

A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

All out against the war

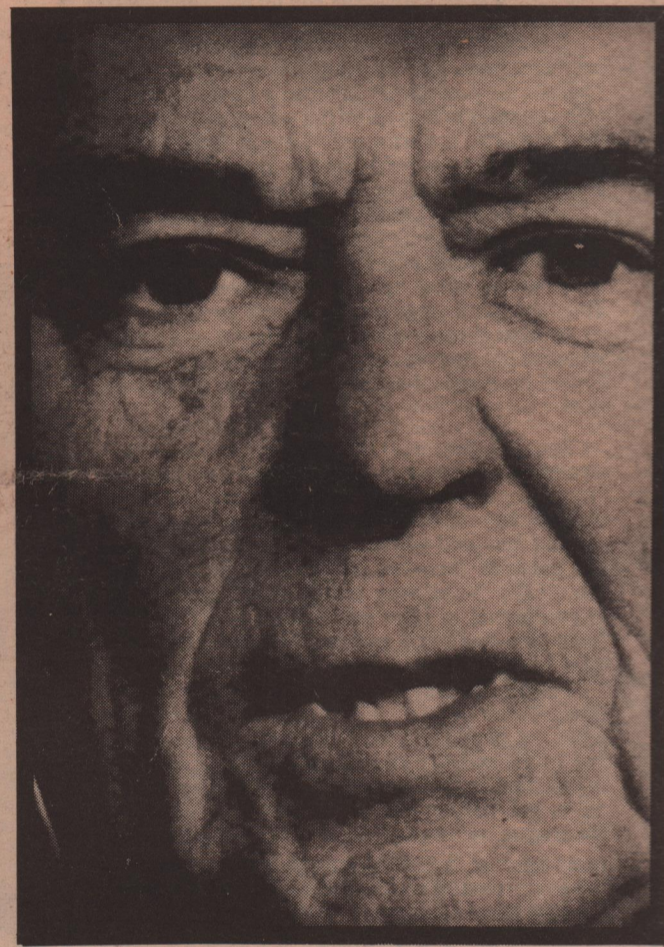
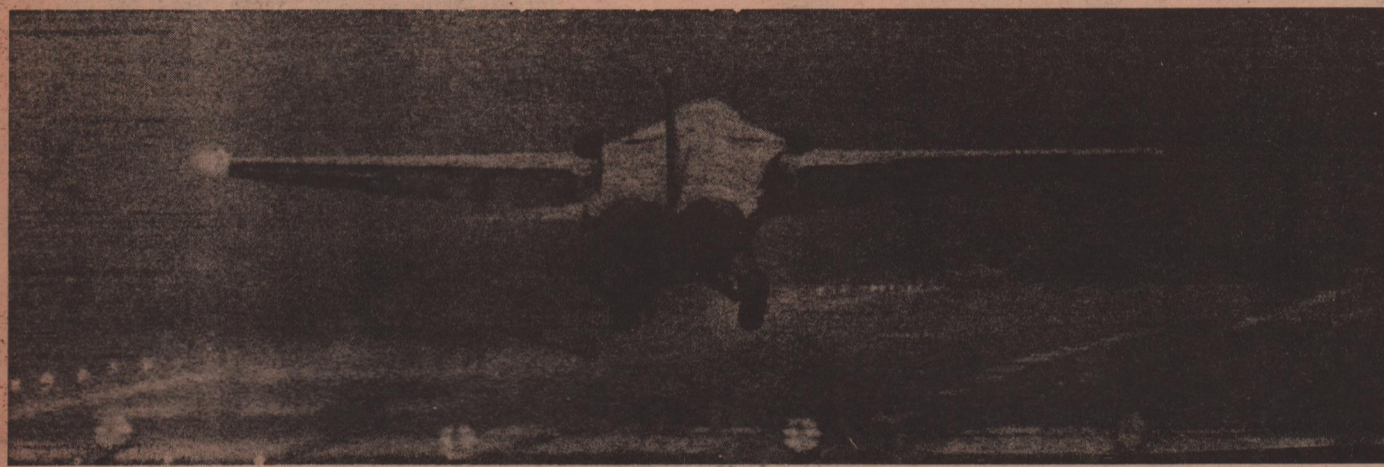
**National Demonstration
outside US Embassy**

**Assemble 12 Noon Grosvenor Square
Saturday 19 April**

Called by CND

For details of local actions outside US Bases call CND on 250 4010

HANDS OFF LIBYA



U.S. BASES OUT OF BRITAIN

THE DIRECT British government complicity in the United States armed attack on Libya is the logical outcome of the role of the Thatcher government as the poodle of the US. Not one single European government other than Britain has supported this attack. Indeed not even a single government in NATO, outside Canada and Britain, has dared to support the United States in its aggression.

The first polls after the attack show massive opposition to Reagan's outrage in Britain. The overwhelming majority of the countries of the world

will utterly condemn the United States for this terrorism.

But the Thatcher government not only supported the US but directly allowed this country to be used as the launching pad for the attack. The Thatcher government is directly complicit both in the United States aggression, and in the murderous killing of civilians in Tripoli which has been shown on every television screen.

This attack shows the complete hypocrisy of the United States and British claims to be 'fighting terrorism'. The United States government has spent the last months attempting to force \$100 million of military aid to the Nicaraguan contras through the US Congress. These

Nicaraguan forces, the remnants of the dictator Somoza's National Guard, and hired mercenaries, have massacred, raped, and killed literally thousands of Nicaraguan citizens.

The United States has also financed the Duarte regime of El Salvador whose death squads killed 20,000 people in one year. Every dictatorship in the world, from Chile to South Africa, knows it can rely upon the aid of the United States.

The United States did not attack Libya because of 'terrorism' but because Libya refuses to support US policies in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Libya opposes the Israeli state and has supported Nicaragua. The United States attacks

Libya not for what is reactionary about the regime but for what is progressive about it.

This United States aggression, which continues the forty years of continuous open international aggression it has shown since World War II, must lead to a rethinking, by the labour movement of its entire international policy. The relation between the British government and the United States is a relation of aggression against the peoples of the world.

In 1982 it was a British war against Argentina over the Malvinas (Falklands) aided by the United States. In 1986 it is United States attacks on Libya aided by Britain. In between times, and all the time, it is

support for the contras in Nicaragua.

This entire 'partnership' has to be ended. It has now been shown not just in socialist propaganda but in actions that the US bases in Britain have nothing to do with 'defence' whatever. They are to make Britain the United States' unsinkable aircraft carrier in the North Atlantic and provide a base for Thatcher's own military operations. The Labour movement has to fight to stop the aggression against Libya. It has to get the United States forces out of Britain.

The open exposure of US aggression and British complicity must be condemned in itself. It must open up a new chapter in international policy for the labour movement.

A Socialist ACTION

SOGAT · NGA · AUEW · NUJ · SERTUC
**PRINTWORKERS
 MARCH FOR JOBS**
 GLASGOW/NEWCASTLE TO WAPPING

JOIN US ON
SATURDAY 3RD MAY
IN LONDON AT 7-30
ON THE EMBANKMENT
 FOR A MARCH TO WAPPING & A MASSIVE
 NATIONAL RALLY OPPOSITE
 'FORTRESS WAPPING'
 AT 9.00. pm.



THE MAGNIFICENT resistance of the sacked News International workers is beginning to tell at Murdoch's Wapping fortress. After the gimmicky offer of the old Gray's Inn Road plant to the sacked workers failed to dent their resolve, Murdoch has now suggested across-the-board redundancy pay and compensation as a way to resolve the lock out. Quite correctly, however, union officials have responded by insisting that the key to any solution is the re-recognition of the print unions and full reinstatement.

By Brian Grogan

Moreover, the pressure in Wapping is now building up to the extent where some of the scab journalists working there are themselves considering calls for action. The *Sunday Times* and *News of the World* NUJ chapels are calling on its officers to organise a ballot for strike action if no significant concessions have been made to the unions by 30 April. Such proposals would increase only if the NUJ reverses its executive's positions and take disciplinary measures against those journalists in the fortress ignoring their union instructions to join other workers on the picket line.

Meanwhile, members of the largest print union, SOGAT, are presently being balloted at various distribution centres around the country to take boycott action of the News International titles.

Labour movement support has been vital to contributing to this sort of changing mood amongst print workers themselves. Labour movement activities around May Day can massively re-enforce the confidence of these workers to take action. And what better way to celebrate international labour day than closing down Wapping!

All out on May Day

Building solidarity with the printworkers

AS THE News International strike enters its twelfth week it is clear that only with the active support of other trade unionists will Rupert Murdoch be brought to heel. Behind Murdoch stands the rest of the Fleet St barons and the Tory government. Behind the printworkers should stand the whole of the organised labour movement.

It is this situation that printworkers and their allies have to change if the dispute is to be won. With the full backing of the labour movement, printers will gain the confidence to extend their action and reverse the series of setbacks that are being inflicted upon them in the newspaper industry.

Central to building such solidarity is understanding the lessons of the miners strike — especially the alliances which were built across the broad labour movement. The mobilisation from the Yorkshire NUM on the 6 April demonstration, by far the largest contingent outside of the print unions, shows what can be achieved.

Already some York-

shire pits have levies in support of the strikers. The example of the NUM should be taken up in other industrial unions, particularly the TGWU and NUR, which are indirectly involved in the dispute.

By Pete Evans

At the moment TGWU members employed by TNT are delivering the papers from Wapping. And if Murdoch is successful in transferring to road delivery, there could well be a loss of rail jobs. The leaders of these unions must be forced to take more effective action than they have done so far. Actively building the mass pickets would be a start.

Similarly the Labour Party must be mobilised in

support of the printworkers, as it was during the miners strike. Labour Party members should demand that the party leadership follows the example of the Campaign Group of MPs, who have thrown their weight behind this struggle. Local Labour Parties should be organising meetings in support of the printworkers, and using the local elections as an opportunity to build the pickets and the boycott campaign.

As in the miners strike, support committees have been set up in many areas to coordinate activity. These are generally broad based committees involving activists from many different unions and political views. They can play an important role in building solidarity by reaching out to the wider labour movement and involving both the Labour Party and the key unions locally. But they must have an orientation towards the official structures if they are going to mobilise the level of support necessary to change the present balance of forces in the strike.

A coordinating body of support groups, unfortunately with a different orientation, the Union of Printworkers Support Groups has been set up. At its second meeting at the beginning of April, attended by over 70 delegates, a move away from the official structures was adopted.

The very size of the meeting, involving mainly London-based groups but some from as far away as Leicester, shows the potential for building support. Sadly this opportunity was wasted.

The first two hours was spent discussing whether or not Fleet St should be brought out on strike, a

further half hour on whether the support groups should set up a 'rank and file printworkers group' — and only a few minutes on what support groups are and should be doing. Appeals from some strikers present for an alternative approach were largely ignored.

John Brown, an NGA FOC at the *Sun*, said 'We want you at Wapping, but support us rather than try to lead us', while Bert Large from SOGAT, a member of the Lambeth support group, pointed out that 'you have to examine what you can do, not what you would like to do' and said that the only rank and file groups which supporters should relate to are the union chapels, not self-proclaimed alternative leaderships.

Such an approach was successfully adopted by the majority of miners support groups who operated alongside the official structures of the NUM. Only in this way will it be possible to build broad support across the labour movement. Linking up with so-called rank and file groups, and putting the bulk of available resources into attacking the leadership of the strike, as the UPSG did in its leaflet distributed on the picket and solidarity march, will weaken the ability of the support groups to win active support for the strike, and estrange them from those printers who want serious support.

Support committees should send delegates to the next meeting of the UPSG on 24 April in Camden Town Hall, and force it to reverse its orientation lest it turns the support committees away from being one of the solutions to the strike, into one of the problems.

We can win!

THIS is a battle we can't afford to lose. The stakes are far too high to leave this to the national leadership.

The crux of this matter is not just that 5,500 workers have been sacked for taking industrial action in defence of their livelihoods. Nor is it the sequestration of the union funds — where for the first time we have seen the Tory laws in their full glory. No two weeks to purge the contempt, the boot went straight in.

By George Hall, FOC SOGAT clerical *Sun* and *News of the World* (personal capacity)

Nor is it the police activities at Wapping, now being used more clearly than ever for strike breaking purposes. There is no pretence in this dispute.

No, what is at stake in this dispute is an attempt at *de-unionisation* — the aim of Murdoch from the day he planned the ambush on the print unions.

That is why the government are lining up firmly behind the Murdoch plan, why there is the high fences with spikes pointing out, the razor wire, the surveillance cameras, and why they are all reinforced by the state. That is why there are police in droves defending the Wapping plant, escorting the lorries in and out of the complex, why there are roads cut off from the public under a 19th century law, and why residents need passes to get into their own homes.

If Murdoch succeeds the Tory government would have gained its biggest prize, the breaking of the mighty print unions. Make no mistake, this is the issue.

The print leadership must grasp the nettle. No amount of cosy job and conditions selling exercises will stand the test of time if Murdoch gets his way. The rest will follow like a pack of cards.

fer, is forced into a publicity style proposal to shore up his fading credibility.

Build the campaign now. The support groups are crucial to give the 'boycott' the teeth it needs, to picket the local newsagents depots.

Mass picketing can only succeed with the solidarity of the labour movement. Come down to Wapping. Stop Murdoch once and the momentum will grow.

A 24 hour strike of the national print trade is essential to show we mean business. Put the pressure on the leadership, tell them what is at stake.

On the EETPU, that is Hammond, we must call for the TUC to take the proper course. No more shilly shallying. Throw them out before they grow in strength and simply walk out splitting the labour movement down the middle.

Let's build the support groups, the confidence of the strikers and take the struggle out to the movement. And let's win: Jobs not compensation!

