vision of the LLL is that Labour has to create, to consciously build, a *majority* for socialism in Britain. The idea that socialism can be introduced by a minority of the population is absurd. However it is equally dangerous, an ultra left delusion, to believe that there *already* exists today a majority for socialism in Britain.

Capitalism in Britain today is not held up by a 'small handful of traitors'. Creating that majority for socialism, a long hard fight, is the most fundamental task facing socialists. That fight for a majority for socialism will take years of struggle of every type — and we are still only just at its beginning.

The first element of this majority for socialism is Labour's traditional support — with, to be blunt, its tradi-



(Top) Ann Pettifor, member of the Labour Women's Action Committee and chair of Labour Left Liaison, speaking at a public meeting in Armagh Prison, Wadsworth, 1986.

tional core in the white male manufacturing working class.

But that core of Labour's traditional support is still vital. The idea of creating socialism based on 'an alliance of the dispossessed' is pure nonsense. The struggle for socialism cannot be confined to white male sections of the working class. But it must definitely take them in.

Politics rests on *power* from within the working class, women, the black community and others are excluded. Any strategy which does not include winning over the white male sections

# OF LABOUR LEFT LIAISON



... of the executive of Women's Action  
... Labour Left Liaison. (Middle) Picket of  
... against strip-searches. (Bottom) Marc  
... chair of the Labour Party Black Section

Labour CND. Other anti-imperialist campaigns, with the partial exception of the Central America Labour Group, do not yet see the need to participate in Labour Left Liaison — although hopefully that will change as it acquires support.

Organisations such as WAC and the Labour Party Black Section, or the Labour Committee on Ireland, are not fighting for narrow sectional national interests of British white male workers. The vanguard of their support are women members in the labour movement, black members of the labour movement and those active on the issue of Ireland. The same principle applies for campaigns such as Labour CND or the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights. But all these campaigns are marked not only by their orientation into the organisations of the CLPs but by their serious support in the trade unions.

WAC naturally seeks to have its crucial base among the one third of trade unionists who are women — but it also seeks to change the positions of the two thirds who are men. The Black Section seeks to spread black self-organisation throughout the labour movement — including the unions — and to have its base in the black community and among black workers. But it also uses this to fight against the racism among the ninety per cent of trade unionists who are white.

A serious fight in the unions has a powerful base among the forty per cent of union members who are women or black. But it also involves a fundamental fight among the positions of the sixty per cent who are white and male.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has among the strongest trade union links of any campaign in the party. The Women's Action Committee has been progressively winning trade union support — gaining a further two unions, the NUR and UCATT, to support its demands this year and only narrowly losing even in John Golding's NCU. The Labour Party Black Section won the first major union, the NUM, to support it in 1984. It won the vote of the NUR and NUPE last year, and it has received its first supporting amendment from a union, the ACTT, this year.

The Labour Committee on Ireland has been intensifying its work in the unions with success. Labour CND, as part of CND, has traditional links with the unions. A key part of the power of the campaigns in the LLL is therefore that they are organising across the *entire* labour movement. This gives a key strength to these campaigns and the LLL as a whole. It also means the campaigns in the LLL are progressively touching the key centres of organisational power in the Labour Party.

But the organisations, and alliances, involved in the LLL show the way that Labour must *expand* its entire traditional understanding of politics — and its social base. The miners strike was not just based on *trade union* solidarity of the traditional type. The miners strike allied a key union, and other unions supporting it, with women inside and outside the working class, with the black community, and with many other social forces. In short it enormously expanded the *alliances* of the labour movement. That is exactly the strategic concept of the LLL. To knit together Labour's traditional working class base with an enormous expansion of its social alliances nationally and internationally, and to unite this in a coherent strategy for socialism.

It is this strategy which creates the power of the LLL's policy. It is ridiculous to claim, as do the Labour right, that this represents an orientation to 'minorities'. Women, white male

workers, the black community, those fighting for freedom and socialism nationally and internationally, young people are not a minority. They constitute a *majority* of society. Out of these Labour can create a real alliance for socialism in Britain which is a majority in society. The strategy the LLL is putting forward is to create a potentially hegemonic force in society.

This is why the overt break of the LLL with anything remotely resembling the politics of *Militant* or the *Morning Star* was decisive. Because the politics of these currents cut the labour movement off from the decisive alliances which could make it a majority in society — and a left which cannot explain how Labour will ever win a majority in society for socialism is a left which cannot lead the labour movement.

The LLL does have a strategy for how to win a majority for the labour movement and for socialism — to tie Labour's traditional working class base to a massive new series of social alliances, and link that to the key anti-imperialist struggles that are taking place in the world. It is by putting forward that strategy the LLL 'breaks the mould' of the previous framework of the Labour left.

It is because it understands that Labour Left Liaison represents something new, and potentially extremely powerful, that the Labour leadership and press have been giving the LLL such attention. The LLL represents a *new* type of force in British politics. One that represents in an organised conscious way the nucleus of the type of alliances the miners created in their strike.

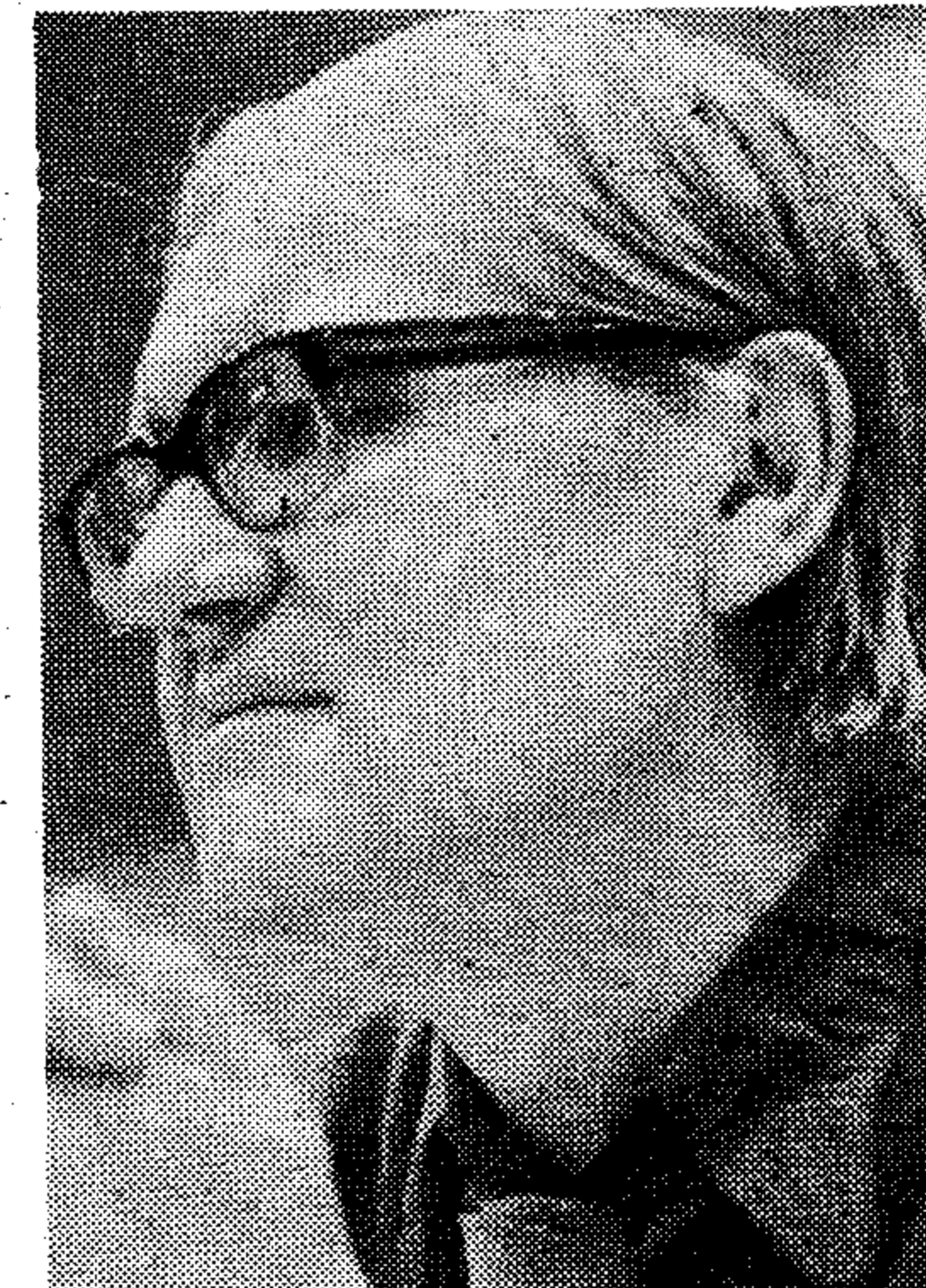
British capital, or the Labour leadership, never lost a moment's sleep over the type of politics represented by the *Morning Star* or *Militant*. But the type of politics represented by the LLL, on the contrary, is something very

serious indeed.

It is also for this reason that many obstacles will be, put in the way of the type of politics that the LLL represents. For success by the LLL, and Campaign Forum, would reshape the entire left wing of the British labour movement.

When it reported the creation of the LLL the *New Statesman* reported as purely token, and deeply significant, the fact that Labour Left Liaison had proposed as its joint chairs representatives of the Labour Party Black Section and the Women's Action Committee. It was a deeply significant decision. But it was not in any way token.