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SOUTH EAST REGION TUC IN COOPERATION
 WITH THE JOINT MAY DAY COMMITTEE
 ★ Announce a major march and
 DEMONSTRATION ★
 AT WAPPING ★
MAY DAY
 Thursday May 1st 1986
 Assemble Tower Hill from 8pm

Socialist ACTION

Labour after Fulham

THE FULHAM by-election showed three things: that there is an overwhelming desire to get rid of the Thatcher government at the next election, that Neil Kinnock is leading Labour to one of the greatest disasters in its history, and that socialists still remain very much a minority within the working class. All three have to form the basis of the policy of the labour movement.

There is no doubt that the Fulham result was extremely serious for the Tories. Despite the claims of Tebbit and others, and talk in the press of a 'normal mid-term swing,' Tory support fell by 10 per cent compared to the general election.

There is nothing in the political situation which points to a *substantial* revival of Tory support before the election. Doubtless there will be some regaining of ground by the Conservatives compared to Fulham but at the next election the Tories are going to receive one of the lowest votes in their history. That Thatcher is now seriously weakening is evident. This will be increased with the reaction to the US attack on Libya.

The reality that Kinnock is leading Labour to catastrophe is less obvious but equally definite. There is no doubt that Labour is now embarked on a course which — even if it were implemented by a majority government — would have consequences that would make the debacle of 1974-79 look small in comparison.

Consider the situation if a majority government under Kinnock were formed. Labour today has no economic policies capable of eliminating or even significantly reducing unemployment. The next Labour government will preside over more than three million unemployed — a policy which is not merely despicable in itself but which would be a catastrophe in terms of mass support.

Secondly it is clear that the shadow cabinet is already discussing a policy of wage controls. These are an absolutely perfect mechanism for dividing the working class — setting higher paid against low paid workers. Wage controls, under the guise of 'incomes policy' are also the most electorally disastrous policy ever pursued by governments in post-war Britain — no government carrying out a policy of wage controls has ever been re-elected since 1950.

Thirdly, Britain is now becoming more involved than ever before in a European/NATO military build up. Kinnock is now pledged not to reduce but to increase conventional military spending. In contrast to this however Kinnock is not pledged to get Britain out of Ireland, to give aid to Nicaragua, or impose total and complete sanctions against South Africa. He would allow US bases to remain, creating the conditions for new US aggression as against Libya.

Such a government would lead to an electoral disaster for Labour and prepare the way for a new right wing Tory government.

But the reality is that Kinnock is not even likely to have the opportunity to pursue this with a majority government. Because Fulham was *still* not a good enough result to secure a Labour majority.

Even in the crudest terms, the 11 per cent increase in the Labour vote at Fulham is not quite enough to secure an overall Labour majority. But it is also clear that the Fulham pattern would not be repeated in a general election.

Firstly the resources put into Fulham could never be repeated in a general election. There were around 2000 helpers for the Labour Party in Fulham on election day.

Secondly Fulham was extremely bad territory for the Alliance in terms of the social make up of the constituency. The SDP percentage of the vote still advanced marginally compared to the election. Given a much more favourable constituency — as at the coming by-elections in West Derbyshire and Ryedale — the Alliance vote is going to advance further.

If Neil Kinnock does not win an overall majority at the election then everyone knows once more that the pressure will be on for coalition — a coalition that would not simply itself be a disaster for Labour but would also be followed by the return of a right wing Tory government.

The left must identify strongly with the powerful sentiment which is building up, and will be greatly encouraged by Fulham, which wants to see the return of a Labour government at the next election and believes that is possible. That is the goal of all of us. But there must be no illusions as to what a Labour government on present policies would mean.

All out against the war!

RESPONSE IN the Labour movement to the US aggression against Libya has been strong and rapid. By 7pm on Tuesday, the day after the US attack, a Campaign Against the War had been established, CND had called a national demonstration against the war at the US embassy for Saturday, and local demonstrations had been held in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Nottingham.

The speed of the reaction is justified and understandable. The United States has been openly exposed for what it is — the most aggressive regime in the world. Thatcher has been exposed as the United States most faithful collaborator — prepared to make Britain a base for even the most blatant aggression.

The speed of the reaction is aided by the fact that the United States and Britain stand so totally isolated and exposed internationally for their ac-

tions. Only Canada, Israel, and South Africa have dared speak out openly in defence of the United States actions.

The United States claim on 'terrorism' is wearing thin — in fact it is a total fraud. The United States already discussed military action against Libya with Egypt in July 1985 — long before the West Berlin bombing which the United States claimed as the pretext for its raid.

The United States is also directly supporting terrorism throughout the world — in fact it is the

largest terrorist organisation on the planet. In addition to the contras in Nicaragua the US supports regimes such as South Africa which regularly carry out terrorist military attacks across their borders (including, incidentally, bombing the ANC headquarters in London). The United States itself has been condemned by the International Court of Justice at the Hague for mining the gulf of Corinto off Nicaragua's coast. The United States is supporting the UNITA terrorist organisation fighting the government of Angola.

But the response of the Labour movement must be clear and precise. The specific action must be condemned — and in far stronger terms than Neil Kinnock has used. But a general conclusion must be drawn. The policy of the British government must be clearly condemned. A clear and unequivocal demand for withdrawal of all bases must be raised.

We urge all our readers to support the Campaign Against the War and to support the demonstration called by CND on Saturday.

Forty years of US terror

THE US GOVERNMENT, with troops on the soil of no less than 69 countries, operates the world's largest terror network. Since 1945 it has maintained its sovereign right to intervene militarily in any world country in the Western world where its interests are threatened.

The principles involved were spelt out in their clearest form in 1965 when the House of Representatives voted, by 312 to 52, that 'The US or any other American country (sic) has the right of unilateral intervention in order to keep communism outside the Western Hemisphere'. In practice this has meant that when US interests are threatened, the government sends in the marines or finances a coup.

Some of the most famous events in a calendar of atrocity and violation of sovereign national rights are:

1953: Iran. Radical prime minister Mossadegh is overthrown with US sponsorship and the brutal dictatorship of the Shah is installed.

1954: Indochina. Eisenhower first states the US interest after the French are defeated by the communist Viet Minh at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. 'Indochina and the whole of South-East Asia are essential to the US both for strategic and political reasons'. *US News and World Report* clarifies these interests thus: 'One of the world's richest areas is open to the winner in Indochina... Tin, rubber, rice, key strategic raw materials are what the war is really about.'

1954: Guatemala. Liberal president Arbenz is removed by a US invasion. The leading figures promoting the invasion are John Foster Dulles, assistant secretary of state and his brother Allen Dulles, head of the CIA.

1957: Lebanon. Marines sent in to back up the government against a popular uprising in line with the 'Eisenhower doctrine', approved by Congress in that year, which asserts that force is justified against 'any country controlled by international communism'.

1961: Cuba. President Kennedy sanctions abortive invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs by right-wing exiles equipped with US weapons and backed by US-supplied boats and planes.

1962: Peru. Peruvian army, led by US-trained colonel, overthrows government.

1964: Brazil. President Goulart is accused of smuggling communism into Brazil and overturned in a right-wing coup after which Brazil becomes the torture centre of Latin America.

1965: Vietnam. President Johnson claims North Vietnam patrol boats attacked the Seventh Fleet and 'in self-defence' initiates large-scale bombing of civilian targets in North Vietnam. Harold Wilson, Labour Prime Minister, supports him. Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon says 'we have totally flouted the rule of law, and we have flouted the United Nations Charter'. The USA is drawn into full scale war in Vietnam — the first war it lost.

1973: Chile. The democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende is overthrown and the murderous dictatorship of General Pinochet imposed.

1974: The USA has now secured pro-US dictators in most major Latin American countries — the very dictators whose removal it now claims as the US-inspired 'wave of democracy'. By now 70,000 Latin American officers have attended US training schools, notably an illegal centre at Ford Gulick in the Canal Zone which specialises in counterinsurgency.

1983: Grenada. After nearly a decade of semi-paralysis following its defeat in Vietnam, the USA overruns Grenada and imposes a government which already, according to the Council on Hemispheric Affairs 'Has the worst human rights record in the Caribbean'.

Today: The USA has now installed a world-wide policy of aid to counter-revolutionary forces. It backs the Nicaraguan Contras, Savimbi's South African-backed UNITA rebels in Angola, and even the barbarous former government of Cambodia



Campaign Against the War

On Tuesday in the House of Commons a meeting of organisations to oppose the US attack on Libya met to establish the Campaign Against the War. We reproduce its statement.

WE, WHOSE organisations are listed below, have come together urgently to a meeting in the House of Commons. We utterly condemn the American attack on Libya and the use of British bases authorised by the Prime Minister. We call for an

immediate ban on all further military action, the cancellation of permission for the use of our bases and the immediate reference of this crisis to the United Nations Security Council. We also urge all those who share these views to organise rallies and demonstrations throughout the country and to support the vigils and demonstrations in London on Saturday.

Called by Lord Fenner Brockway
Organised by the World Disarmament Campaign
Organisations represented:

- Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- The Campaign Group of Labour MPs
- Campaign Against the Arms Trade
- European Nuclear Disarmament
- Labour Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- Liberation
- The Bertrand Russell Peace Council
- The Green Party
- National Peace Council
- Peace Pledge Union
- Quakers' Peace Service
- United Nations Association
- Women's International League for Freedom
- World Disarmament Campaign

Reagan's fabric of lies

REAGAN'S military strike against Libya was prepared by a premediated and conscious campaign of misinformation and downright lying. Even a cursory study of the lead-up to the action proves that the claim of 'self-defence against terrorism' is a complete fraud.

First indications of the build-up came on 9 April when Reagan threatened new military action against Libya at a press conference. This was allegedly for 'Libyan terrorism'.

No specific act was cited and, as usual in the war propaganda against Libya, none of the alleged 'considerable evidence' was supplied. Instead, Reagan launched into a racist tirade against Qaddafi as the 'mad dog of the Middle East'.

US officials have also revealed that Washington has rejected at least seven attempts by Libya to discuss a peaceful resolution of the conflict with the US.

The threats followed the 27 March announcement that the largest naval force assembled in the Mediterranean since World War II was pulling back from waters near Libya. The fleet launched the first attacks on Libya 24 and 25 March that killed 56 people.

To prepare the ground for the new attacks on

Libya, the Reagan administration and the capitalist media — again without evidence — portrayed Qaddafi as responsible for the 5 April bombing of a West Berlin discotheque, in which two people died, and the 2 April explosion of a bomb in a TWA jetliner that killed four people.

In order to further isolate Libya Washington urged its imperialist allies in Europe to expel Libyan diplomats and other Libyans as 'terrorists'.

Washington's planning for attacks on Libya included proposals to the US-backed government of Mubarak in Egypt for a joint invasion of Libya. According to a report by Ibrahim Jafeh in the 31 March issue of the semi-official Cairo daily *Al-Ahram*, the Egyptian government has rejected three such offers.

Nafeh revealed that Washington's decision to seek a joint US-Egyptian attack came at a July 1985 meeting in Washington chaired by then national

Security adviser Robert MacFarlane. This was followed by visits to Cairo by vice admiral John Poindexter, who succeeded MacFarlane, and other officials. The Reagan administration (fearing, according to the *New York Times*, that 'American public opinion would not tolerate substantial loss of American lives in a military assault on Libya') had not given final approval to the plan.

According to a *Washington Post* report, the Pentagon estimated that 'as many as six divisions, or 90,000 men, would have to be used if direct US military involvement was required.'

US officials critical of the invasion plan, according to the *Washington Post*, warned that 'through a series of so-called revolutionary committees, Qaddafi has organised and armed the population, in some instances down to individual blocks, in the Libyan capital of Tripoli.'

The *Washington Post* admitted that, at the request of the government, it had suppressed information relating to the invasion proposal that it had received in December and January.

Over the years, the US authorities' chief justification for going after the Libyan government has been

its alleged support for 'international terrorism.'

Although Washington has yet to present any proof of Libyan involvement in any terrorist act, the US capitalist media have presented the claims of Libyan terrorism as though they were beyond dispute.

When US officials talk about 'terrorism,' they always include popular liberation struggles like those in Palestine, Ireland, southern Africa, Central America, and elsewhere.

Since the Libya government has backed many of these struggles, that automatically constitutes support for terrorism in Washington's eyes.

Such accusations, moreover, divert attention from the real source of international terror — the world system of imperialist domination headed by Washington. The US-organised mercenary war against Nicaragua, which has taken thousands of lives, is one example. Others are the military attack on Libya and the US government's virtually open endorsement in November of a CIA proposal to spur assassination attempts against Qaddafi and a 'campaign of sabotage and violence' against Libya.

The source of many of the stories about Libyan terrorism was revealed

back in July 1981 when the CIA told a congressional committee that it has launched a campaign of 'disinformation' against Qaddafi. 'Disinformation' is CIA language for what normal people call lies.

In 1981 the US government claimed that Libyan 'hit squads' were converging on the United States to assassinate Reagan and other officials. That story turned out to be a concoction by the US and Israeli intelligence agencies.

Although Reagan claimed 'irrefutable' proof of Libyan involvement in the December 1985 terrorist attacks on the Rome and Vienna airports, no actual evidence was ever presented.

The lie campaign about terrorism aims to smear not only all Libyans, but all Arabs (aside from a few 'moderate' kings and sultans) as subhuman terrorists.

Racism was obvious in the attempt by the US government and the capitalist media to convict May Elias Mansur of responsibility for the TWA bombing, despite the lack of any evidence. Mansur, a Lebanese supporter of one of the groups resisting US and Israeli attempts to dominate her country, was a passenger on an earlier flight of the plane that was bombed.

Despite the absence of

evidence, newspapers like the *New York Post* carried racist, sexist headlines portraying her as 'terror gal' and 'woman of murder.'

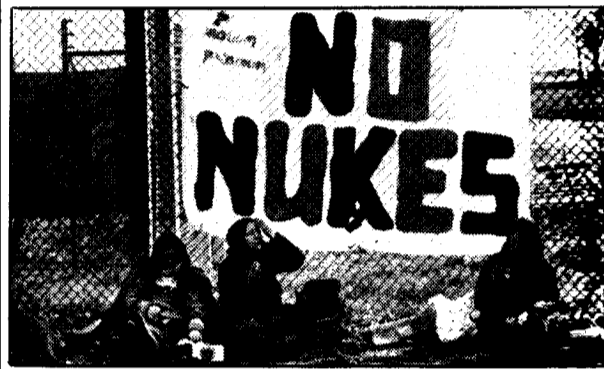
On 5 April she held a news conference in Beirut. Insisting that she would never strike at innocent women and children, as the TWA bombing had done, she said she would sue the US government for laying false charges against her.

The real reason for Washington's continued assault on Libya is not 'terrorism,' but the fact that Libya follows policies that are opposed on many

issues to those of US imperialism. Qaddafi must be overthrown, according to Secretary of State George Shultz, because he 'is doing things that are against our interests.'

The US rulers are bitterly opposed to the democratic rights of nations to govern themselves and determine their own policies. They are escalating wars against Libya, Nicaragua, Angola, and other countries that dare to exercise these rights. That is the reason for the US attack on Libya.

Tony Benn calls for ending of all US bases



THE USE of US forces from British bases to attack Libya must necessarily raise urgently the question of how long more we can accept the presence on our territory of the armed forces of another country engaged in policies that have nothing whatever to do with our national interests.

The case for the closure of all American bases, and the withdrawal of all American forces, must go on the agenda for

annual conference and open the way for a completely non-aligned foreign policy devoted to disarmament and development, and free from the dictates of a US president who we did not elect, do not control, and cannot remove.

As for terrorism the US government is the biggest terrorist in the world with its support for the contras in Nicaragua and the systematic policy of destabilising, undermining, and in some cases attacking progressive regimes which they believe might threaten US economic interests.

Statement by Labour CND Tuesday 15 April 1986.

LABOUR CND condemns the attack on Libya by the government of the United States, the biggest terrorists in the world.

We further condemn the role of the British government which knew in advance of and sanctioned the use of US bases situated in this country from which this air-raid was launched, which killed more than 100 people, the majority civilians. These bases from which North American planes flew in the early hours of Tuesday morning, under the cover of a 'routine' NATO exercise, contain and provide the support systems for cruise missiles and other nuclear weapons sited in this country.

This attack by the United States government is fully in line with the logic of the current arms build-up which began in 1979 with the decision to site cruise and Pershing missiles across Europe. It

shows that the need is more urgent than ever for Labour to campaign on its unilateral nuclear disarmament policies, which include the removal of nuclear bases. It further calls into question the wisdom of Britain's continued membership of the NATO alliance.

Labour CND fully supports the demonstration outside the US embassy, Grosvenor Square, London, called by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to begin at 12 noon this Saturday, 19 April.

We call on all Labour Parties and affiliated organisations, and on the party nationally, to support that demonstration and to pass resolutions reaffirming Labour's nuclear disarmament pledges and condemning the actions of the governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, which take the world one step closer to a nuclear holocaust.

Why Libya is Reagan's target

LIBYA is a North African nation of 3.6 million people. The overwhelming majority are Arabic-speaking. Islam is the religion of 97 per cent of the population.

Libyans have been suffering under and resisting imperialist domination for most of the 20th century.

The Italian imperialists invaded Libya in 1911, waging a war of conquest that continued until all of Libya was conquered in 1932.

During World War II, the US-British-French alliance invaded Libya, forced out the Italian occupiers (who were allied with Germany in World War II), and placed the country under British and French administration.

In 1951, Libya was granted formal independence under King Idris, who served US and British interests.

British troops continued to be stationed in Libya, and Washington established its biggest air base outside the United States — the Wheelus base near the capital city of Tripoli.

Libya under imperialist domination was one of the poorest countries in the world, with an average annual income per person of about \$100. The discovery of oil in the late 1950s began to change things. Under Idris, virtually the entire oil industry was held by foreign companies. The oil barons



and the monarchy and its friends monopolised the country's growing wealth. About 10 per cent of the population received more than half the national income.

In 1969, while King Idris was traveling abroad with some \$60 million in spending money, a military Revolutionary Command Council led by Muammar el-Qaddafi took power. It abolished the monarchy and took measures to improve living conditions and break the control of the imperialist powers.

The British troops were forced to leave, and Washington had to shut down the Wheelus base.

In 1971 the government also nationalised the holdings of four major oil companies and later took 51 per cent ownership of the rest.

The uses to which oil wealth was put were radically different than

under the old regime. While substantial inequality still exists, the masses

have made big gains.

A \$500 monthly minimum wage was established for many categories of workers. By law, universal primary education was instituted, and education at all levels was made free of charge. So was medical care and housing. According to the 1986 World Almanac, the literacy rate has risen to 40 per cent.

One effect of the regime's measures was to wipe out the old aristocracy that supported the monarchy. The main beneficiaries were the workers, peasants, and sections of the middle classes.

'Qaddafi clearly has considerable support from the younger and poorer elements of Libya's population — who have benefited most from his revolution,' conceded the

14 July, 1981, *Wall Street Journal*.

Qaddafi also opposed imperialist domination in the Middle East and North Africa. For instance, he has backed forces in Chad that are fighting the French-dominated government there. He opposed the Egyptian government's separate peace with the Israeli rulers at the expense of the Palestinians and other Arab states. He backed the Lebanese people's fight against US and Israeli occupation forces in Lebanon. When the Iraqi regime invaded Iran in 1980, with the backing of the US government, Qaddafi backed Iran.

And soon after Washington cut off all aid to the Nicaraguan government, Libya provided the country with a \$100 million loan. The Libyan government has continued to voice support for the Nicaraguan revolution.

Get the troops out of Ireland, says student conference

IN PROBABLY the most significant policy change on any issue in over a decade, the National Union of Students conference has voted to support a motion calling for unconditional British withdrawal from Ireland.

By Connor Foley, Labour Committee on Ireland student officer

Previous policy had explicitly supported the British presence and branded all those resisting it as criminals. The last time Ireland was debated was in 1981. Prison conditions in the H-blocks and Armagh were described as the best in the UK and NUS was committed to supporting Thatcher's intransigent refusal to concede the five demands of the hunger strikers: that is, it said political dissident prisoners in a colonial regime should be treated no different from rapists.

The motion passed this time recognised the 'inadequacy of previous policy' in failing to address the root cause of the conflict, partition and the British occupation. It declared that Britain had no progressive role to play in Ireland and supported the right of the Irish people, as a whole, to determine their own future. The Hillsborough Accord was rejected as yet another British-imposed solution and NUS was given a mandate to campaign against all repressive measures used to uphold partition including plastic bullets and strip-searching.



This comes on top of a number of successful political initiatives by student bodies in Britain against British involvement in Ireland. NOLS has produced posters and leaflets against repression, two national tours have been organised by the LCI and NOLS for Sinn Fein activists around colleges and an activist from Ireland from the campaign against strip searches attended the conference itself.

This decision, it is hoped, will promote greater campaigning action by students against the British occupation of Ireland.

Amir Khan appeals expulsion

EIGHTY PEOPLE turned out for a picket of the regional appeal against Birmingham Sparkbrook Labour Party's expulsion of Kevin Scally and council for Amir Khan. There was a large turnout from Asian members of the Sparkbrook constituency. The appeal will now be discussed at Labour's National Executive, most probably at its May meeting.

The successful picket was called at short notice, and the defence campaign is now planning a public meeting on 21 May. Ken Livingstone has already agreed to speak and speakers have been invited from the black section national leadership and from the Campaign Group of MPs.



"We are women, we are strong!"

'WE ARE women, we are strong.' This is the inspiring message that came out of the second national Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC) conference on 5-6 April. As WAPC chairperson Ann Lilburn emphasised when opening the conference, WAPC is still a force to be reckoned with.

The conference took place in Sheffield and was WAPC's first full delegate conference. The area delegations were based on one delegate per pit. Every NUM area was represented and 250 women attended. The conference represented a real consolidation of WAPC, and developed solid perspectives for its future progress.

Although a large number of constitutional issues came up for discussion, the debates came to grips with some of the major issues confronting the working class today. They ranged from the internal organisation of the movement, to the defence of the NUM, the relationship of WAPC to the Labour Party, right through to solidarity with women and other workers nationally

and internationally.

On associate membership of the NUM for WAPC, concern was expressed that although this

By Mary Donnelly

will give official NUM recognition of the role women are playing — and give women a voice in the NUM — WAPC must go about it in the right way. It was felt that WAPC must be able to work side by side with the NUM, and still retain the right to use its own initiative.

The relationship of WAPC to the Labour Party surfaced in many debates. But it was most thoroughly discussed when the question of WAPC's affiliation to the party came up — and on the question of the UDM. During the discussion

on affiliation Gill Page brought greetings from the National Labour Women's Committee, and personal greetings from Jo Richardson, front bench spokesperson on women's rights. Gill said that the Labour Party is bigger than its membership, that women in the party are a radical force, and that WAPC's affiliation would strengthen its radicalisation. Conference however narrowly defeated a vote to affiliate.

The Labour Party also came up in relation to the UDM. A Notts resolution demanded that the party maintain its position on the UDM and did not recognise any UDM members individual rights to Labour Party membership.

In the debate Betty Heathfield warned the conference of the deep dangers posed by the setting up of scab breakaway organisations. Insidiously, she said, they promote the idea of an alternative trade union movement. The message of the print workers struggle clearly shows this, she argued.

Help

She concluded by saying whenever a trade union is in struggle let us go out and help — that's helping us as well.

The conference overwhelmingly passed the resolution on non-recognition of individual UDM members in the Labour Party.

Discussions were taken on the issues of pit closures, privatisation of mines, coal imports, the proliferation of nuclear power, and their effects on mines and the mining communities. The need for full publication of the facts on these issues, and the need to campaign with the NUM on them, was recognised and supported.

Links

It was put to the conference that after the strong links made with the Greenham Common Women during the strike a logical step to take now to affiliate to CND. The mo-

tion was narrowly turned down — not so much because women opposed the sentiments but because there was still uncertainty on the matter of affiliation generally.

The main perspective for the future will be an active campaign in support of all victimised members of the NUM. WAPC nationally, and in some areas, is already affiliated to the Justice for Mineworkers' Campaign. There was complete endorsement of this perspective.

During this discussion Liz French, whose husband Terry French is still in prison appealed for letters to be sent to the men in jail. In the early days of his imprisonment Terry for example received hundreds of letters which were real morale boosters. Now, however, the numbers have dwindled to about two letters per week.

Nicki Boyle from South Yorkshire explained that her husband was one of four brothers who were sacked — the whole family was victimised. With four children to care for they were having a hard time.

There were no sacked miners in any area who were not suffering. The NUM's funds are still in the receivers hands, so the only financial help has to come from the Solidarity Fund, which is now dwindling fast.

Money

Several practical proposals were put forward, but the main task was seen to be the raising of money for the Solidarity Fund, so that it can continue to distribute financial help fairly to sacked miners throughout the country.

Remembering the international support received during the strike a decision was taken to affiliate to the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Before the conference ended a report was given by two women who had visited Chile on behalf of WAPC at the invitation of Chilean women.

Women had an opportunity to 'let their hair

down' at the social on Saturday night. Flaming Nerve entertained tirelessly — as did talented women from many coalfields who sang or spoke their poetry. The whole evening culminated in repeated and enthusiastic renderings of 'We are women, we are strong' led by Mal Finch.

The conference was closed on Sunday afternoon by chairperson Ella Egan. She said women would return to the coalfields remembering women fighting all over the world — including Winnie Mandela and the Chilean women — and to continue the battle for the mining industry, to rebuild and maintain the unity of the NUM, and to fight to establish a new society.

Correction:

Valerie Vaz is not a member of the Labour Party black and Asian advisory committee as listed in the last issue of the paper. She is an observer sent by Ealing/Southall CLP.

Wales witch hunt gathers force

A MAJOR witch hunt is gathering force in the Labour Party in South Wales. It is orchestrated by TGWU boss George Wright. Moves are being made against supporters of the *Militant* newspaper in a series of constituency Labour Parties.

In Swansea Labour Solidarity has swept to power at the Labour association AGM, and are believed to have won every seat on the executive with a slate of candidates pledged to a witch hunt of socialists in the party. Even Kinnock's supporters have been removed from office because the right wing believed they were too soft on *Militant*.

In Pontypridd a letter has been sent from the largest ward, Rhydyfelin, demanding action against

nine ward members — all members of the LPYS.

George Wright himself has promoted a resolution from his own TGWU branch banning all meetings at Transport House, containing the headquarters of the Wales Labour Party, if *Militant* supporters are present. At the moment further moves in the witch hunt have been postponed on the advice of Wales Labour Party organiser Anita Gale until the NEC produce their guidelines for disciplinary action.

But there is no doubt that George Wright, Labour Solidarity and their supporters are gearing themselves up for a full scale witch hunt of socialists in the party in Wales. This they see as a step in their campaign to put pressure on Kinnock and the NEC to themselves undertake a real purge of socialists from the party.

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News

Justice for Mineworkers campaign plans next steps

MORE THAN 150 people attended the 13 April meeting of the national Justice for Mineworkers campaign. This was the campaign's first meeting since the highly-successful demonstration and Heroes concert at the Albert Hall on 2 March.

Mike Elliott, socialist comedian, reported from the Durham support groups and Consett Music, who are responsible for the Heroes organisation. It was decided to continue the Heroes campaign with a series of large-scale concerts.