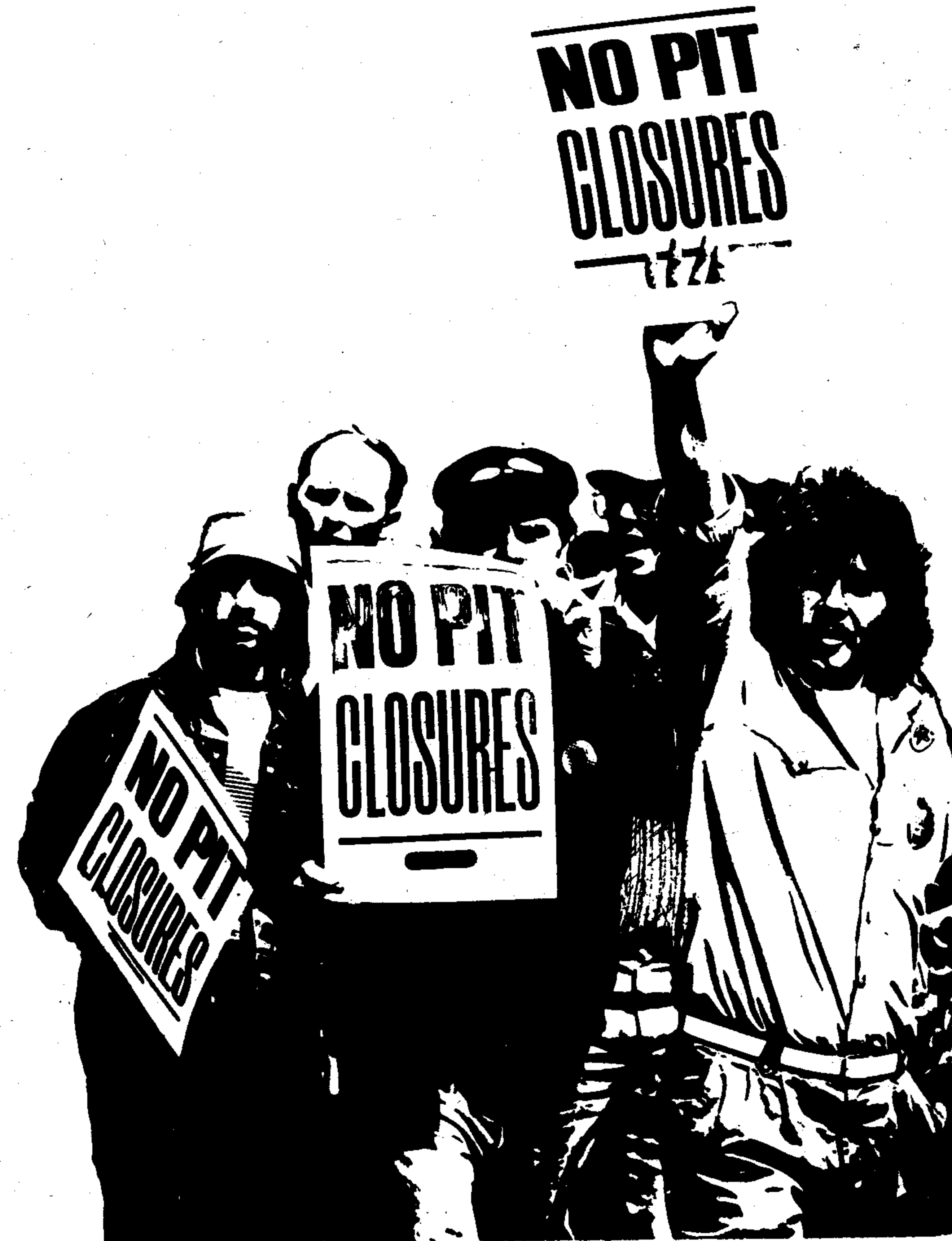
The decision to propose that WAC and the Black Section take the chair of a labour movement organisation, the LLL, symbolised, and determined, its



Vladimir Derer, secretary of CLPD and secretary of Labour Left Liaison

entire orientation. It meant embarking on a strategic line whose absolute core was to tie together the white male working class, women, the black community, and the key anti-imperialist campaigns in the party — and to tie these together in the organised labour movement. Proposing to make WAC and the Black Section joint chairs meant that the entry ticket to that left was support for the demands of the Women's Action Committee, and the Labour Party Black Section — as well as crucial international demands including British withdrawal from Ireland. That is a sea change in the entire orientation of the Labour left.

And it is also why Labour Left Liaison is making such a huge impact in the press and Labour party. It genuinely is an historical land mark in the politics of the left wing of the British labour movement.



# LCI's open letter to Neil Kinnock Labour must hear Sinn Fein

**THE LABOUR** Committee on Ireland's plans to invite Sinn Fein Councillor Tommy Carroll to speak at a Labour party conference, and its promotion of a tour of Sinn Fein councillors to local councils in October has provoked a big controversy in the press. In this open letter to Neil Kinnock, the Labour Committee on Ireland reply to press criticism and address pertinent questions to the party leader.

Dear Neil Kinnock,  
This week, the press have been responding to the Labour leadership's unpreparedness to discuss the Irish question at party conference in Blackpool. The newspaper of the Irish community in Britain, the *Irish Post*, led on Stuart Bell's remark that conference was unlikely to discuss Ireland. The *Daily Telegraph*, *Mail*, *Sun*, *Express*, and *Today* all picked up on unattributed comments from the Labour leadership that meetings organised by the 'pro-republican' Labour Committee on Ireland were seen as 'stunts designed to win publicity for the provisional cause'.

## Quoted

The *Daily Telegraph* said that you in particular are 'known to regard the readiness of left wingers such as Mr Kenneth Livingstone to flirt with Sinn Fein as a serious electoral embarrassment'. You are further quoted as saying that 'nobody in, or associated with Sinn Fein is welcome within a million miles of the Labour Party or anything we stand for'. This is all damaging for the party.

The LCI is not engaged in 'stunts'. It never has been and never will. We regard the Northern Ireland issue as one of the greatest political and moral challenges facing an incoming Labour administration.

We have been deeply concerned over the decision of the national executive committee not to allocate resources for the completion of the report of the NEC/Parliamentary Labour Party working group on our Northern Ireland policy. Many people in the party, including ourselves took great care to present options for the working group to consider

and hoped that a report would be brought forward for conference debate.

## Accord

The Labour Party helped promote the Anglo Irish Accord signed last November. The overwhelming majority of the PLP walked through the division lobbies with the government to indicate their assent. The LCI argued at the time that since the Accord aimed at bolstering partition, it ran counter to Labour's policy for a united Ireland. Senior party figures intimated that they too were sceptical about the Government's intentions, but thought there would be positive reforms coming out of the Agreement which would make the task of creating unity easier.

Since then, we have not seen a process of reform. We have seen the legal system in the Irish Republic bent to satisfy British government demands for extradition — as in the case of Eibhlin Glenholmes. We have seen the economy of the Irish Republic strained to breaking point by the demands of the British government for more and more resources to be pumped into border security. We should remember that this border was imposed by violence from Britain and which the constitution of the Irish Republic does not recognise.

## Extradition

In the United States, president Reagan has applied unprecedented pressure upon Congress to facilitate the signing of an amended extradition Treaty which removes the political exception clause — a basic safeguard within international law. But as for reforms? Nothing.

Since the signing of the Accord, nationalist people of the North live under greater threat from sectarian violence. Provocative Orange marches have been allowed to parade straight through vulnerable nationalist areas. Ten people have fallen victim to loyalist sectarian assassinations. Bigotry in the workplace has sharply escalated.

Even reforms that were promised have been put onto the shelf. The no-jury 'Diplock' courts have not been touched; victims of the infamous 'supergrass' trials still await appeal. Instead of greater accountability of the security forces, nationalists were given the 'Stalker' affair — where an investigation of the selective assassination policy known as 'shoot-to-kill' seems to have been disrupted by a clumsy attempt to smear the investigating officer. Plastic bullets have claimed their first loyalist victims.

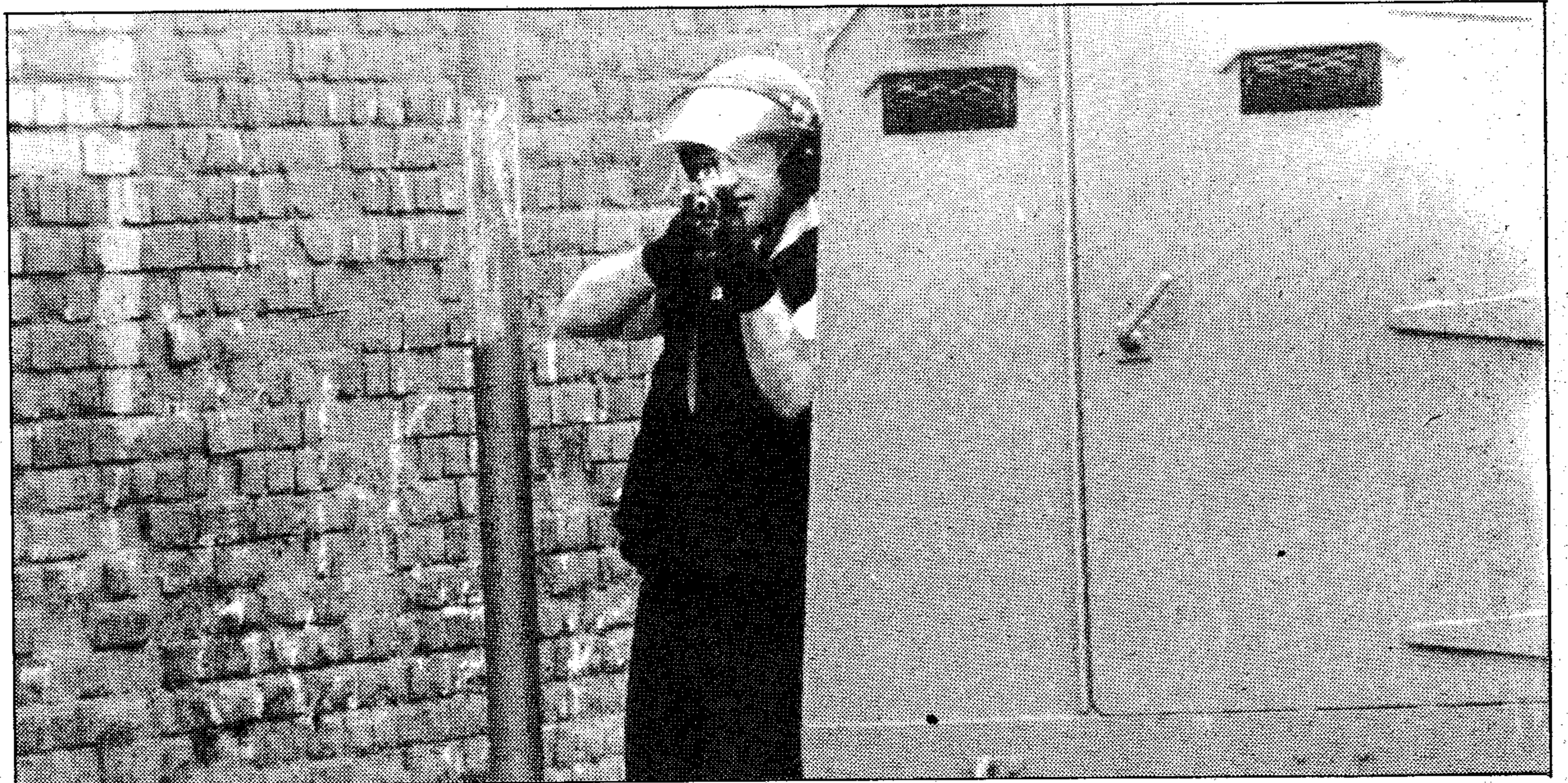
The sole item of reform remaining on the agenda — the repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act, is already seen as being merely the recognition by the RUC that existing legislation is unenforceable.