These are being organised in Scotland, Nottingham and Yorkshire. A concert is also to be organised in Blackpool on the eve of the Labour Party conference in October. Two videos have been produced for the campaign, one a documentary on the sacked miners, and the other a 90-minute recording of the Albert Hall concert.

Reports were also taken from executive members and a number of NUM areas. Eric Clarke, secretary, and George Bolton, vice-president of the Scottish area, reported on plans for a lobby of the Scottish TUC. Maurice Wood of the Yorkshire area executive, Bill Smith of the Northumberland area executive, and Frank Duffy of the Durham area executive, said that their NUM areas had undertaken to continue regular meetings of their sacked miners. Terry Thomas of the South Wales executive and Jim Coughlan, secretary of the Midlands area, both welcomed the Justice campaign and pledged continued support for the sacked miners in their area.

Anne Suddick, delegate from national Women Against Pit Closures, reported on the recent WAPC national conference, and the resolutions passed supporting the Justice campaign and prioritising campaigning for the victimised miners.

Roger Windsor, of the NUM national office, stressed the importance of

maintaining the regular fund raising activities of the campaign. It was agreed to launch a national lottery with the NUM.

He also proposed that the campaign publish a regular national newsletter

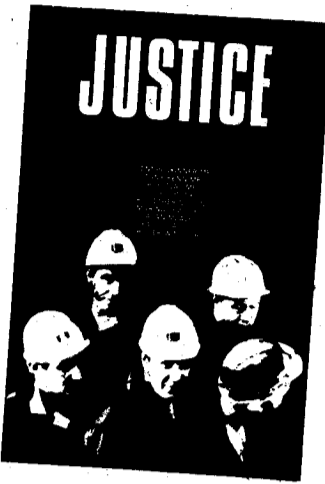
By Dick Withecombe

and it was agreed to research and publicise details of many of the different cases of sacked miners around the country. Lastly, he urged the campaign to take on board campaigning with the NUM against the Tory anti-union laws. This proposal was well-received, particularly given the address given by Mike Brittan, SOGAT NEC member and two sacked printworkers to the meeting.

The 13 April meeting represented a turning point in the campaign's life since its launch at the 1985 Labour Party conference. The Albert Hall concert has established the campaign nationally as the most important development in support of the NUM since the strike ended.

To step up its work and to organise at each national union conference this summer, it was agreed to organise an annual general meeting within four weeks. The AGM will elect the national council of the campaign and its officers will be submitted for reelection.

The national council will be composed of twelve

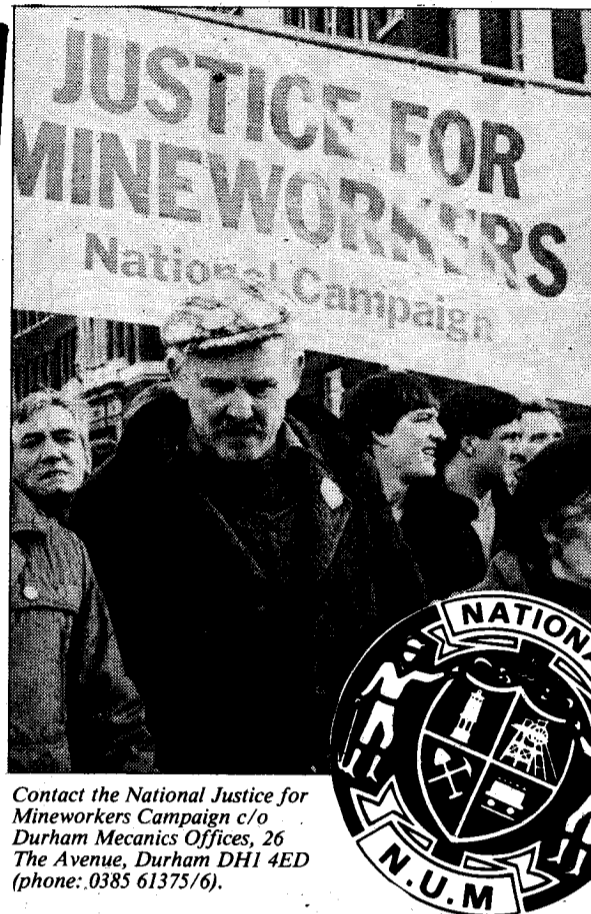


delegates elected by the NUM areas, twelve from WAPC, twelve from regional Justice campaigns and twelve others including representatives from the Campaign Group of Labour MPs and the NUM and WAPC nationally. Dick Withecombe, of the North West Justice campaign, and one of the organisers of the Albert Hall concert, was elected as an officer of the campaign with responsibility for organising the AGM and establishing Justice campaigns in each Labour Party region.

Regional campaigns currently exist in the South West, North West, Yorkshire, Notts, and South Wales. Part of the constitution of the campaign is guidance that such regional campaigns should be formed in conjunction with the appropriate NUM area.

During this week a new national leaflet for the campaign, including a standing order form for the victimised miners will be printed.

During the next month this will be distributed throughout the labour movement, to win new affiliates to the campaign.



Contact the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign c/o Durham Mechanics Offices, 26 The Avenue, Durham DH1 4ED (phone: 0385 61375/6).

Chesterfield forum on East-West relations

ON FRIDAY 18 April there will be a public forum on East-West relations at which two senior diplomats, one from the American Embassy and one from the Soviet Embassy will be speaking.

This forum has been arranged by the international committee of the Chesterfield Constituency Labour Party which was established last year.

The Soviet representative is Mr Guennadi Shabannikov, first secretary at the Soviet Embassy, and the American representative will be Mr Alexander Vershbow, deputy councillor at the

American embassy.

Tony Benn, MP for Chesterfield, will take the Chair.

The mayor of Chesterfield, councillor Tom Whyatt, has arranged a civic reception for the distinguished guests to meet local citizens before the forum which will begin at the College of Technology at 7.30pm.

After the welcome and an introduction by the Chairman each of the guests will make their statements and there will then be an opportunity for local people to put questions and make their contributions, after which the principal guests will have the opportunity for a response before the forum adjourns.

Southern Region conference

CONTINUING OUR round up of this year's Labour Party regional conferences LES HARTOP, delegate for Gillingham CLP (personal capacity), reports on Southern Region Conference.

THE exhilaration of Margate prom during the gale that greeted delegates easily beat the inspiration received in the conference hall. The platform, decorated with flashing light bulbs, looked like the set for a cheap quiz show. Unfortunately there were

only small prizes for the left.

Most motions were absorbed by the delegates in a cozy doze, and then unanimously agreed.

The most significant development in left-right alignments was made by the NUPE and GMBATU delegations who denounced a resolution for continued resistance to the Tory local government controls. Less than half the constituency votes stood in favour of the resolution.

But doom and gloom should not prevail. Firstly because where the class divide is drawn absolutely clearly — South Africa and Wapping — the left carried the day. The ANC and full sanctions received unanimous support. The emergency resolution supporting the printworkers — despite being opposed by the executive because of its clear condemnation of



the role of the EETPU leadership — was however carried with only the EETPU delegation itself voting against.

The debate on the north of Ireland also showed hopeful signs. A resolution calling for a dialogue with Sinn Fein received twice as many votes as the local government motion — the overwhelming bulk of CLP votes. Notably *Militant* cast their votes in the right direction — breaking with tradition.

The hallmark of the conference was that *not one* union block vote supported the left when pushed to a card vote (except on Wapping). The NUM in the area simply had not prepared for the conference nor sent a full delegation. Clearly the opportunity exists to make the NUM a focal point of support in the future. The political will exists in Kent NUM but the organisation for this year's conference did not.

Dear Comrade Editor,

In her report on the North West conference your correspondent Cath Potter rightly points to the successful fringe meeting organised by the Campaign group and the CLPD. However in saying that 'in previous years supporters of the *Militant* newspaper have been the only coherent alternative' she is doing a disservice to the CLPD and to the Campaign group. I am sure this is unintentional and based on an ignorance of how this year's successful fringe meeting came about.

At the 1984 North West conference the CLPD put on a fringe meeting at which John Tocher and myself spoke. There was only a small attendance, but at least it was a start. The following year, the CLPD organised a joint meeting with the Campaign group, with Allen Roberts MP in the chair and Eric Heffer and myself as speakers. There was a good attendance and the Campaign group and the CLPD decided to repeat the fringe meeting this year, this time with Les Huckfield MEP in the chair. We were delighted to extend the platform, at a very late stage, to comrades from Liverpool city council.

Yours fraternally,
Michael Hindley MEP
Member of the Campaign group and CLPD

IRELAND UNFREE

In its special issue commemorating the 70th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, the paper supported in Ireland by Sinn Fein, printed an account of the details of the political preparation of the rising — and in particular the role in it of Marxist socialist James Connolly of the Irish Citizens' Army and Sean Mac Diarmada of the revolutionary nationalist Irish Republican Brotherhood. We are turning this week's 'Ireland Unfree' over to it.

JAMES Connolly and Sean Mac Diarmada, men of keen intellect and tremendous energy, were actively involved in the preparations for a revolution in Ireland for several years prior to 1916. Their different paths to the revolution finally converged in 1914 when the two men were instrumental in bringing the forces of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) and the Irish Volunteers together.

Mac Diarmada, who had a long history of involvement in the Irish Republican Brotherhood which he joined in Belfast in 1906, was present at the inaugural meeting of the Irish Volunteers in the Rotunda in Dublin on 25 November 1913. There he was elected to the Provisional Committee, the controlling body of the Volunteers. Two days previously, Captain Jack White and James Larkin had founded the Irish Citizen Army as a defence force for workers.

From the very outset there was friction between the Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers and this was only resolved in early 1916 due mainly to the efforts of Connolly and Mac Diarmada.

The Citizen Army's antipathy to the very idea of a volunteer force had been voiced at the inaugural meeting of the Volunteers in the Rotunda. The opposition was founded on the belief of its leaders, Larkin and Sean O'Casey, that the motivation behind the Volunteers was unsympathetic to the class struggle.

The adoption of John Redmond's nominees onto the Provisional Committee of the Volunteers in June 1914 widened the gulf between it and the Citizen Army.

A brief alliance between both organisations was achieved in September following the split with Redmond and with the arrival in Dublin of Connolly, he took direct control over the citizen Army following Larkin's departure for America. However, the alliance was short lived, frustrated by the refusal of the Volunteers to co-opt two members of the Citizen Army to the Provisional Committee or to affiliate the ICA as a whole. This was a set-back to the drive by Mac Diarmada. Connolly and Clarke to present a united revolutionary front and caused friction for many months but there was a reconciliation between the ICA and the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) in October 1914 in which Connolly was the prime mover.

Already personally committed to organising an insurrection, Connolly decided that the First World War would provide the opportunity. In this he was supported by Mac Diarmada and Clarke, both senior IRB men, who, unlike the Volunteers, were already planning a rising.

Following abortive talks between the Citizen Army and Volunteers, Mac Diarmada and Clarke organised meetings between the ICA and IRB but little progress was made.

By early January 1916, following months of manoeuvres by the Citizen Army, it became clear that Connolly was contemplating a solo venture and the Military Council felt it was time to inform him of their detailed plans for a rising.

At a three-day meeting between Connolly and the Military Council (19-21 January) — during which time it was generally and incorrectly believed that he had been kidnapped — Connolly was told of the planned rising for Easter Sunday, 23 April, sworn into the IRB and co-opted onto the Military Council.

Both Connolly and Mac Diarmada became members of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and signatories of the 1916 Proclamation.

On Easter Monday, 24 April 1916, Mac Diarmada and Connolly saw the practical conclusion to their years of tireless organising when they marched up Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street) with the Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army to take their place with the headquarters staff in the GPO, where they fought throughout Easter Week.

Following the general surrender on 29 April, the wounded Connolly was taken on a stretcher to the military hospital at Dublin Castle. Mac Diarmada, along with the remainder of the GPO garrison, was taken to the grounds of the Rotunda Hospital.

At 3.45 on the morning of 12 May 1916, Sean Mac Diarmada was executed in Kilmainham Jail. Several hours later, the badly-wounded James Connolly was taken by ambulance from Dublin Castle to Kilmainham Jail, strapped to a chair and also executed.

Stop the Purge: Badges 30p + 17p p&p; bulk orders 20p each for more than 10, plus 31p p&p from Ray Sirotkin, 10 Hazeldon Road, London SE4 2DD



LAST WEDNESDAY, 9 April Socialist Action held a meeting to commemorate the Easter Rising in Dublin, 1916. Speakers included **SEAN McKNIGHT** from Sinn Fein, **KEN LIVINGSTONE**, **DIANE ABBOTT** and **MARTIN COLLINS**, who is editor of *Labour in Ireland* and has just returned from a tour of the USA. Here we print Martin Collins' speech and extracts from the contributions by Sean McKnight, Diane Abbott and Ken Livingstone.

Sean McKnight: 'In six months time the army and the RUC will come for the Republicans and claim to be impartial'

JAMES CONNOLLY was a man much maligned. He was, they say, a socialist who went wrong. He didn't really mean to go to the GPO: he meant to go somewhere else. This is rubbish. Connolly knew what he was about just as we, in Ireland today, know what we're about.

We're not willing to accept any London-Dublin accord, or any half measures that will make my children, or the children of my friends and comrades go to jail again, or die again, or be slaughtered in the streets by the RUC or any force that takes over from the RUC.

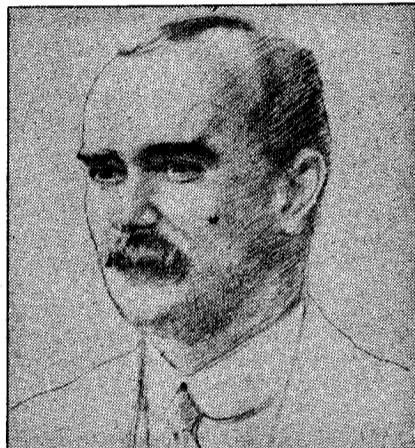
We have been told that if we accept the London-Dublin accord we can fly the tricolour and I'll be allowed to speak Irish, and put Gaelic nameplates up on the streets, and the RUC will be with the UDR and they won't harass me.