## Policies

As for Labour's policies — for repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act, banning plastic bullets, stopping strip searching of women prisoners, getting rid of no-jury courts — nothing has been heard of this at all.

Is it not time to draw a balance sheet of Labour's support for the Accord and admit it was a mistake?

If we can be honest enough to do that, we can start to prepare a clear policy. We need to be able to go to the electorate with a manifesto commitment which will solve a problem which has confounded British politicians for generations. At the heart of such a plan must be Labour's determination to allow the Irish people as a whole the right to determine their own future, free from outside interference. How can this be put in-



to practice? What measures can Labour in opposition, as well as in government take to prepare that transition and bring about the most rapid end to violence? These are questions we urgently need to discuss and get the agreement of the whole movement on.

Our fringe meeting at this year's conference is structured as a discussion between socialists who share the Labour Party's goal of a united Ireland but who have different assessments of the Accord.

Labour's junior spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Stuart Bell, has told the press that he intends to use the platform we are providing to 'denounce IRA violence'. That, of course, is his right. But is this no different from Sir Geoffrey How who intends to use his opportunity to meet Oliver Tambo to 'denounce the violence of the African National Congress'?

If denunciations of violence could solve the world's problems, there would be no racism, no apartheid and no partition of Ireland. All have been imposed by violence.

In repressive regimes around the world, freedom fighters, socialists, democrats live with the fruits of repressive violence. They are trying

always to find the best ways to end injustice and inequality where the status quo is being preserved with brutality, torture, murder and state terror. It is morally offensive to denounce the struggle of the oppressed in such circumstances. Our duty is to find a way to help.

## Listen

The Labour leadership above all has a duty to listen. It is a fact that the most hard-pressed nationalist communities in the North of Ireland, who have borne the brunt of military occupation by Crown forces and today face the savagery of loyalist reaction, have elected Sinn Fein representatives. They are fully aware of the support that these men and women give to the military struggle of the IRA.

The 59 local councillors who the Unionist upholders of the status quo seek to exclude from the council chambers and who government ministers refuse to recognise and who you refuse to talk to are elected representatives. They come to England to discuss with Labour representatives, local councils, conference delegates, trade unionists in the hope that Labour, of all parties can be persuaded to adopt policies that will bring an end to

violence. They hope that the days when Labour politicians like Conservative politicians saw only the military saturation of nationalist areas and torture of prisoners as adequate policies are over.

There can be no military solution to the problems in the North of Ireland. Surely we have learned that through bitter experience.

You have been to the north of Ireland and said publicly you refused to talk to Sinn Fein. What did that achieve? What message did that give the thousands of nationalists who have voted for Sinn Fein representatives?

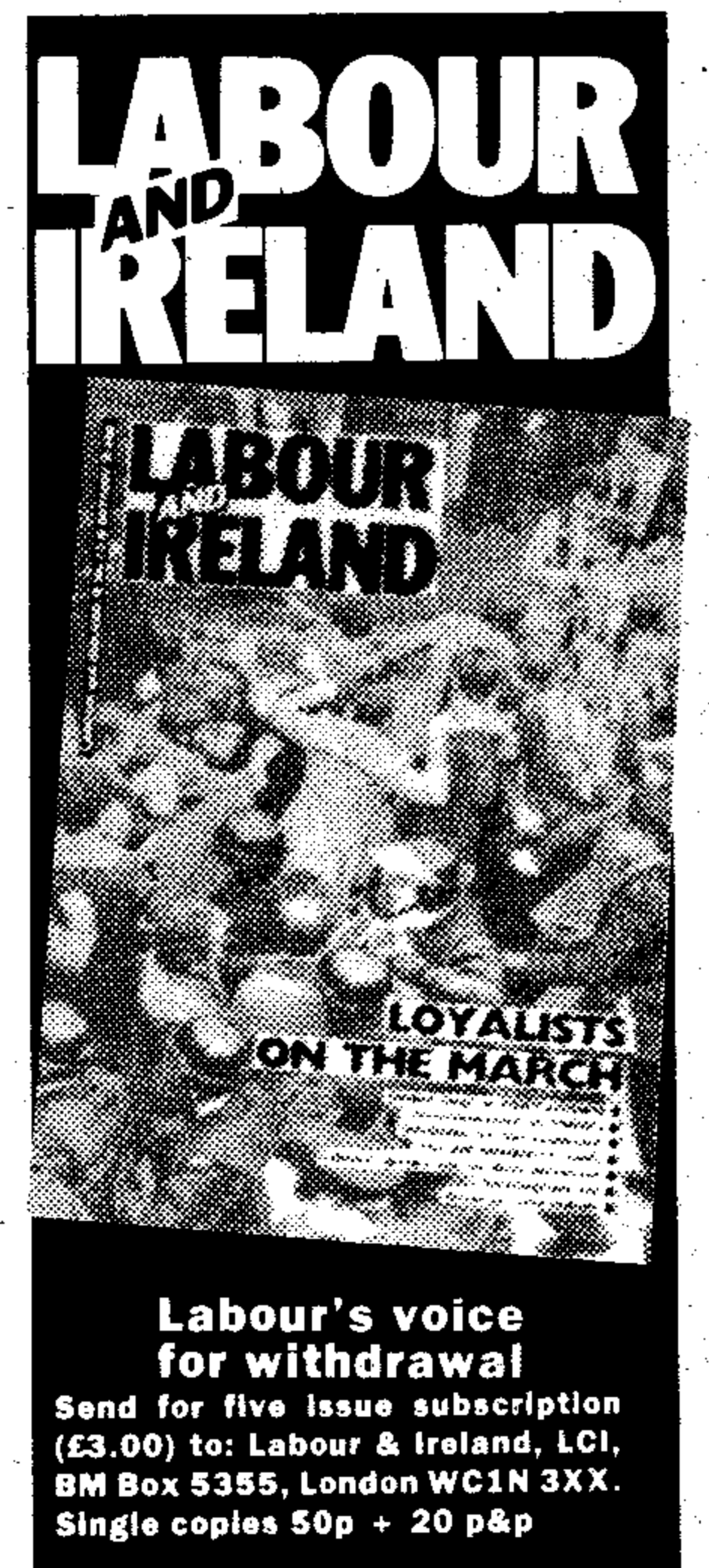
## Dialogue

What hope does the Labour leadership bring to nationalists or republicans that it is worth talking or engaging in a political dialogue? Perhaps you have the answer to how the minority in the North of Ireland can achieve justice and equality without resort to violence: If you refuse to discuss such matters, they will draw their own conclusions.

The Labour Committee on Ireland wants the Labour Party to be able to say: 'We are the Party that will put an end to violence in the North of Ireland.'

We share the conviction of the majority of people in Britain that only by withdrawing British presence can this be achieved. Violence in the North of Ireland is Britain's responsibility. And we have a responsibility to end it.

The Accord has produced reforms. It has not found a mythical 'middle ground'. Nor will it. Labour has to grasp the nettle of an alternative policy. We can not do it without talking.



# Victory for political rights in US

**A MAJOR** blow has been struck for political rights in the US. A federal court has ruled that the US government has no right to use informers, break-ins or disruption programmes against political organisations. Federal district judge, Thomas Griesa, gave his ruling at the end of last month, to a law suit that has been going on for thirteen years. The suit was filed in 1973 by the US political organisation, the Socialist Workers Party, against the US government.

The SWP charged that it had been subject to an illegal 40 year campaign of break-ins, forgeries, phone-tapping, the planting of informers inside the Party and other disruptive operations.

In his court decision, which fills 210 pages, Judge Griesa rules that the FBI's spying and disruption was 'patently unconstitutional'. The FBI, according to the decision, used its informers 'to obtain private information

about political meetings, demonstrations and other lawful events and their participants. It is the

By Nick Adams

court's conclusion that this was wholly incompatible with the SWP's First Amendment right to freely assemble and freely speak on political matters.

The judge also held that the disruption programme carried out by the

FBI, known as 'Cointelpro' ('counter-intelligence programme') was illegal. The FBI he ruled 'embarked on a series of actions with the express purpose of harming the SWP by causing internal mistrust and strife, by weakening its alliances with other groups, by hampering its scheduled activities and by other means. There was no legal authority or justification for such operations.'

Griesa awarded damages of \$264,000 about (£180,000). He rejected the claim by the US Justice Department that the FBI campaign was justified because it believed there was evidence of illegal activities by the SWP. 'Over the course of approximately 30 years' Griesa stressed, 'there is

no indication that any (FBI) informant ever observed any violation of federal law or gave information leading to a single arrest for any federal law violation.'

Commenting on Judge Griesa's findings that the 'FBI had accumulated evidence of a variety of lawful political pursuits by the SWP but no evidence of sabotage or violence or anything else of that nature' Doug Jenness, editor of the SWP's paper *The Militant*, comments in its 19 September issue that the 'SWP has nothing to hide; there are no skeletons in its closet.'

'To the contrary' Jenness continues 'it is the FBI, the immigration cops and other police agencies that operate in the dark, because their disruptive

operations and snooping are outside the law.'

The court ruling has been widely publicised throughout the United States, in mass circulation daily papers and on TV. Literally millions of people in the US have learnt more about the shady, covert operations of the state through publication of documents turned up through the court action.

Constitutional rights lawyer, Leonard Boudin, told the press that the ruling extends 'important new protections to the rights of all politically active individuals and organisations.' Boudin is a prominent defender of civil rights. He recently represented Nicaragua at the World Court.

In a 3 September statement, the SWP argues that

the advantage gained through the ruling should be pressed home. The court decision, the statement argues 'puts a valuable weapon in the hands of every working class organisation in this country. It is a new weapon, one that can — and should — be widely used to win broader freedoms to engage in political activity.'

## Illegal

The SWP highlights three areas. By declaring illegal the use of informers against political activists, the court has 'expanded the constitutionally guaranteed right to privacy'. Griesa's ruling also marks 'the first time' a court has declared illegal FBI surveillance techniques such as theft of documents, phone-tapp-

ing, bugging and such like. And also 'for the first time' that the surreptitious campaign of disruption operations is also held to be against the law.

'The sweeping character of this ruling' the Committee states 'makes it unambiguous that this applies not only to the FBI but to similar actions taken against any organisation by any government cop agency.'

Consequently, it will not just be the SWP which will benefit. The decision is a 'direct gain for every labour union, every opponent of Washington's dirty contra war against Nicaragua, every organisation fighting for women's rights and everyone seeking to halt racist discrimination and cop violence against Black people.'



# 'Autonomy' advance for Nicaraguan indians and black people

AS PART OF THE intensification of the US-backed war against Nicaragua, the Reagan administration engaged in a vicious campaign concerning the plight of the country's Indian and black people. But Reagan's claims that the Sandinista government maltreats the country's indigenous peoples couldn't be further from the truth, writes Jon Silberman. Living in the Atlantic Coast region, Nicaragua's Indian and black peoples have enormously benefitted from the 1979 revolution.

Roads, schools and hospitals have been built. Land has been distributed. Trees and crops have been planted. The town of Bluefields is projected as becoming Nicaragua's chief port.

Despite such gains, the US found the Atlantic Coast a quite fertile area for its 'contra war' operations. Even significant economic improvements to the region could not rapidly overcome deep-seated divisions rooted in a history of discrimination. As Tomas Borge, a national leader of the Sandinista National Liberation

Front put it earlier this year: 'the revolution came up against a problem that had not presented itself in any other part: the ethnic problem'.

Appreciation of this problem gave rise to the 'Autonomy Plan'. 'When I speak of autonomy' Borge explained 'I am referring not just to respect for their customs, religion, language, and the right to use the forests and waters, but also to the election of the local administrative authorities and a Regional Assembly, meaning an advanced autonomy, the only real autonomy for ethnic

groups that exists in the Americas.'

The Autonomy Plan provides for defence, internal security, international relations and foreign policy, all-Nicaraguan economic strategy and jurisprudence to be the responsibility of Nicaragua's central government. Within this framework, the Atlantic Coast will govern itself at all levels — cultural, economic and political.

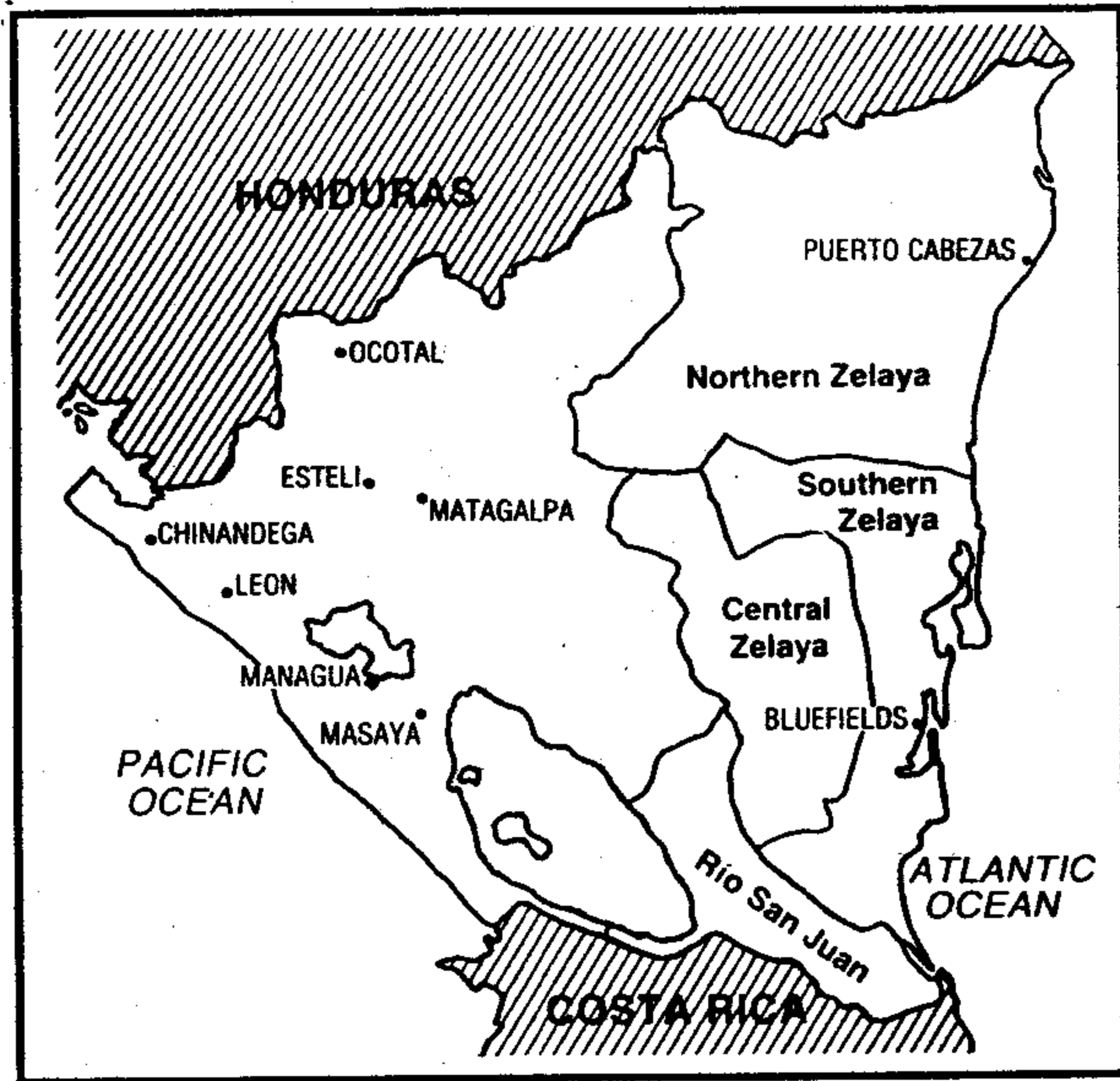
Borge explains that the Plan has a nationwide scope. 'The Atlantic region is enriched because it is the direct beneficiary of autonomy. The Pacific region is enriched because it receives the cultural heritage of the Atlantic. Both are enriched through the elimination of prejudices and misunderstandings.'

The plan, he argues, is a contribution by Nicaragua to humanity. It 'ex-

presses in legal terms the revolution's recognition of the marginalisation and oppression that the aboriginal communities and ethnic groups have suffered for ages. The revolution has adopted their historic demands as its own, and promises to

respond to them on all levels.' Tens of thousands of Nicaraguans have been involved in meetings discussing the autonomy process.

The greatest obstacle to the carrying through of the autonomy plan remains the US intervention. Until



now, some 35 per cent of economic damage produced directly as the result of the 'contra war' has been inflicted on the Atlantic Coast.

Substantial amounts of the latest \$100 million contra aid from the United States is earmarked for continuing this policy of destruction. Thousands of indians remain in Honduras, hostages of the contra war. Two organisations of the indigenous peoples still maintain themselves under arms against the revolution.

But by recognising the just demands of the indigenous peoples for autonomy, through their policy of dialogue and through amnesties, the Sandinista government has turned the tide in the

Atlantic Coast. Each week dozens of Miskitos and Sumos have returned from Honduran refugee camps. By October of last year, despite the armed conflict in the area, more than half of the 34 villages along the Coco river which divides Nicaragua from Honduras have been resettled.

As Tomas Borge puts it the 'creation of a new Nicaragua national, ethnically pluralist, multi-lingual and culturally pluralist will take time' but 'the bases are firmly established... There have been qualitative changes in the population's thinking... Peace, return and autonomy have become the banners of struggle of the peoples of the Atlantic Coast.'

## Centuries of discrimination

'AUTONOMY IS not a new idea' explained Nicaraguan president, Daniel Ortega to special conference held last year 'it has been the desire and aspiration of the people from the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua for over four hundred years'.

The Atlantic Coast comprises 56 per cent of the country's territory. Despite this the region has suffered tremendous isolation, and its peoples have been subject to super-exploitation and racial discrimination.

The Pacific coast was conquered by the Spaniards who exterminated the native tribes. But they were never able to

carry through their colonial policy in the Atlantic region. That was left to the British.

The British first began contact with the Atlantic coast early in the seventeenth century. They curried favour with sections of the indigenous peoples seeking to turn them against both the Spanish and other indigenous peoples to strengthen their own rule. The Atlantic coast continued as a British protectorate until 1860 (Nicaragua had won its independence from Spain 40 years earlier).

Following the Coast's incorporation into Nicaragua in 1894 its resources were milked dry by foreign, principally US-based companies. Lumber com-

panies wiped out forests. Mining companies exhausted the considerable gold deposits. (Nicaragua was in the world's top ten gold-producing nations in the 1940s and '50s). Over-fishing left the coastal waters bereft of the most healthy and lucrative fish.

Prior to the revolution of 1979 nothing was done for the people of the region. No schools or roads were built. Illiteracy stood at 80 per cent. Attempts to organise unions were crushed by the National Guard. Silicosis and tuberculosis was the plight of those thrown out of work by the closure of the mines. The people's cultures and languages were suppressed.

## The peoples

Six distinct indigenous peoples and ethnic communities with their own languages presently live in the Atlantic coast region:

- CREOLES The 30,000 Creoles are descendants of African slaves. Their culture is Afro Caribbean and they speak Creole English.
- SUMOS Today the term 'Sumo' is used to refer to all the surviving non-Miskito groups. There are 8,000 Sumos.
- MISKITOS After the Mestizos, the 80,000 Miskitos are the most numerous people in the Atlantic Coast. Today they live in hundreds of communities especially in Northern Zelaya.
- RAMAS The 800 Ramas constitute the smallest indigenous group. Their very survival is at stake.