But you see, I already speak Irish. And if any of you have been to Belfast, there were tricolours flying long before the accord. There's Gaelic street names up in Belfast. And the RUC do harass you. And the UDR do harass you. So nothing has changed for the people who walk the streets of Belfast — unless, of course, you're an RUC man. I don't need Margaret Thatcher or Garret Fitzgerald to tell me that I can speak Irish. I don't need them to tell me that I can fly a flag. And that's why we don't accept the Anglo-Irish accord.

The Anglo-Irish accord is wider than Ireland or Britain. It's aimed at the NATO bloc of countries. It's far more intelligent than anything Ian Paisley could have thought up. But Britain can't allow things to go on as they are. They let the loyalists govern the six counties for sixty years and they've made a mess of it.

The accord is there, let no-one make any mistake about it, to put down the rise of Sinn Fein within the six and the 26 counties of Ireland, and that is the stated policy of the Free State government. They could not afford to let a group like Sinn Fein make any ground within the 26 counties, which they are doing.

All you're seeing today is in that context. In six months' time there will be another wave of repression against the republicans. And when the RUC



James Connolly

and the British army are harassing republicans they'll say: 'Look what happened in March. We're good people! We beat up five or six hundred loyalists. That must count for something.'

It doesn't count for anything. It's just a balahcing act. They want to break the spirit and the will of the unionists. And when they've done that, they're going to come for the republicans. Which, as I said, is the reason for the accord.

As long as you have that sight of loyalists attacking the RUC, you can do what you want with all the mad IRA men and all the mad Sinn Feiners that are running about — because it's balanced. You can then say 'The RUC is a total impartial force. It has no compunction about sticking a plastic bullet in the head of a republican.'

But that doesn't make it right, comrades. It makes it very wrong. So, for people who say 'maybe we should give it a chance. Maybe it will be the first step along the road to a united Ireland', let me read this. This is the speech made to a secretly held British court martial of Padraig Pearce in Dublin 1916.

'I assume that I am speaking to Englishmen who value their own freedom, and profess to be fighting for the freedom of Belgium. Believe that we too love freedom and desire it. To us it is more desirable than anything in the world. If you strike us down now we shall rise again and renew the fight. You cannot conquer Ireland. You cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by a better deed.'



Martin Collins: 'The Americans said "get Dublin on your side". And that is exactly what they did.'

It is appropriate that we as British socialists should commemorate the Easter Rising. Sometimes as socialists you have to fight for what you believe is right. You might suspect that you are in a minority, but if you believe something is right you have to go out and do it.

That is what the Easter Rising represented. They didn't know that they had the support of the majority of the Irish people. They only found that out some years later, when in 1919 there was an election — the last chance the Irish people as a whole had the opportunity to express their view.

We as socialists also have to understand that we live with the consequences of British actions in Ireland. In that election 70 per cent of the Irish people backed Sinn Fein and voted for an Ireland free from Britain. The British, however much they talked about democracy, weren't interested in it at all as soon as the Irish people had demonstrated their intentions through the ballot box. The British government responded, as always, by arming whoever they thought could oppose this move to democracy, in this case the Ulster loyalists. They armed, they built and they encouraged the loyalists to divide Ireland to defend British interests there. They created the loyalist monster.

We are living with that decision, as with all the consequences of our occupation of Ireland. We are going to live with the consequences of plastic bullets, with the use of strip-searching, with the use of the electoral law to make it illegal for people like Bobby Sands to stand for parliament, with the use of the law for political purposes.

We will also have to live with the



Martin Collins

consequences of the Anglo-Irish accord, and the Labour Party leadership's acceptance of that accord. What does it represent?

As much as we talk about the Anglo-Irish accords being for American consumption, apart from a very small coterie of politicians around Teddy Kennedy and Tip O'Neill there are in fact very little illusions in it in the USA. The organisations of the Irish community, from the Ancient Order of Hibernians to the left, are unanimous in their opposition to the accords and all understand what they mean.

Of course, it is important that people in America do understand what the accords mean, because it isn't so much an Anglo-Irish accord as, in a very real sense, an Anglo-American accord. Sinn Fein did a very great service to the movement by publicising the documents produced by the European Institute of Strategic Studies, a body which reflects the interests of the American government. It was very interesting to see the motivation from the USA that went into that document.

Basically they were saying to Margaret Thatcher: 'Grasp what is happening in Northern Ireland. Realise

there is no military solution. Realise you cannot withstand another moment like the one built behind the hunger-striking men of H-block prisoners of Armagh. You have got to do something else in this situation. And they said: 'Don't think you can rely on the soft wing of the nationalist community in the North, the SDLP, to support you for as long as you want. You will not be able to do that.'

The Americans were saying: 'You have got to get the Dublin government on your side absolutely tooth and nail. And that is exactly what they set about doing in the dialogue leading up to the accord.'

Now, it didn't come as any surprise to the Labour Committee on Ireland that the British government was able to get the Dublin government along because they've always been able to do that. The surprise was how few concessions, if any, they had to make in order to do it.

People have to be aware that there is a new situation. For the first time the Dublin government has acceded to the principle of the division of Ireland and the right of Britain to be in the North completely against its own constitution. For what?

What they propose for the running of the North is very interesting. Anyone who thinks that the loyalist uprising is going to bring down the accord is completely wrong. The whole drift of what the loyalists are saying is 'You've got to suspend the operation of the accord. Are they saying: 'You've got to suspend the fact that the Dublin government recognises the accord'? No, they're saying: 'You've got to suspend attempting to run the North with the cooperation of the Dublin government. We want you to do it with us.'

If you read the accord — really read it, and not just the glib explanations in the press — you will see that the main Tory proposition is to run with a form of devolved government that will incorporate a moderate wing of the unionist

LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

26/27 APRIL 1986

Venue Saturday 26 April London School of Economics
Students Union Building, off Portugal St, London WC2
(nearest tube Holborn). Disabled access.

Venue Sunday 27 April Camden Town Hall
Judd St, London WC1 (nearest tube Kings Cross).
disabled access.



peace

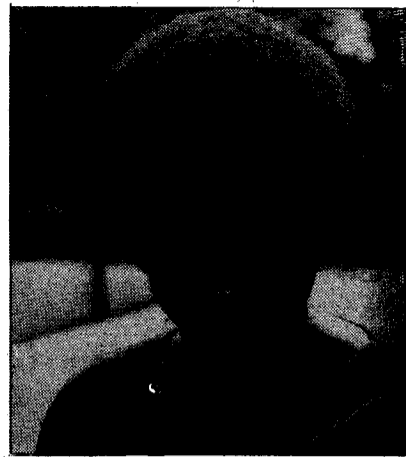
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1986

Diane Abbott: 'Ireland shows the contempt in which the ruling class holds the rule of law'

CERTAIN debates go to the heart of what is wrong with the British Labour Party, and Ireland is one of them. It lays bare something which the leadership finds deeply embarrassing: the classic relationship of the British labour movement to imperialism and colonialism. That relationship is one of collusion. And that is why they find Ireland so difficult.

Ireland also shows how lightly the British ruling class take the rule of law. Now I've been interested in this because in the Labour Party we are constantly lectured about it. It's because of the rule of law that we are not supposed to be able to reinstate and reimburse the miners. It's because of the rule of law that we are not supporting Liverpool.

But in Northern Ireland, all of a sudden, this rule of law is as nothing. I heard Enoch Powell on the radio yesterday, humming and hawing about the attacks on police by unionists. He was asked over and over again to condemn the attacks. And he said 'Oh no, I can't do that. I warned you what would



Diane Abbott

happen.' Now if, because of some action by the British government, black people were attacking police in their homes, on the British mainland, and I went on the radio and said 'I can't condemn them', I would not be able to walk the streets! Somehow the rule of law, which is so inviolable on the English mainland, is not so inviolable in Ireland at all.

Ken Livingstone: 'a built-in loyalist lobby within every British trade union'

THERE IS a striking parallel between the Easter Rising and what we have seen in the last fifteen years. In the aftermath of the rising, there was in no sense an immediate wave of support for that revolutionary cause.

It was the wave of brutality and repression and executions that did much to bring back to the general public in Dublin the true nature of British rule, and I think we've seen many similarities with the apparatus of brutality operated by successive Labour and Conservative governments in the last fifteen years.

It was the apparatus of torture and internment, which Thatcher built on in her determination to see the death of the hunger strikers, which brought home to many Irish men and women the real nature of British rule.

It also brought it home to many people in the Labour Party, who believed that we were in Ireland to stop warring communities tearing each other apart. It is much more difficult to support such nonsense when you see the nature of the régime that Britain has been propping up in Northern Ireland for the best part of this century.

The traditional Labour Party view is eroding. It's important, if you look at the history of the British Labour Party and Ireland, to see how much overt support there was for the unionists in the 1945 government. It was a British Labour government that introduced the loyalist veto.

What has changed is that for the first time there have been developments of links between Sinn Fein and British socialists which would not have been possible ten or fifteen years ago. The very first move, when the majority of the GLC Labour group invited Morrison and Adams to come to the GLC in November 1982 created a wave of hysteria. We actually had debates in the House of Commons where Don Cannon got up and called for Londoners to violently resist the arrival of Adams and Morrison.

Now you go to national and regional Labour Party conferences and there are Sinn Fein speakers on those platforms.

I don't want to create the impression that we have won, that it's not going to be easy to actually break the remaining support there is in the party leadership to that commitment of remaining in Ireland. I've no doubt that we are a long way away from seeing the



Ken Livingstone

leadership of the Labour Party accept the need to withdraw from Ireland.

Part of the problem is the predominance of unionist opinion within trade union branches in Northern Ireland that are affiliated to the TUC. When you sit down and look through the transcript of the more recent party conferences and read Alex Kitson's speeches, you see that there is a consistent attempt, year by year, to hold back a growing tide of rejection of party policy by the rank and file of the constituencies, because they fear what a debate on a united Ireland would do within many trade unions that are organised in the North of Ireland.

For one basic reason: unemployment is two and a half times greater for the catholic community than the protestant one. And if, in the catholic community there is a predominant tendency to be in a union based in the South, and in the protestant community a predominant tendency to be in trade unions that are part of the British Trades Union Congress, then you have a built-in lobby within virtually every British trade union for Britain to remain part of Ireland. And a lot of unions are determined that there should be no debate which they see as opening up the prospect of their union being torn apart on the issue of a united Ireland.

That is the major weakness which I believe we face in actually moving the labour movement into a position of being firmly committed to a united Ireland. It will tear into the centre of every trade union in Britain. It will force the sort of political debate which can schism a whole movement, which will be damaging and divisive — but it's inevitable, because at some point this has to happen.

Britain's interests.

Now I want to deal with the argument, which always comes up, that withdrawing the troops will lead to a bloodbath.

What Britain is afraid of is not that there will be a bloodbath at all. They're afraid of what an Irish government will do to avoid a bloodbath.

If the British withdrew from Ireland, and there was a united and independent Ireland for the first time in 800 years, you would have a government in Ireland which has an interest in integrating the people throughout that island. And since the British have been in Ireland they have had an interest in dividing the people. As soon as you have a government of a united Ireland, it would have to think about how to integrate the whole population of Ireland into the running of that country.

The dilemma is very simple. Take the question of discrimination, as it exists today in the six counties. Is a government of a united Ireland seriously going to say to the Unionists: 'OK, you've had discrimination for the last so many hundred years and now we're going to take it away from you; so you can just get out of that job and that house because we're giving them to a catholic.' Can you seriously imagine the government of a united Ireland saying that? Of course not.

But then the problem is: how do you make up for that discrimination? How do you end it? Do you simply take the existing houses and the existing jobs and share them round — in which case more protestants would be out of jobs and houses? No. That wouldn't be the situation at all. An Irish government, in order to integrate the population, would have to create jobs, create housing, raise the aspiration of the loyalists behind that of their drum-beating on 12 July every year into what a new Ireland would be about.

In that situation, what is going to happen with the Irish economy? In the North, money is being pumped in hand over fist by Britain. Where are the pro-

fits coming from in the North? You can't find them. Look at the South. What kind of economy exists there? It is more indebted than Argentina, Mexico, or any of those countries. It is the most indebted country in Western Europe. So what is going to be the attitude of a united Ireland? Will they say: 'To build our united Ireland the first thing is to pay back our debts to the banks in the USA, in Britain, and the imperialist countries'? Or are they going to say 'we'll have to do something about houses and jobs in the six counties and in the 26 counties'?

I think the answer is that if they are actually going to create a united Ireland, they are going to have to do something about those economic questions.

Equally, they are going to have to look at their foreign policy. Are they going to back the foreign policy of Britain and the United States, which has acquiesced in their oppression for so long? I tend to think not.

And so the whole scare about a Cuba on Britain's doorstep is not about some sort of threat which is going to stop the Americans giving money to the IRA. It's about something very much more real, something very much more integral to the dilemma of a new government of Ireland. I think that's what they're frightened of, and I think that's why we in Britain have every interest in building a movement to get the troops out of Ireland. In that respect I would recommend you to join the LCI, to read the magazine, and for every person here to consider coming to the LCI conference.

The discussions that are going on after the accord, the clarification of where we are going, on the role of the British unions, are some of the central questions in British politics as a whole. So we don't just say 'join us, come with us'. It's a question of the education and building of a socialist movement in this country.

and a moderate wing of the nationalists, and exclude the extremists together. Sinn Fein were written out of the whole deliberations around the forum report, and were deliberately excluded by name from the Anglo-Irish accord.