- GARIPHONES or BLACK CARIBS The 1,500 Garifunas originated as the mixture of Africans with the Caribbean Indians of the Lesser Antilles. Their language has almost disappeared and is being saved along with their distinct culture.
- MESTIZOS The 120,000 Indo-Hispanic peoples from the Pacific coast and central regions form the majority of the Atlantic coast population.

# Labour Movement Conference on Central America

A MAJOR CONFERENCE in solidarity with the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador will take place on 28 February 1987. The initiative was taken by the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign and has now gained support from the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign and 12 national trade unions — including the transport, civil servants, graphical, construction workers, public employees, shop workers and communication workers.

Ron Todd, general secretary of the TGWU will join trade union and political leaders from Nicaragua and El Salvador on the conference platform. Their theme will be the struggle for peace, self-determination and reconstruction in the face of stepped up United States intervention.

The conference has been called with the US-backed war to overthrow the Sandinista government entering a new stage. On 13 August the US Congress approved \$100 million aid to the Contras and US military manoeuvres are escalating in Honduras.

The Nicaraguan people have appealed for international support in their efforts to defend their sovereignty and prevent the direct use of US troops.

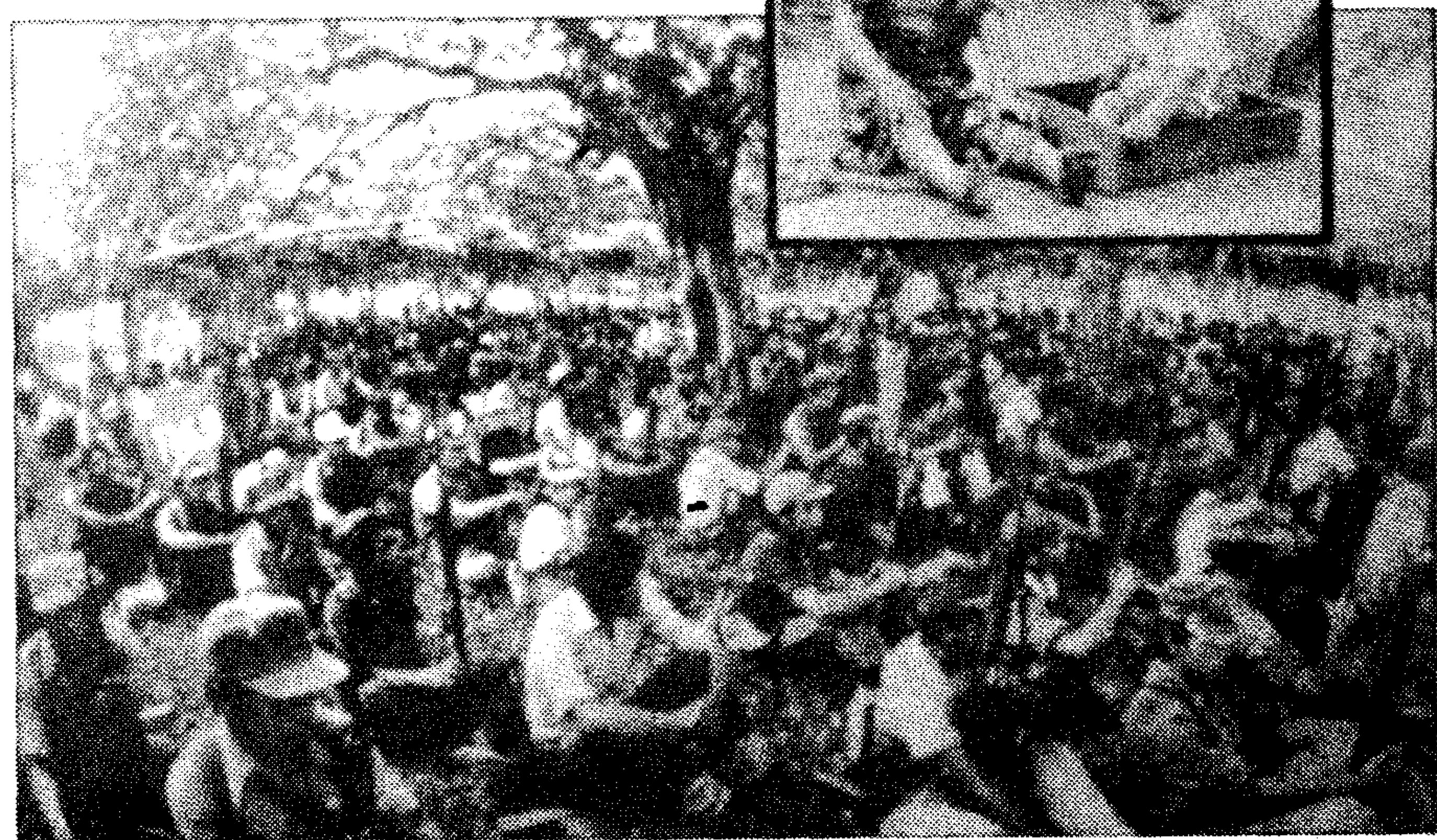
the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign on 6 September discussed how to promote this solidarity. The NSC

By Celia Pugh

has joined forces with War on Want to produce an attractive campaigning and information pack. This contains material on US destabilisation, trade unions, the Atlantic Coast, Reagan's war and the contras, women and health.

The NSC has also produced briefings with facts and information on US funding of the Contras, the pro-Contra lobby in Europe, the International Court of Justice decision and the reasons for the bannings of La Prensa, Bishop Vega and Father Carballo.

The El Salvador Solidarity Campaign is also responding to appeals for



FMLN forces — Duarte has rejected peace dialogue

support to match the new situation inside El Salvador. The Duarte government is in deep crisis. It faces mass demonstrations of a broadening opposition and military breakthroughs by the FMLN liberation forces. The mass movement's demand for a peace dialogue between the government and the liberation fronts of the FDR-FMLN have again been rejected by Duarte.

On 13 September, 200 supporters of the El

Salvador Solidarity Campaign picketed the US Embassy in London. They were protesting against US funding of the Duarte regime and military support for the ruthless bombings of the Salvadorean countryside.

Labour Movement conference on Central America, 28 February 1987, Congress House, London. Leaflets are available from ELSSOC, 13-16 Borough Road, London, SE1. Telephone

01-928 3412. Donations are requested of £1 per 1000 leaflets. Also available is the report of a recent British Labour Movement delegation to El Salvador at £1.

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign/War on Want packs are available at £1.95 from 20/21 Compton Terrace, London N1. Briefings on the state of emergency, Contras and International Court of Justice decision are available for 30p each.

## Grenada murder trial smears revolution...

ALMOST THREE YEARS have passed since the murder of Grenada's prime minister, Maurice Bishop, and the US invasion of that tiny island. In October 1984, the occupation authorities arrested Bernard Coard and 18 others for Bishop's murder. Coard had been deputy prime minister of the

By Celia Pugh

People's Revolutionary Government. After much delay, the trial began in April this year. It is being used by the US-installed New National Party and the Reagan administration to discredit the 1979 revolution.

The Coard faction overthrew the revolutionary government by moving against Bishop and turning the guns of the army against the mass demonstration of 19 October 1983 which released Bishop from house arrest. The Reagan administration and its servants in the Caribbean are seeking to convince the Grenadan people and the oppressed throughout the world that these are the inevitable methods of communists and anti-imperialists.

The NNP government is also using the trial to undercut popular discontent over worsening conditions on the island. Health, employment, and education projects initiated by the revolutionary government have been dismantled and unemployment has soared.

In the first four months of this year, living costs jumped by almost 30 per cent with a new tax on consumer goods. Democratic rights and civil liberties are under assault. A new Movement Restriction Act limits travel out of the country of those deemed to be security risks. Trade unionists are harassed. Unemployed youth have been killed, political activists intimidated and opponents of the government and US presence on the island are subject to arbitrary searches. Irregularities by the authorities in the conduct of the murder trial, including ill-treatment of defendants, have also formed part of the government's repressive measures.

## ... Coard supporters cover up

Now, however, very necessary opposition to the government repression is being abused by the so-called Committee for Human Rights in Grenada and Caribbean Labour Solidarity. These organisations have been organising in the trade unions and Labour Party and through the pages of the *Morning Star*, *Caribbean Times* and *Tribune* to cover up for Bernard Coard.

They use denunciations of the US-backed trial to rewrite history on the murder of Bishop, denying that Coard had any part in this. They even point the finger of responsibility at George Louison, agricultural minister in the revolutionary government and today a leader of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement. *Caribbean Times* of 12 September describes Louison as 'the man accused of murdering Bishop'. Other accounts blame him for bullying Bishop to break party discipline leading to his house arrest; and for 'manipulating' the masses to take to the streets on 19 October leading the army to shoot them down.