But there's also a real sense in which the British are saying to the Irish and to people around the world that if the moderate wing of the unionists cannot collaborate with the SDLP to run Northern Ireland, or if the SDLP cannot collaborate with the official unionists, then there is a fall-back position.

This is where this intergovernmental conference comes in. It's a fall back. It's not the main position. It says that if there is no agreement of the kind we would like, then the Dublin government will be involved through the conference. Not that they're going to take a share in running the North. They'll get responsibility for it, but they will have no say in it. It's there in black and white in the accord; We'll be very pleased to listen to the suggestions of the Dublin government, we would appreciate their point of view, but in the last analysis sovereignty rests with the British government.

So Margaret Thatcher is offering the Dublin government three options. First, we go on as now under direct rule. Option two: you can have some kind of devolved government in the North with the moderate wings of the nationalist and unionist community, and the moderate wings are going to be defined by whether they agree with what Britain wants or not. Then there is a third, fall-back position: you can have an intergovernmental conference where we will listen to what the Dublin government has to say, but in the last analysis we're going to do exactly what Britain wants to do. That is where the British government stands, and that is why the accords are not going to collapse, because they are set up not to collapse. They are set up to preserve the existing situation and the partition of Ireland has acted in

Non-racialism and the South African revolution

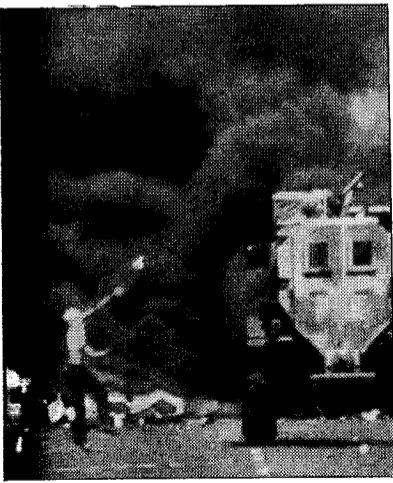
Discussion on the black section position on South Africa

THE 4 APRIL edition of *Socialist Action* carried the position adopted by this year's AGM of the Labour Party Black Section on South Africa. Here we print a comment on the black section's position, by MIKE WONGSAM, Manchester delegate to the black section national committee.

THE struggle unfolding in South Africa has presented the solidarity movement, the organisations in the black community and the socialist movement in general with one of the richest and most vital points of debate in years. It is certainly understandable why this should be so. Southern Africa is like no other African country — indeed it is like no other country.

In order to arrive at a correct conclusion as to how to proceed in the situation, the question must be approached from two points of departure. Firstly, one has to understand *historically* what the struggle is all about. Secondly, one has to understand what it is necessary for the masses to achieve in terms of organisation, politicisation, and leadership. These two points of departure analysed in their *concrete detail* will throw light upon and reveal the tasks which face the revolution in Southern Africa.

In order to correctly assemble the argument, it first has to be raised to a sufficiently high theoretical level. Firstly one has to thoroughly understand the nature not only of apartheid itself, ie *abstractly*, but of the apartheid state in Southern Africa as it exists in its concrete reality. That is, a state constructed and organised from top to bottom on institutional racism.



Therefore, the *nation* that the apartheid state is based upon is one in which black people are excluded from the most elementary civil and political rights. For black people to be able to have access to these most elementary rights requires the construction not merely of a new legal framework but the construction of a new nation state which guarantees to everybody the rights now enjoyed exclusively by the white minority population. This is nothing short of the construction of a *new nation*.

This is different from the anti-colonial revolutions which took place in countries subjected to colonial domination by an imperial power. They took place in the aftermath of the development of revolutionary Pan-Africanism, in countries where there was a stunted economic development and hence a weak working class unable to take the leadership



of the national liberation struggle. The masses were subject to the most momentous general experiences, much more generalised than the experiences of the working classes in the advanced imperialist countries. But these experiences nevertheless were particular insofar as they were directed against a foreign imperial power represented by a few colonial administrators and policemen.

Independent working class organisation was ruled out in the majority of these countries because of the stunted economic development, but the masses transcended this stage of development by becoming intensely politicised. This was the achievement of revolutionary Pan-Africanism. The masses achieved a level of political theory and culture that was equal to the task of liberating almost a whole continent from colonial subjugation within the space of some 30 years.

The result is of course the picture of Africa as it is seen today. The legacy of the inability of the working classes to take the leadership of these colonial revolutions is precisely that despite their liberation from direct colonial rule, sometimes having major effects in the imperialist countries themselves as with the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal, they remain under the yoke of neo-colonialism. That is, despite the political and cultural renewal inaugurated by the African revolution, the countries of Africa remain economically dominated by imperialism.

That is not to say that the African revolution hasn't had a tremendous effect upon the struggle of the black masses worldwide. Quite the contrary. The effect of the African revolution, of revolutionary Pan-Africanism has produced a great leap forward in black consciousness both throughout Africa and in the imperialist countries themselves. Indeed, revolutionary Pan-Africanism consummated the great social transformation in the USA started by the civil rights movement, and led to the greatest explosion of black culture in history.

Limits

The course of the revolutions in Africa however were limited by their very success. Because they didn't need to produce a leadership with a class theory and culture more enduring

than the experience of colonial revolution in Africa, they have not effected any substantial political advance of black people in countries with powerful workers movements. The advances made by black people in the USA, for instance are due primarily to the civil rights movement which had its own dynamic growing out of American conditions and the black experience there. This is in contrast to the effects of the Russian revolution worldwide, or the Chinese revolution in Asia, or Cuban revolution in Central America.

These previous African revolutions did not have to contend with a colonial settler nationality, which in Southern Africa numbers some five millions and constitutes a permanent feature of any South African nation state imaginable in the future as much as it does in the present. This settler nationality, now embattled, is prepared to go to any lengths to protect its privileges even in the face of the now foreseeable collapse of its ability to rule.

Youth

South Africa has the most developed, and now one of the most powerful working classes in the entire world. It consists of one of the most revolutionary working populations to be found anywhere. Its youth constitute a whole politicised generation coming up out of the experience of Soweto.

This combines with one of the longest surviving national liberation movements with a continuity going back as far as 1912. All these factors indicate that the South African toiling masses have to not only achieve class consciousness, not only become politicised in terms of its independent political organisation, but also must elaborate a revolutionary theory and culture which must be radically different from that of the previous African revolutions. The experiences of the masses in South Africa is so much more *generalised* than that of the African masses of Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, etc, that there is an *historical break* between the previous African revolutions and the South African revolution.

This indicates why the development of the doctrine of *non-racialism* has taken place. Non-racialism is first of all *not* a liberal philosophy design-

ed primarily to appease whites in South Africa as to the compromising nature of the new nation which will emerge out of the struggles being fought out now. It is an eminently revolutionary strategy which has come about because of the conditions which face the national liberation movement there.

Class

To the policy of white racial supremacy practised not only by the bosses and their police, but also by the white racial trade unions, the independent non-racial trade unions have advanced the doctrine of non-racialism which says that all workers have an equal right to representation by and in their own organisations. The newly formed and powerful trade union confederation COSATU has taken this as the basis of its own class theory, and as such represents the most advanced stage reached by the most revolutionary working class anywhere in the capitalist world.

All revolutions involve the sweeping away of the old vile and bankrupt organisation of society and its replacement by a new and more universal system of representation and participation. The revolutionary process therefore involves the break up and collapse not only of the apparatus of rule of the old regime but also the hegemonic position of the old ruling class.

Failure

The hegemony of the ruling class in Southern Africa is so precarious that it can be maintained over the white working class only by guaranteeing the privileges of the white working class at the expense of a disenfranchised and exploited black working class. This has become so precarious in recent years with the growth of the independent trade union movement that the apartheid government has had to try to establish its hegemony over the coloured and Indian populations with constitutional reforms designed to give these populations a semblance of political representation, again at the expense of the majority population.

The failure of this strategy has not only served to emphasise the embattled position of the government, but also testifies to the strength of the independent trade unions in proving

that they are the supreme defenders of the rights of all workers in South Africa. Moreover, as institution after institution begins to see the ANC as the legitimate spokespeople of the struggle to create a new nation and the only force in society that aspires to guarantee the rights of all members of society, this further serves to reinforce the weakness of the Pretoria government.

The truth of the matter is that the hegemony of the Afrikaaner ruling class is crumbling, and the hegemony of the national liberation movement is being steadily and relentlessly built. The national liberation movement is no longer an oppositional force fighting for better conditions for blacks, for more access to exclusive restaurants and all-white public beaches, but poses itself as an alternative government with a *national policy*.

This is different from a policy of appeasement, which would have to convince whites that while the colour of the faces of the personnel in the government would change, nothing else of substance would change. Such a policy of appeasement could not lead to a truly non-racial society. For a truly non-racial society to exist in South Africa there would have to be a government elected by the majority, ie a black government. But also, there would have to be a genuinely revolutionary transformation of South Africa itself. For instance, the cities would have to be desegregated; the land would have to be owned by those that work it, there would have to be a universal education system, etc.

State

The only forces existing in South Africa at the moment that have a policy even remotely approaching this are the ANC, and the independent non-racial trade unions. The independent non-racial trade unions have to be the social basis on which the ANC comes to power, and therefore, when the new nation state is constructed it will have to be a *workers state*.

From these considerations it can be seen that the singular judgement that black people are engaged in a struggle against racism *and therefore* must organise as black people, ie attain political race consciousness is only a superficial and narrow judgement of how to proceed in the concrete situation of Southern Africa. In the black sections movement in Britain, black self-organisation is an absolutely correct course of action since the struggle revolves vitally around the fight for the right to adequate democratic representation inside the Labour Party. If it wasn't on the basis of black self-organisation then black representation wouldn't be democratic, and without the struggle it also couldn't conceivably be adequate.

Unity

It is quite different from what is taking place in South Africa. There, the struggle assumes the form of the fight for the majority of the citizens to determine and form the government, to an equal right to the ownership of land, and wealth, and for the right to a full and equal participation in all affairs of the nation and the state. This involves the black masses assuming the responsibility of leading a whole nation which is wider than itself, and this responsibility also offers it the opportunity to significantly advance the political consciousness of black people and the toiling masses worldwide.

The unity of the black struggle worldwide is therefore more complex and far richer than the appearance of it as seen over the short time span taken from the 1950s to the present day. When looked at historically, it reveals itself as being composed of contradictory historical elements and mediated national circumstances.

The South African revolution can inaugurate the next phase of development, and as such does much to reveal the essence of the black struggle as well as lighting a torch for the toiling masses of the world in the march towards socialism.

South Africa: SARMCOL striker interviewed

MOSES MAYEKISO, a striking worker from Sarmcol in South Africa, has been touring Britain. Black workers at Sarmcol, which is owned by British Tyre and Rubber, have been on strike for 48 weeks over starvation level wages and for trade union recognition of the MAWU (Metal and Allied Workers Union).

Moses Mayekiso was interviewed for Socialist Action by PAUL PERKINS and ATMA SINGH.

Can you describe the situation in South Africa at the moment? We heard that you were detained just before you arrived here?

Just before coming to Britain I was detained for three and a half weeks. I came to gain solidarity from the battles in the Alexandra township where I live. I was a leader of one of the street committees which had been organised by the Alexandra Action Committee — which is the top body fighting apartheid in Alexandra. I will give you one example of what is going on.

The police shot dead one comrade. I was elected to conduct the funeral and be master of ceremonies. The police opened fire on the mourners, who retaliated by throwing stones. Street battles for five days followed. The police were reinforced by the South African defence force. Forty four people were killed by the police, although they said only 22 were killed. There were also 70 people injured.

I was detained. The police said I was behind the whole event. They questioned me about the street battles and the street committee. More than 50 factories went on strike to demand my release, and they were forced to release me. These are the sort of problems you face when organising.

Cosatu was launched in December 1985 and is now the biggest federation of workers in South Africa. Can you tell me what are the guiding principles of your federation?

At our founding congress of Cosatu we had five principles that were agreed by all unions present. These were:



2. Workers control — meaning that the leadership of the federation should come from the workers themselves.
3. Proper democratic structure.
4. One union per industry.
5. Workers organisations must be independent.

These principles guide our work in the democratic struggle.

Elijah Barayi, the first president of the South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), said that 'The union must be democratic and under workers control.' Could you tell us what that means for your union MAWU and for Cosatu?

When we are fighting against capitalism we want to ensure that our trade union leaders remain committed to the aims and objectives of workers in their fight against the bosses. We need to ensure accountability and democracy. The working class struggle must be built on proper democratic structures. The workers must have their own organisations and leadership. MAWU and Cosatu have the same structure. We have general meetings in factories where all workers take part in all decision making.

The national executive has no power to take decisions. They can only make recommendations which have to be taken back to the factories, and

the decision of all factories is final.

We also have shop stewards councils — for example the Johannesburg local has 20 factories that meet weekly. They make decisions and implement them, like on dismissals and the proposed May Day mobilisations.

Although our trade union is new, our members are learning very quickly how to organise themselves.

What are some of the problems Cosatu faces when trying to unionise workers?

One of the main problems we have is that nearly all companies are against trade union recognition. This is aided by the apartheid regime.

The police and the army shoot workers. But through the power of the workers we have cracked some of the companies and forced them to recognise us, and negotiate about conditions. But these have only come through long battles.

The apartheid regime uses all the weapons at its disposal to try to break our strength. The migrant system, the hostel system, pass laws, the homeland system, are all used to keep us down. The homelands are reservoirs of cheap surplus labour.

We have to organise not only in factories but we want to organise the unemployed and organise co-operatives for them so

they can organise production for their own benefit.

Stopping scabbing is most important. Workers are also using a new tactic — one of occupying their factories. By 'sleeping in' scabbing is stopped.

At its founding conference it was stated that: 'the challenge facing Cosatu will be whether it is able to link this worker base to the present upsurge in South Africa's black community.' Can you tell us what Cosatu's relationship is to other progressive forces in South Africa?

In the fight to get rid of apartheid we will fight with the UDF (United Democratic Front) in all areas. We have taken a decision that Cosatu must be independent of the UDF. The recent meeting on 5 and 6 March (between Cosatu, the ANC, and Sactu) in Lusaka was a good move.

As Cosatu we are part and parcel of the national liberation struggle. The ANC is waging an armed struggle. We appreciate that. We are going to work together to destroy apartheid and in forging a new society.

We support all organisations that are fighting the racist and capitalist regime. We abhor the division by Gathsa Buthelezi. He is dividing the workers and helping the bosses. He is creating 'sweet heart' unions such as the pro-capitalist United Workers

Union of South Africa.

He will not succeed because the masses will see the evil he is doing. He is going into the labour movement to try and destroy it. We will not accept this.

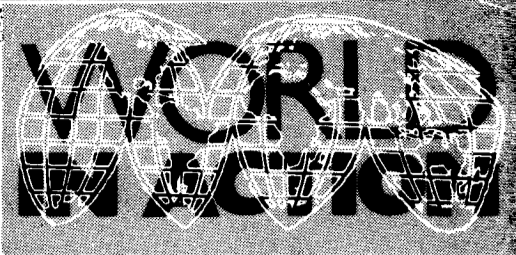
What forms is the struggle against apartheid taking at the moment?

Freedom is coming from the school students on strike, the boycotts and 'stay aways', the growth of trade unions, and community based protests. All are part of the struggle — all are important. All pressure that can be brought to bear on the companies which invest millions, like BTR in South Africa, also aids our cause.

Workers in neighbouring countries are not regarded as foreigners by us. They are our comrades, brothers and sisters. That is why we said we would take action to stop any threat by Botha to deport them from South Africa.

What is your hope for the future?

I have five children. All will grow up poor, hungry and countryless as long as the apartheid regime remains. Of my five children there is a chance that at least one will die before the age of ten. We have little money for food and no money for medicines. But they will grow up to see a free South Africa.



South Africa

THE CONGRESS of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has called on its members to stay away from work on 1 May, reaffirming previous declarations of intent to hold large scale industrial actions on May day.

Jay Naidoo, secretary of COSATU, issued the call on 14 April and said the union would ask its members to attend mass rallies to press industrial and political demands.

Philippines

CORY AQUINO'S government is running into early problems. Deaths in clashes between the military and the New People's Army in the first month of her presidency, at 352, are almost as high as they were in the last month of Marcos' rule. All the indications are that the corrupt and repressive army apparatus, which remains intact, is bent on settling accounts with the guerillas militarily in the hope that Aquino's victory has isolated them politically.

Meanwhile, few economic reforms are emerging and the process of trying to chase out former Marcos cronies from positions in leading Philippines companies is turning into a straight grab for power and wealth by the business people who were dispossessed by Marcos and are now eager to retake their lost wealth. Aquino's Presidential Commission on 'Good Government', which is leading the purge, has been accused of a 'witch-hunt'.

Former Marcos associates in parliament have launched a further challenge. They are planning to reconvene the parliament which Aquino has suspended (using the absolute presidential powers she inherited from Marcos) and install Arturo Tolentino, who was Marcos' running mate, as acting president.

Mr Tolentino is 75.

Haiti

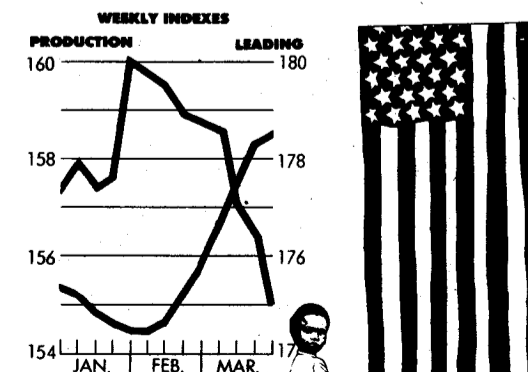
GENERAL Henri Namphy, who replaced Duvalier in Haiti, is having equally hard problems because of popular opposition to his attempts to keep as much of Duvalier's old cronies in their places as he can. Neighbourhood committees are forming and the slogan 'Chak 4 ans' — meaning elections each four years — is appearing everywhere. Suspected former Tonton Macoutes are being pursued everywhere for justice and Namphy has been the target of several demonstrations demanding punishment of former Duvalierites he is trying to shelter.

And in the USA on 29 March over 2,000 Haitians demonstrated to protest statements by Secretary of State George Schultz that US troops might intervene 'if the situation becomes chaotic'.

US economy down

THE US production index declined sharply for the third month running despite forecasts that cheaper oil would lead to a new boom. Auto production is down to 136,699 compared with 183,266 last month, the most dramatic decline. But there were falls of up to 10 per cent in Electric power production, paper, and rail freight.

Puzzled US economists cannot account for it, though a straightforward Marxist analysis suggests that the next slump is due some time between the middle of this year and the middle of next. Postwar business cycles run at around seven years between slumps — and the last one was in 1981. Moreover the US rate of profit turned the corner and started declining at the end of last year — the clearest indicator of coming problems.



For more information, or to order leaflets and petitions, contact the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 20-21 Compton Terrace, London N1. Tel 01-359 8982.

Nicaragua: Reagan gets his war chest

ON 15 APRIL US President Reagan will again go to Congress asking for \$100m aid for the Contras. As part of his supposed international crusade against 'terrorism', he will be funding an army that has carried out 1,268 attacks on civilian targets in the last five years.

Congress will probably pass the aid, but hold up its delivery for 90 days to allow the Sandinistas a 'chance' to negotiate with the Contras. This is a shift from last month when a similar package was voted down.

Since then, Reagan has claimed that a hot pursuit into Honduras by Sandinista troops that hit Contra in their base camps was an 'invasion'. Nicaraguan President

Daniel Ortega flatly denied any invasion or hostile intention to Honduras. Normal relations were maintained with Honduras during the incursion.

In fact, this was simply the latest of no less than 942 border incidents resulting from the Contra war. None of these were described as 'invasions' even by Reagan. This time though, he rushed \$20 million in emergency



military aid to the Honduran army, which the Hondurans had not asked for, and used US helicopters to rush Honduran soldiers into border regions they have effectively abandoned as a war zone.

The head of the Honduran human rights commission says the money is just enough to bribe every officer in the Honduran army.

Reagan's hypocrisy and scare mongering on border incursions is put in context by US violations since 1981. The USAF has

violated Nicaraguan airspace on 2,809 separate occasions. The US navy has violated Nicaraguan territorial waters 841 times, including an occasion when they laid mines outside Corinto, Nicaragua's main port.

Moreover, this month 4,500 US troops are on manoeuvres in Honduras, including units from 82nd Airborne, the unit that spearheaded the invasion of Grenada in 1983. This is the latest of 14 exercises in the region since 1981. These have trained 75,000 US troops in battlefield conditions in Central America.

Reagan is now openly talking war. First public responses are not favourable to him. While only 13 per cent of Americans polled had any

Black Shack Alley

Black Shack Alley tells the story of a boy growing up in Martinique, a Caribbean island ruled by France. His childhood mischief is played among the 'black shacks', built of planks and packing cases by workers on a sugar plantation. His grandmother brings him up in one of them, making great sacrifices to pay for him to go to school. Like in the schools of the British empire, he is taught the history, geography, and national anthem not of his own people but of the 'mother country'.

He makes friends with a half-white boy, the son of the plantation owner and a black woman. The planta-

tion owner punishes his son for playing with the 'black children', but won't get married because 'my surname has been carried by twelve generations of Frenchmen, all white'.

He discovers a talent for writing when the school teacher accuses him of copying his essay from a

Reviewed by
Chris Morris

book because 'only a Frenchman could write like this'.

An old man tells him 'When I woke up after the drunken joy of finding myself free, the hard reality that stared me in the

face was that nothing had changed either for me or for my friends who'd been in chains with me ...

'Like all the other Negroes, I was still here in this accursed country; the békés (white settlers) still owned the land, all the land in the place, and we went right on working for them as before ...' So he begins to see that he can put his pen at the service of his people.

The original novel the film was based on was written by Joseph Zobel based on his own experiences as a child in the 1930s. It was published in Paris in 1950 by Présence Africaine. This was the first ever book in French by a black novelist about the experiences of black people in the Caribbean. The white settlers burned every copy of *Black Shack Alley* they could lay their hands on.

Florence Alexis talked about the making of the film in a speech at the Fourth International Bookfair of Radical, Black, and Third World Books last year. The speech was reprinted in *Race Today*, Aug/Sept 1985. She said 'Euzhan Palcy, the director of the film, is a young woman of 30. She was born in Martinique. She says that when she was ten years old, she was writing poetry, short stories, and music where all the characters were white people.

'When she was 14, she discovered black literature and especially the novel of Joseph Zobel entitled: *La Rue Cases-Negres (Black Shack Alley)*. She was so amazed that, three years later, she started to write her first adaptation of the novel ... for the first time, all the characters of the story were blacks of the Caribbean, workers nobody had ever talked or written about before.'

Palcy struggled for five years to raise funds to make the film. Alexis says 'the people in Martinique followed daily the progress of "their film" and at the end, facing lack of money, helped Miss Palcy to finish it. 'In the final weeks the Martiniquans were coming with big and small cheques, with costumes and furniture, with all kinds of things to help achieve the "first Martiniquan film".'

● *Black Shack Alley* was recently shown on Channel Four and is on show at specialist cinemas around the country.

Reviews

The thirty-thousand pound opera?

IF BERTOLT Brecht's ghost returned to earth to see his *Threepenny Opera* at the National Theatre (music by Kurt Weill), it is unlikely that he would enjoy the show. Checking the script with Brecht's estate in East Germany may have guaranteed its authenticity, but this was a production more faithful to the letter of the original than it was to its spirit.

As a committed socialist, Brecht criticised the bourgeois theatre of his time for encouraging the audience to empathise emotionally with characters on the stage, rather than to analyse their

gangland.

Only Sara Kestelman, as Polly's mother, and the

THEATRE



Reviewed by
Geoff Matthews

predicament. The intention of the famous Alienation-Effect was to challenge the illusion that the actors 'became' their roles, and to open up a critical distance between the audience and the action which allowed for thought as well as feeling. However, there is little sign of anything other than the orthodox in the National's version of his play.

Tim Curry starred as MacHeath (Mack the Knife), the psychopathic criminal around whom the action centred — a kind of Dickensian Kray twin.

Lines delivered with a badly-hidden middle-class accent, and a rather wooden unpleasantness anaesthetised the character's violence and sexuality.

Towards the end of the play, standing on the scaffold from which he is about to hang, and surrounded by the friends who have only recently betrayed him, MacHeath thanked them with an absence of malice that bordered upon real gratitude. The only electricity in the theatre was working the lights.

MacHeath's lover, Polly Peachem, relied more heavily upon stage musical conventions to get by. The songs, which both comment upon the narrative and help move it along, became set-pieces almost outside the action.

Lyrics relishing lechery and treachery, were delivered with full-throated drama-school clarity to the back of the stalls. Eliza Doolittle, we were asked to believe, had stepped off the set of *My Fair Lady* in order to run part of East End

excellent music, gave a hint of what might have been. Her direct address to the audience, and her hoarse, well-timed delivery, made sense of the play's vulgar humour for a while.

Upstaging everyone was the set. A dizzying series of sumptuous and visually distracting props were rolled on and rolled off, or flown in and flown out.

It was a fetishistic parade not dissimilar to the end of *The Generation Game*, with its conveyor belt of consumer goods: an apparently real vintage vehicle (full-size), a huge carousel-type horse, a four-poster bed ... one particularly spectacular entrance even received applause.

A combination of the opulent production and undecided direction restricted what remained of the original meaning to the words themselves. Brecht's message about the influence of a full stomach upon virtue ('It's food that morals flow from ...') and the luxury of moral judgement, was mostly undermined. The song with which the play ended, remonstrating with the audience to consider 'the sorry lot of man on earth', was no more than another big finale, the necessary concluding razzamatuzz.

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INSIDE THE UNIONS

Black NALGO Conference

ON 31 MAY 1986 a national black NALGO conference will be organised by black members in Leeds. More than 200 delegates and observers are expected. The meeting has been prepared by a national steering group of black caucuses from branches throughout the UK, facilitated by an NEC decision earlier this year. This is a tremendous step forward in the fight for black self-organisation and follows over four years of struggle.

Black NALGO members have been excluded from union structures, and their interests ignored, for a long time. In 1982 some black NALGO members gathered to campaign for a conference motion reflecting their demands, and to tackle racism in the union.

The NEC prevented a vote on it. Instead, it set up a Race Equality Working Party (REW). The REWP was almost all white and its members were union officers.

In February 1983 the REWP tried to organise a national conference, but was picketed heavily and never started. Two months later black NALGO members held their own national meeting before the NALGO national conference, attended by over 100 delegates and branch observers. They decided to boycott the REWP and campaign against its report. They also backed the Mohammed Idrish campaign.

But the 1983 conference supported the REWP and voted down the black members' motion. The tense debate was the best attended of the conference. The NEC opposed the motion without saying why. Moreover large sections of the NALGO Broad Left, especially from Scotland,



also opposed it. Black members discovered that the 'traditional' left in NALGO cannot be depended on when discussing race.

In May 1984 a second meeting of black members set up a national committee for black NALGO members, and elected a coordinator. This meeting, however, revealed differences of strategy on accountability and how best to build groups in the branches.

The 1984 NALGO conference took the same course as in 1983 but the black members' motion was now backed by a majority of city branches.