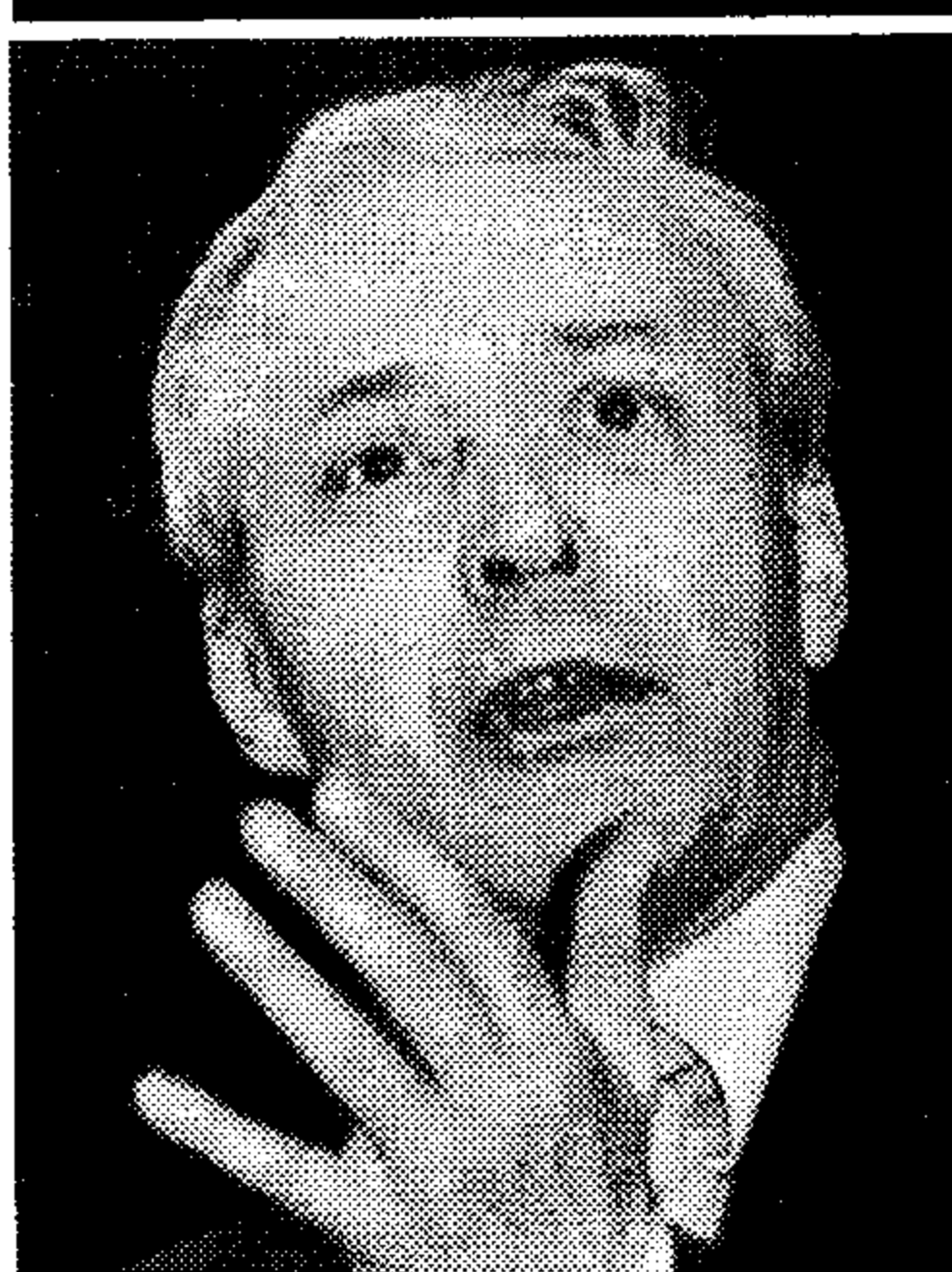
This cynical cover-up and smear campaign does no justice to the Grenadan revolution. It flies in the face of well-documented evidence presented by Cuban leader Fidel Castro. While rejecting the right of the US-backed court to try Coard and his supporters, Castro leaves no doubt that this 'Pol Pot group' murdered Bishop and with it the Grenadan revolution.

# BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

The second annual 'Alliance for Socialism' weekend of debate, discussion, and agitation sponsored by Socialist Action.

## 22-23 November

### Initial speakers include



Tony Benn



Linda Bellos



Peter Heathfield



Marc Wadsworth



Betty Heathfield



Diane Abbott

Martin Collins  
Jeremy Corbyn  
Vladimir Derer

Bill Etherington  
John Lang

Alan Meale  
Ann Pettifor  
Jude Woodward

### Topics include

- ★Which way for the left?
- ★Labour Left Liaison
- ★Which way for women in the Labour Party?
- ★Black Liberation
- ★Defending the unions today
- ★Justice for the miners
- ★Lesbian and Gay Liberation
- ★Campaign Group of MPs
- ★Fighting the witch hunt
- ★The Anglo-Irish Accord
- ★Britain out of NATO, US bases out of Britain
- ★South Africa
- ★Solidarity with Nicaragua and El Salvador
- ★Zionism

Price: £6 for the weekend, £3.50 per day (£4 and £2 unwaged).  
Venue: Sir William Collins School, London.  
Make cheques payable to Socialist Action.

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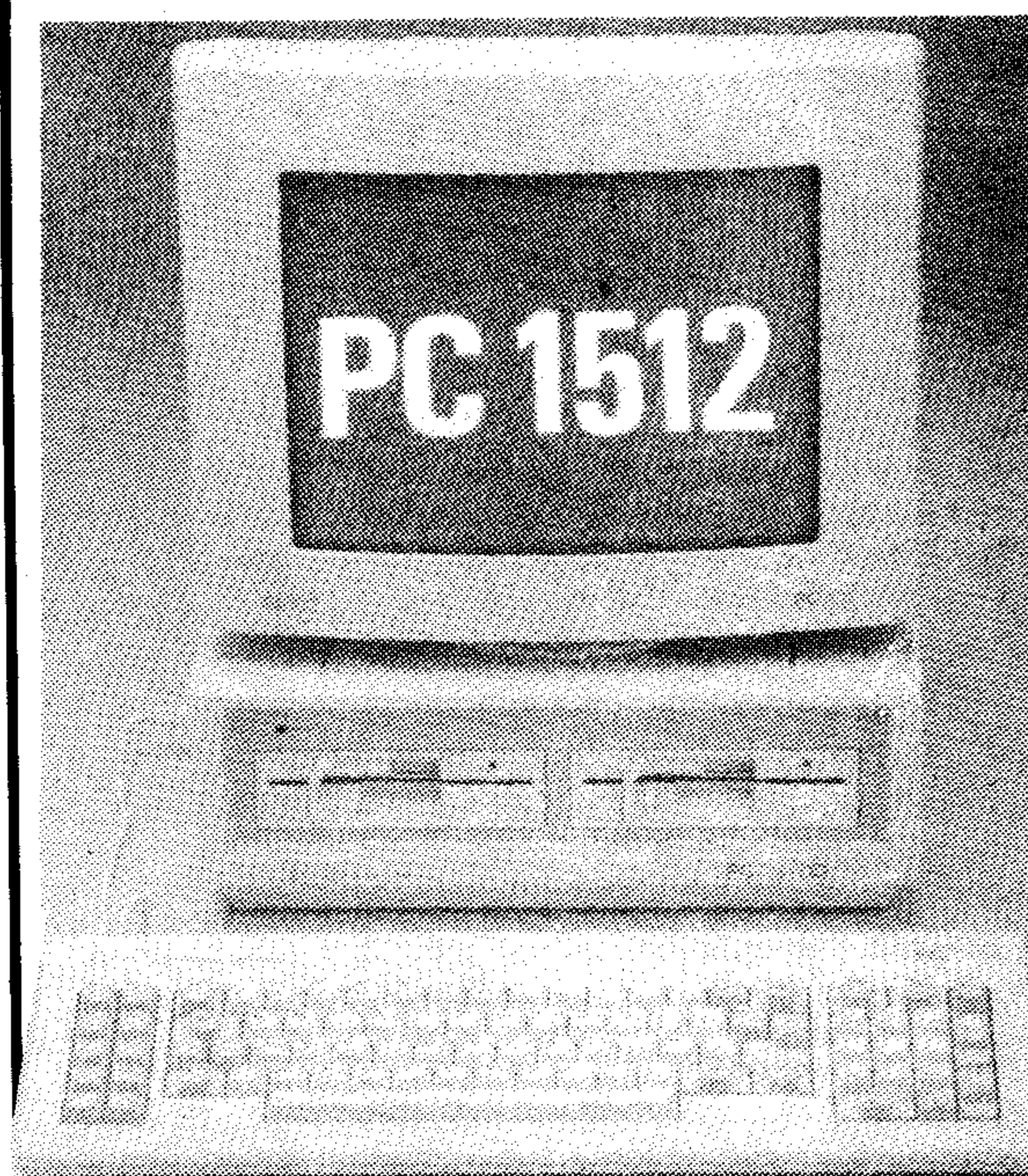
Name .....

Address .....

I/We require ..... places in the creche for children aged .....

Send to PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

### Fund drive



### Grand Xmas raffle

FROM THIS issue of the paper, we announce the launch of a grand Xmas raffle. All funds to go to help the regular publication of Socialist Action. We hope to raise a considerable sum through the raffle. Our target is £1,500. So we are offering major prizes.

The first prize will be a choice. Either the new IBM compatible Amstrad personal computer (the PC 1512). Or the new Sharp 10-function VHS video recorder. The winner can take the cash equivalent if they prefer.

This raffle is separate and apart from our ongoing fund drive — and a projected major publication fund that we will be launching from our Building an Alliance for Socialism event. This latter will be to fund our return to a weekly schedule.

But before then, we need monies in rapidly. We had aimed to resume weekly schedule immediately after the summer break. The problem is that a series of debts were accumulated following the split in our editorial board at the turn of the year. Most of our commercial activities were disrupted for a period of over two months. We must meet our creditors before we are able to resume weekly publication.

So we are asking all our supporters to help sell these tickets, obtainable from our editorial office (Box 50, London N1 2XP). And we ask all our readers to buy some tickets. They sell at 50p each or 3 for £1.

Success in this will speed the return of the weekly Socialist Action.

### Fund drive

THANKS to our readers and supporters who sent us money since the summer to keep us afloat. These include: £35 from our Newport supporters, £25 from Phil Waterhouse 'left over from my holidays', £10 from Luko, a German reader, £40 from our Bristol supporters and £5 from Norma Dowd. Please keep the money coming in.

### Other Books

The Other Book's mail order service offers a wide selection of socialist, anti-imperialist and radical literature.

**Shifting Horizons: a testament to women in the miners' strike**  
Lynn Beaton, Canary Press, 265pp, £5.65 + 40p p&p

**Women Under Apartheid**  
International Defence and Aid Fund, 120pp  
black and white photographs plus text, £3.50 + 46p p&p

**For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears: Women In Apartheid South Africa**  
Hilda Bernstein, IDAF, £3.50 + 34p p&p

**Part of My Soul**  
Winnie Mandela, Penguin, 164pp, £2.95 + 28p p&p

**South Africa: The Struggle For A Birthright**  
Mary Benson, IDAF, 314pp, £4 + 59p p&p

Cheques and postal orders payable to Other Books. Orders with payment should be sent to: Other Books, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. If the total value of books ordered is over £10, then simply add 15 per cent for postage and packing.

# New mood of resistance in the NUM

**THE DURHAM COALFIELD** gave a massive 'yes' to industrial action in two area ballots last week. The eight thousand NUM members voted 68 per cent in favour of an overtime ban in defence of wages, pits and jobs.

In a parallel ballot, Durham mechanics voted for action in four specified areas — solidarity with their victimised workmates, pay, restoration of the industry's conciliation procedures and in opposition to the closure of Seaham, the area's most profitable colliery.

The vote by the two-and-a-half thousand mechanics means that the area's pits will now be hit by weekly lightening 24-hour stoppages — without the mechanics' prior warning.

By Jon Silberman

The Durham votes are the latest evidence of a growing mood of resistance. Last month the South Wales Area voted to start a ban on coal production during overtime in protest against the Coal Board's pay tactics and continuing job losses.

In Yorkshire, Hatfield Main and Rossington NUM branches have both had one-day strikes and a number of South Yorkshire branches have called for an Area overtime ban. The Yorkshire Area Council rejected moves for immediate action but voted in favour of a national overtime vote should talks with new NCB boss Sir Robert Haslam fail to yield the desired results. Kent miners will also be voting this month and both south Derbyshire and Northumberland are to consider action.

The new mood in the pits is the proof that Arthur Scargill's presidential address to this year's NUM conference, which said the NUM would be faced with the need for industrial action, was not 'out of touch with reality' as South Wales officials like Terry Thomas put it.

It's the new mood of resistance, moreover, which prompted coal boss Haslam to make his fraudulent 'gesture of goodwill'. By proposing a combined deal involving the reconsideration of certain of the outstanding 468 sacked miners and proposals on pay, Haslam hoped to side-step the growing anger and what he described as the 'past intransigence of the NUM leadership'.

But just what Haslam had in mind with this

'gesture' was revealed by the *Daily Telegraph* industrial correspondent in the 9 September issue. 'Only a small minority of the 460 still not re-employed will get their jobs back' he concluded.

As for pay, Haslam went over the heads of the NUM to impose the outstanding rise — which will be back-dated only to those who scabbed during the dispute. Next year's offer will be 'below the inflation rate of 2.4 per cent' according to Robert Taylor, labour editor of *The Observer*.

## Wages

The Coal Board is known to favour a new wages structure with a greater emphasis on productivity, aimed at further dividing the miners.

The Board's tactics are clear enough. They aim to press home the advantage gained as a result of the outcome of the strike. In addition they want to cut off the legacy of the strike by maintaining the victimisation policy at local level and at national level defeating the Scargill leadership of the NUM by hook or by crook.

Certainly the Board is continuing its attacks. In the year 1985-6 a total of 43,000 jobs were lost, with the closure of 27 pits, five coking plants and 10 workshops.

## Seaham

Earlier this month the Board announced the 'partial closure' of Seaham colliery in Durham. Since March of last year, six collieries, two coke-ovens and two workshops have closed in the Durham area with the loss of 9,000 jobs. The rundown of Seaham, the most profitable of the remaining pits, is seen as a threat to the whole area. Ernie Foster, Seaham delegate to the Durham Area Council told us 'we're determined to fight this through to the end'.

The Board has also an-



Durham mechanics took first lightening strike

nounced the closure of Hucknall colliery in Notts. Hucknall was merged with Babbington only last year when it was stated that the combined pit had massive reserves and a life of 40 years. Investment of £12.2 million followed. Now the 1,300 strong workforce face the prospect of a move from south to north Notts — and the town of Hucknall faces effective destruction. The 130 NUM members at Hucknall have voted to fight the closure which they see as a springboard to further closures in the Notts area.

The fight against closure has already won wide backing, reflecting the growing strength of the NUM in the Area. The NUM membership now stands at just under 5,000. In June a new Notts NUM office was opened and 5 September saw 3,000 marching through Mansfield and 5,000 at the gala.

## Fighting for Justice

**SIX MINERS** are still serving jail sentences. In Yorkshire 132 are still sacked. The figure for Scotland is 128, 45 in Kent, 29 in Notts, 77 in Durham, 8 in South Wales and 18 in north Derbyshire. A total of 468 miners remain victimised as the result of the strike.

Victimisations have continued since the strike. Two leading NUM activists at Welbeck in Notts were sacked for distributing leaflets opposing a visit to the pit by MacGregor at the beginning of the year. Bevercoates NUM branch secretary, Paul Whetton, was sacked for pinning up a notice advertising a forthcoming NUM branch meeting.

Two miners sacked at

Armthorpe colliery in south Yorkshire for leaving the pit early only won reinstatement as the result of a week-long strike which spread to Bentley, Rossington and Hatfield Main.

'The fight for justice is more necessary than ever. It must be supported by all Labour Party conference delegates', said Dick Witcombe secretary of the Justice for Mineworkers Campaign.

The Justice for Mineworkers Campaign is now supported by TGWU, ASTMS, Fire Brigades Union, ASLEF, FTAT and the Society of Civil Servants and new affiliations are coming in at the rate of 5-6 per day.

● National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign  
26 The Avenue, Durham  
DH1 4ED.

## Youth in action

### Youth resolutions to Labour Party conference

**SIXTEEN RESOLUTIONS** and amendments have been submitted to party conference on 'youth organisation'. The essence of the debate will be around proposals made by Glasgow Hillhead CLP to downgrade the role and independence of the LPYS. These proposals are supported, among others, by the National Organisation of Labour Students.

By Anne Kane and Robin Laney

It is claimed the new proposals will create a 'vibrant youth movement' and make Labour more attractive to youth. Labour is to 'Listen to Youth' more, promote Red Wedge, and keep up the work of 'popularising socialist policies amongst young people'.

Despite the gift wrapping, the key proposals are ones to bring the party's youth — that is the LPYS — sharply under the control of the party leadership. They are made in the context of a £3000 budget cut suffered by the LPYS since October and the total removal of its £4000 newspaper budget. They are part of wider proposals suggested by Tom Sawyer of NUPE — which include lowering the age limit to 21.

The proposals for immediate implementation, by way of preparing the ground for next year, include setting up youth campaign committees regionally, to which the LPYS would be subordinate and which would allow youth officers in CLPs to 'coordinate' youth work. Next year there would be proposals to replace the LPYS by a youth campaigns committee — and elect the present LPYS representative on the NEC by a 'wider franchise', decided by the NEC, will come forward.

These proposals have nothing to do with creating a 'vibrant youth organisation'. The first right of any such movement is to decide its own campaigns, leadership and representatives. However, the policies of the LPYS render it a small and irrelevant organisation in the face of widespread youth campaigning — as seen during the miners strike, in solidarity with the struggle against apartheid, against racist policing and in many other struggles. The LPYS has failed to involve itself in almost every struggle important to young people in the last few years.

There are two possible responses to this situation. One is the cynical attempt by Hillhead to use this isolation to try and end any independence of the LPYS — a lot of pop music but no power!

The other is for the LPYS to adopt policies that make alliances with black youth, women, lesbians and gay men on their terms, and be involved with young people in campaigns like the AAM. This type of way forward for the LPYS began to be built with the united campaign around a black sections candidate for LPYS representative on the NEC at this year's LPYS conference. The kind of left that exists in the Labour Party — around WAC, the Black Sections, the Labour Committee on Ireland, Labour CND, LCLGR and Campaign Group News — must organise to further its support inside the LPYS.

Supporting these policies and alliances will create a much 'wider franchise' by allowing the LPYS to reach out to and win many more young people for Labour. The proposal from Hillhead is to put Labour's youth under the control of an NEC that opposes exactly these kinds of alliances.

## Ireland day school

**THE first Youth and Ireland school** will be held in Birmingham on 8 November, aimed at building on the support for Irish self-determination won at this year's NUS conference and driving that policy into the LPYS. 'We aim to consolidate our links with the National Organisation of Labour Students, through joint campaigning activity,' said Conor Foley, LCI Student Officer, 'and use our success in the National Union of Students to take the case for Irish self-determination to a far wider audience.'

● Details of the Youth and Ireland school are available by contacting: Gerry Kirk, LCI, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

## Broadwater Farm Trial Opens

**TWO HUNDRED** people demonstrated at the Old Bailey last week as the first trial arising out of the police occupation of Broadwater Farm opened. Eighteen-year-old Gary Potter was in the dock accused of affray, writes LARRY HERMAN.

Over the next year some 80 people will pass through London's Central Criminal Court.

Broadwater Farm erupted a year ago in response to the death of Cynthia Jarrett who fatally collapsed during a police raid on her home.

Gary Potter's trial ended on Friday with the jury finding itself unable to

reach a verdict after being sent out twice. The judge has ordered a retrial. The evidence against Potter was based on a confession signed after he had been beaten by the police and held in solitary confinement for days. The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign has called for dropping of all charges and for a public enquiry into the death of Cynthia Jarrett. They will be organising demonstrations at each trial.

To mark the first anniversary of Mrs. Jarrett's death, the Campaign has called a candlelight vigil at Tottenham police station from 6pm to midnight on 5 October and a mass picket at the Old Bailey starting at noon the following day.



Charges against those to be tried include murder, riotous assembly and affray. Police will not be amongst the 80 people on trial.

# A Socialist ACTION

## The blood on apartheid's gold

ON 1 OCTOBER, which coincides with the Wednesday of Labour party conference, miners throughout South Africa will mourn 177 of their fellow workers who died in the Kinross mine disaster. The executive of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) of South Africa has demanded that the Chamber of Mines shut down the country's mines on that day. If they refuse the NUM will call a one-day strike.

The NUM have been backed by the 500,000-strong Congress of South African Trade Unions and by the United Democratic Front, the country's largest anti-apartheid organisation. The UDF said it would support the NUM in 'whatever call it makes to mourn and pay homage to those gallant miners who died in Kinross'.

Anger among black South African miners over the disaster was reflected at a memorial service organised by the owners of the Kinross gold mine. The overwhelming majority of the miners refused to attend the service. A local NUM representative explained that the Kinross owners were more concerned at the disruption to production and their profits than with the lives and well-being of the miners. The miners held their own short service, as evidence piled in over the company's responsibility.

Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the NUM made an inspection of the pit in the wake of South Africa's worst ever gold mining tragedy. 'This was a completely unnecessary accident', was his angry verdict.