Unfortunately differences among the black members deepened, paralysing the national coordination, so that the 1985 conference saw no real development in coordination of black members. However, we saw more black delegates from areas we were not aware of. The grass root development of black caucuses in branches had expanded and built the material basis for a further jump in the organisation of black members.

The 1985 conference called on the NEC to set up an equal opportunities committee to implement the policies agreed last year. It also saw a deepening alliance between black members and other progressive layers.

The next few months saw a real development of black groups and the NEC finally agreed to facilitate the meeting of a national steering group.

This was a vital step forward. However, further struggle is expected around the implementation of the policies agreed at the 1984 conference and the struggle for affirmative action is seen by black members as the only way out in the present situation.

Other Books

A NEW paperback, *Malcolm X Speaks* has recently been published for the first time in this country. Price £3.95 plus 22p p&p it is available from Other Books. The Other Books mail order service offers a wider selection of socialist, anti-imperialist and radical literature, including the following by and about Malcolm X and the struggle for black liberation:

Malcolm X: The Man and His Ideas
George Breitman, Pathfinder Press, 60p + 12p p&p

Two Speeches by Malcolm X
Pathfinder Press, 60p + 12p p&p

Malcolm X Talks to Young People
Pathfinder Press, 60p + 12p p&p

The Assassination of Malcolm X
George Breitman, Pathfinder Press, £2.25 + 28p p&p

Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self Determination
Pathfinder Press, £2.25 + 22p p&p

By Any Means Necessary: some last speeches by Malcolm X
Pathfinder Press, £3.25 + 34p p&p

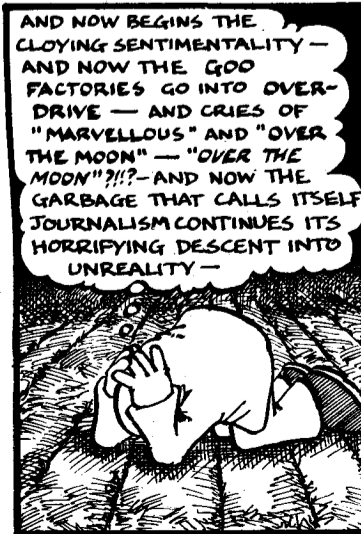
The Last Year of Malcolm X: the evolution of a revolutionary
George Breitman, Pathfinder Press, £3.95 + 34p p&p

Malcolm X on Afro-American History
Pathfinder Press, £2.25 + 22p p&p

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a piece of the ACTION





NUT calls for teachers' unity

AT THE National Union of Teachers conference in Blackpool, the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA) supported calls for unification with the NAS/UWT, best described as a 'craft union', a question of strategic importance to all teachers. The fact that this move comes from the left of the union, rather than the NUT bureaucracy, is important because it demonstrated the ability of the STA to relate to the objective needs of teachers as a whole and shows the STA's capacity to grow in the next period. We reprint below the speech of RAY SIROTKIN, who moved the resolution on behalf of the Lambeth Teachers Association, which gained the overwhelming support of conference for the proposed unity, despite opposition from some on the left and a part of the bureaucracy.

DURING the last year, this union has led the fight to regain living standards and now leads in that fight and also the fight to defend education and working conditions. You can be sure that fellow trade unionists outside of teaching refer to us in the same breath (although for different reasons) as the miners, the printworkers and other trade unions standing up against the government.

Our esteem in the trade union movement is at an all time high.

During this period we have led numerous marches, lobbies and rallies. But we have to face up to the fact that we didn't win.

Of course the NAS/UWT leadership have a lot to explain to their membership for leading the sell-out of pay, but it would be foolish to see it that simply. The 30 per cent vote against the sell-out by the NAS/UWT leadership clearly demonstrates that we have

good reason to be optimistic that a united union is possible.

As a union we haven't pretended that we can win this dispute alone. We have gained the support of parents, councillors (some!), MPs, trade unionists and the public in general.

Yet, within teaching, when considering where we have gained support from, is it difficult to give a clear answer? Has it been from the NAHT or SHA (headteachers unions-ed) who rubbed their hands with glee with the settlement which gave them the best part of £1200 after they had obstructed our action? Was it from the Professional Association of Teachers, the teachers' UDM? Of course not!

Up and down the country we were engaged locally in numerous joint activities with our ally, the NAS/UWT. I myself spoke at three joint meetings in schools organised by the Lambeth

Associations of our two unions. How much stronger would we have been had this been the rule locally and nationally, rather than the exception?

Why is the NAS/UWT so special? It is primarily their affiliation to the TUC. Teachers join us, the NUT or NAS/UWT for all sorts of reasons. If they join the NAS/UWT they become trade unionists, albeit with different policies and structures from us. If they choose to join the other organisations, they choose not to be a trade unionist at all!

We are all aware of the role played by the NAS/UWT leadership during this present campaign. But our response must not be sectarian to their membership with cries of 'look what you've done' etc. We cannot let all the good work we have done during the past year evaporate through pointless rivalry.

It is argued that our policy, the NAS/UWT are not anti-racist and are sexist to the extent that as the NAS, they only allowed women into their union due to the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975. It is also generally argued that our policies are radically different from theirs.

Let's be clear about this. Have none of you noticed the huge difference we have had in debate on policy during this conference over the past few days? Does anyone seriously suggest that this will prevent us

leaving this hall at the end of conference united and determined to defend education as one union?

On policies, references have been made to the changes that have been made in our union over the past 10 years. How were, for example, changes in relation to women and our policy on equal opportunities arrived at? By some magical formulations of our executive? Not at all!

They were won by the women of this union and it is insulting to them to suggest that having led the fight against sexism in our union, they would be incapable of doing so in a larger union. The NAS/UWT being maintained as a separate union will mean that their executive will provide a barrier to our ideas reaching their membership.

There is another aspect worth considering. Be sure, there is nothing in education that would frighten the Tories more than ourselves and the NAS/UWT in one TUC-affiliated union serving primary and secondary teachers.

But we cannot pretend that Fred Smithies, general secretary of NAS/UWT, is outside this hall fighting to get in! On the contrary, we need a national campaign — perhaps lasting years. It will not be achieved simply by negotiations between the two executives which, of course, will start proceedings.

Remember, this de-



mand comes as a plea from the membership. It will be achieved by the continued joint action on pay and other issues by primary

and secondary teachers. It will be achieved by getting joint action in schools.

It will involve long, patient discussions explain-

ing the importance now of unity to NAS/UWT members. There will be numerous problems — but let's go forward!

Fight Ford victimisations

EIGHT local MPs have put out a statement in support of TGWU branch 1/1107 which is resisting the victimisation of new workers in the Paint, Trim and Assembly (PTA) plant at Dagenham by Ford management.

Following a story planted in the scab-produced *Sun* by Ford management on Monday 7 April, support has come from other trade union branches. The article, which is headlined 'Ford Fire Two Red Women', says that two women among the new starters were sacked.

Management hoped to weaken any support for the women after the successful defence of a male new starter. This story proves that the union is right when they say that the company is trying to hide anti-union victimisation.

The 'A' shift in the PTA plant have already saved the job of a new starter who was being harassed by his foreman. Under the threat of industrial action, management gave in at the appeal hearing. Their action has proved to all the new starters the value of the union. This is especially important since management has tried to exclude union-minded workers from the new jobs. Their victory leaves this shift in a strong position to resist any other attacks that management might be planning, such as line speed-ups. 'B' shift can make the same gains by defending the job of a woman whose appeal will be heard on Thursday 7 April.

The shop stewards committee on Monday 7 April decided to hold a meeting and argue for industrial action in the sealer deck area if the appeal is rejected. The MPs statement fully backing any action by the workforce shows how important these issues are. In the second circular to its members in the PTA, the union explained:

'The only protection a new worker — indeed any of us — has against such outrageous management is if we stick together and protect each other. This basic solidarity is what trade unionism is all about.'

For fifteen years Fords resisted giving equal pay to its women machinists and refused to employ women on the production line.

When it took on new workers at the start of the year, Ford said it would employ women as well as men. In fact it took on only 11 women out of 350 new starters.

Black, including Asian, applicants also suffered clear discrimination. The company claims that one in eight of the new starters are from an ethnic minority. The union comments that in that case: 'our eyes must be deceiving us. Even if this figure is true, it bears no relation either to the present make-up of the workforce or the composition of the 7,000 who applied for the jobs. Many people have been saying it privately and we will say it in public: we believe the company's recruitment has been racist.'

With these forms of discrimination management try to sow divisions among the workforce. By supporting those who are discriminated against, the union branch is defending the interests of all its members, women and men, black and white. All those who were turned down for these jobs should consider taking their cases to the Equal Opportunities Commission or the Race Relations Board.

To start with management gave no reason for the sacking of the first woman. At her final appeal they said that they were sacking her because of bad references. But they refused to read out the references. She previously worked for British Telecom. The National Communications Union

should demand to know what British Telecom told Ford management about her union activity.

All trade unionists should be aware of the way that Ford are trying to use new starters to weaken the union, because other managements may follow their example. The issue in these sackings are so serious that all labour movement bodies should give support to the union's campaign. Our readers are asked to raise it wherever they can.

WE the undersigned condemn the recent sackings in the Paint, Trim and Assembly plant in Dagenham by Ford management.

These dismissals are designed to weed out union-minded workers from among the new recruits. We note that the company originally said that the first woman sacked had bad references but now they are using the pretext of inaccuracies on the application forms.

The company only took on eleven women among two hundred and thirty new starters in the PTA plant, and also only took on small numbers of black and Asian workers. So its anti-trade union attitudes are combined with racism and sexism.

Under recent government legislation a worker can be dismissed from a job up to two years after he or she started without recourse to an industrial tribunal, so new entrants can be protected only by their union.

We will give our full support to the union and the workforce in whatever action they see fit to take.

JO RICHARDSON MP (Barking)
BRIAN SEDGEMORE MP (Hackney South and Shoreditch)
HARRY COHEN MP (Leyton)
TONY BANKS MP (Newham NW)
IAN MIKARDO MP (Bow and Poplar)
CHRIS SMITH MP (Islington South)
ERIC DEAKINS MP (Walthamstow)

Rail against apartheid

RAILWORKERS ARE being urged to attend a meeting on 23 April called by a new campaigning group established in the union — Rail Against Apartheid (RAA). The meeting — to be addressed by a speaker from the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) — will be the first attempt to bring together railworkers who are disgusted by apartheid rule in South Africa, and who want to do something about the role of the British government in promoting the Botha regime.

'The Workers Are Coming', the new video about the founding of the half-million strong Congress of South African Trade Unions earlier this year, will also be shown. The meeting is seen by RAA as part of the Trade Union Week of Action decided upon by the Anti Apartheid Movement, although it has had to be held a week later.

RAA was set up in early March. The inaugural meeting, although small, brought together activists from a range of depots in London, both on British Rail and the underground. Geoff Revell, an NUR NEC member, was elected chair. Its immediate aim is to build the strongest and largest contingent of railworkers possible on the 28 June national Freedom March called by the AAM.

To this end, RAA sees itself very much as a resource group. It hopes to provide educational material, speakers, and any assistance required by railworkers who wish to campaign against apar-

theid. Plans for a speakers' kit, leaflets, posters and a banner are all underway. The campaign has borrowed the trade-mark of SACTU (black and white workers

By Doreen Wepler

marching behind a banner).

The National Union of Railwaymen already has policy against apartheid rule, including policy to campaign for the early and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and an end to the harassment of him and his family. In addition, last year's AGM decided to back a previous NEC decision to affiliate the union nationally to the AAM, in the face of a challenge to this decision.

However, the activities which RAA hopes to encourage and service are the first systematic campaigning and educational work the union has undertaken. Railworkers already committed to the anti-apartheid struggle will be

looking for ways to involve their workmates in the campaign, to strengthen union policy, including its recent action in withdrawing all union investments from South Africa, and ultimately to ensure the union will sanction any actions taken by railworkers who refuse to transport apartheid goods.

● *Rail Against Apartheid meeting, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, 1900 hours Wed. 23 April 1986 'The Workers Are Coming', 16 min., colour. New video designed for trade union meetings. From IDAF, 64 Essex Road, London N1 8LR. 01-359 9181*

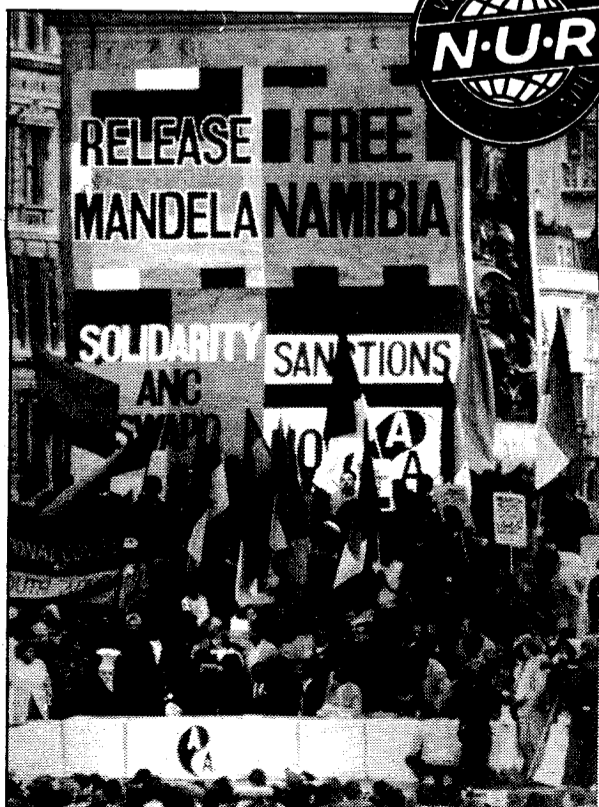


Photo: GM Cookson