On 16 September five welders had been left to fight an intense 400 meter flame arising from a faulty torch. No fire extinguishers were to be found. Miners as far as 1.5

kilometres away started to 'drop like flies'.

The killer fumes were the result of gross

By Doreen Wepler

negligence by the General Mining Corporation Limited (GENCOR) which owns Kinross. They were formed because polyurethane material had been used to coat the gallery walls. There was no alarm system to warn miners of the fire.

Further details will undoubtedly come to light once the judicial enquiry demanded by the NUM — and now conceded by the apartheid regime — gets under way. But the grim reality behind the disaster will not change until the entire apartheid system is overthrown.

As a statement issued by COSATU the country's largest non-racial union federation, put it: 'These deaths are a telling example of the peril of black miners exposed to daily for the super-profits of the South African mining industry.'

Conditions facing the gold miners in South Africa are the worst in the world. In the 10 years up to 1983 8,209 gold miners died.

At Kinross, as in South Africa's other mines, the workforce is composed of migrant workers, torn from their families and

forced to live in single-sex compounds for 11 months of the year, the duration of their contracts.

While the mine-owners can find money to fit out these prison-like hostels with elaborate tear gas systems and to hire their own private force of security thugs — both to be used against the workers — even the most basic safety precautions are ignored.

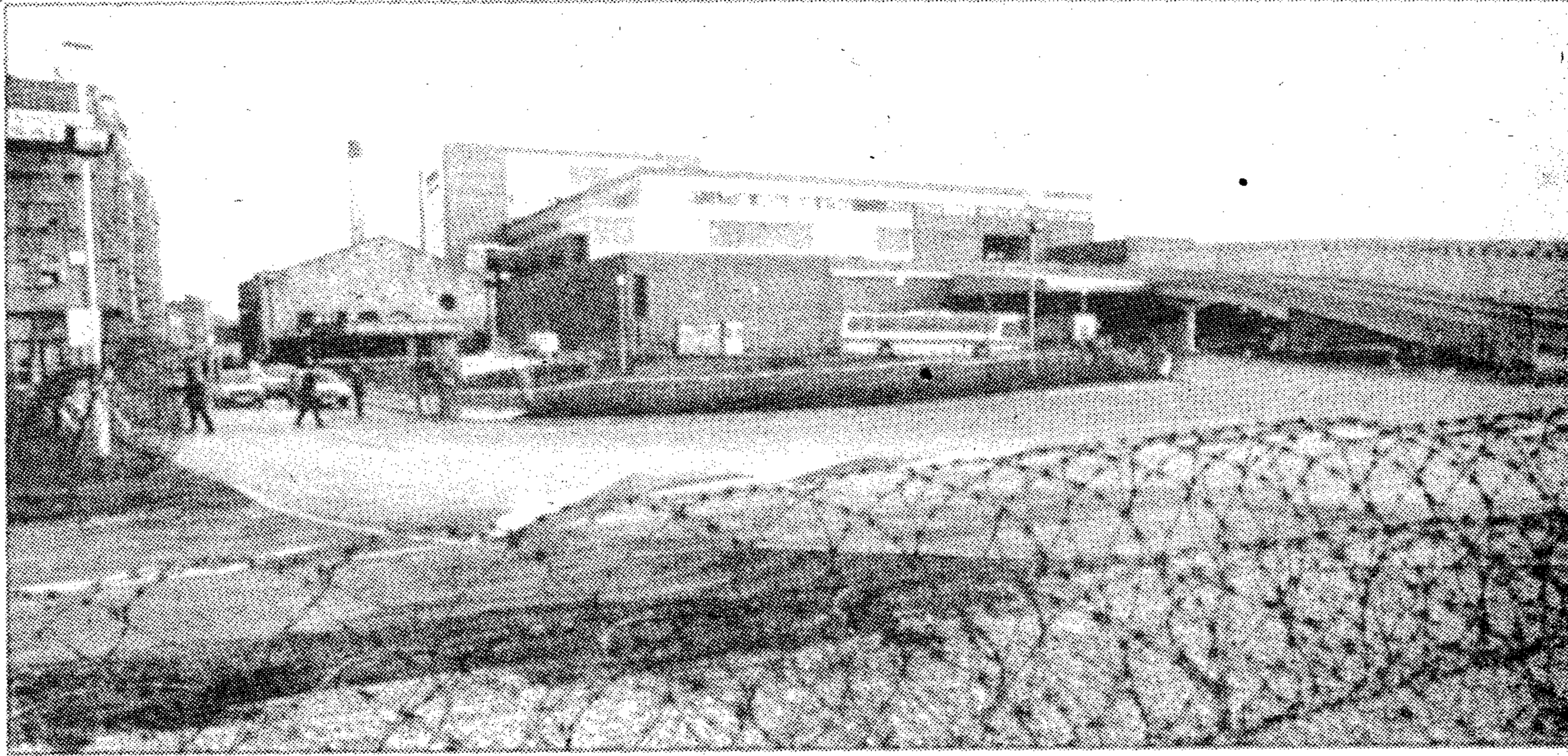
Gencor is infamous for its anti-union stand and appalling safety record. This year alone began with the largest mass dismissal in mining history, when Gencor herded 2300 striking miners out of the Impala platinum site.

A statement issued by SACTU in Lusaka after the disaster calls on Gencor to recognise the NUM 'as a first and necessary step to pressurise the mining bosses to begin to ensure adequate health and safety standards'. The planned one-day strike will be decisive in getting such recognition. But equally the international labour movement had a responsibility to take up the appeal for a massive flow of money into the special fund set up to aid the families of the victims.

The TUC immediately sent its condolences and an offer of assistance. In view of the British NUM's close relationship with its counterpart in South Africa, miners here will undoubtedly lead the way.

Labour party conference must express its detestation and outrage at this latest act of barbarity by apartheid — as well as by the resolutions demanding sanctions. A minutes silence on Wednesday would be a fitting tribute of solidarity.

# Reject Murdoch's new offer



A new offer will not remove the barbed wire

Rupert Murdoch's latest 'final offer' must be rejected. It's hardly different from his previous 'final offer' which was rejected decisively by the sacked News International workers before the summer.

The current offer 'increases' the overall redundancy payments from £50m to £58m. But the previous offer of the old Times Fleet St building, claimed to be worth over £6 million is withdrawn. Even though the ceiling on the maximum for every year worked is marginally raised, the £58 million is small in comparison with traditional Fleet Street pay-outs.

The sacked News International workers will not be offered their jobs back. The electricians will stay. Murdoch has even refused to guarantee priority to the sacked printers when new vacancies arise. The offer of a 'works committee' is not even a small step to recognition of the print unions, but simply a statement of what already exists. Such a 'works committee' would be almost 100 per cent scab electricians, overseeing the present no-strike sweetheart deal that they have guaranteed to Murdoch.

It's a scandal that our national leadership have decided to ballot the members at all on such an awful proposal.

It seems that after the mass hysteria and rantings that the miners 'should have had a ballot' the

By John Lang, deputy FOC, Times Clerical SOGAT

News International members are having to suffer with a ballot at every turn.

These are ballots of attrition. As the months tick by and no new initiatives are taken the hardship becomes greater. We have to win every ballot, Murdoch only needs to win once.

With the capitulation of our national union leaders, this prospect looks daunting in the eyes of the rank and file. At the

time when the rank and file activity and organisation was at its best the dispute was handed back to the national leadership to run at the biennial delegate conference in June. Since that time, we've seen a series of cosmetic exercises in the form of a 'boycott campaign' (even though this took six weeks to happen).

But it's not too late to turn this dispute into something it's always been capable of — being won. What's needed is a campaign for a regular mass presence at Wapping, the imposition of a national levy amongst SOGAT members, and for industrial action within Fleet Street.

United action with Fleet Street is ultimately the key. In the nine months we've been in dispute, we've seen deals signed in other newspaper houses that have allowed job cuts, decreases in pay, increases in hours, the ending of the closed shop, the printing of newspapers under contract and countless other concessions to manage-

ment. We need to link such attacks that have been made on the *Mirror*, *Express* and *Observer* with our own struggle against News International. But the more the national union leaders sign away hard-won rights, the more they undermine the members' confidence in other newspapers.

Just look at the latest deal with the Telegraph. It involves binding arbitration and a no-dispute agreement. Should industrial action take place the management have the right to lay-off those not involved without pay. Nearly a thousand jobs are to be axed, and some departments will have a real pay cut.

This is 'deunionisation' in all but name. It shows that attacks on unions affect us all. Instead of signing away our members' rights and union organisation, our national leaders should help to link such attacks with our dispute and forge a united fightback. By fighting together, we all can win.

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## EEC sanctions apartheid

THE EEC's package of economic measures on South Africa were more a case of sanctioning apartheid than imposing real sanctions against the racist regime.

After a great deal of hullabaloo, the Common Market's foreign ministers finally decided merely to halt new investment in South Africa and ban the country's exports of iron and steel and Krugerrands.

The ban will affect less than five per cent of South

Africa's exports to the EEC. Even if coal had been included, as was predicted, just 15 per cent

By Jim Kingsgate

of its sales to the bosses' market — which topped £5.5 billion in 1985 — would have been at stake.

But an alliance of West Germany, Portugal and Britain ensured that coal was excluded and that the package was kept to a minimum.

Chancellor Kohl and Thatcher gave a joint press conference in Bonn following the decision to express their opposition to sanctions in general. Kohl explained that in relation

to coal imports not only did this general position apply but in addition 'the fate of many thousands — not only of coal miners but their family members' were at stake. Kohl and Thatcher pleading on behalf of miners was just one of the many sickening examples of their hypocritical stance.

There was undisguised relief amongst South Africa's rulers that the package was so weak. Beeld, the most influential Afrikaans daily newspaper said that the sanctions contained more 'verbosity than content'.

The package will have no perceptible effect on

Britain's imports from South Africa according to *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in Brussels, Alan Osborne. 'Last year Britain bought some £27 million of iron and steel. Most of Britain's imports from South Africa are fruit, vegetable and minerals, and Mrs Thatcher has insisted that these remain untouched', he wrote 16 September.

As the biggest foreign investor in South Africa, Britain stands to be the most affected by the ban on new investment. 'But in practice' Osborn goes on 'the ban is unlikely to force changes in any major business plans.'