

# A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

## Vote Labour on 8 May

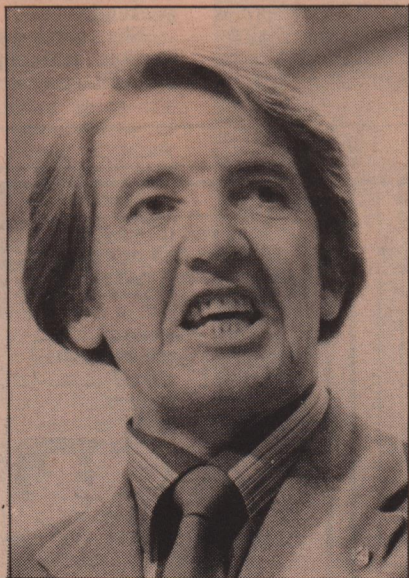
THE LABOUR PARTY

# "ALL U.S. BASES MUST GO"



THERE ARE A FEW occasions in the lifetime of politics when you can actually move up a gear. What the British people were saying in response to the attack on Libya — loud and clear, without any doubt at all — is that they want to see the removal of all United States bases. I am sure most men and women in the street, on being asked about the Libyan bombing, would call for the closure of US bases, full stop.

I think they would be somewhat disillusioned to find out that a future Labour government would not be committed to getting rid of those bases from which the attack took place. It would be a strange irony if, dur-



By Dennis Skinner MP

ing a general election campaign, the leadership of the Labour Party were to announce in answer to

questions from the press that the F1-11 bombers would continue to be stationed in Britain.

This attack using United States bases in Britain has created a new dimension in the argument about removing those bases.

Immediately after the criminal activities of president Reagan and Mrs Thatcher in killing and maiming innocent people in Libya as a result of the use of the bases in Britain, a number of people in the Parliamentary Labour Party put down a resolution on the order paper of the House of Commons, using as a focal point the attack by Reagan and Thatcher on Libya and calling for the removal of all those US bases that had nuclear weapons. Whilst that ought to be supported in line with Labour Party policy, I put down a simple amendment: it called for the removal of all the United

States bases in Britain — which is not undermining Labour Party policy, it's building upon it.

In view of what has happened, the Labour Party policy is now seen to be inadequate by a lot of people both inside and outside the party. That's why I think we have to move it up a gear. Calling for the removal of all US bases will, I am certain, be part of a big campaign during this summer leading up to conference.

I always hesitate to speculate about what a few trade union leaders might convince their delegations to do especially in the run up to the general election. Anything can happen at party conferences. But if I were asked the question as to what the constituency parties will do, my guess is that the overwhelming majority would call for removal of all

United States bases.

The chances are that in most constituency parties a proper democratic discussion would take place amongst the activists within the party — and I'm pretty certain that would be the conclusion. But in the trade unions, as we've known to our cost before, that kind of discussion may not go deep enough to ensure that more than a few of the leaders of executive committees will discuss the matter.

So we call upon all people involved in trade union activity, at all levels of their organisations including the most important level, namely on the shop floor and in the various branches of all the service unions as well, to make sure that a proper discussion takes place with a view to ensuring that the leadership of those unions support the policy of getting rid of all United States bases.



# Socialist ACTION

## Chernobyl is in Britain

'IT COULDN'T happen here' was the unanimous claim by British 'experts' 12 hours after Swedish scientists first noticed radiation levels one hundred times above normal. The radiation was coming from the huge cloud released by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant near Kiev in the USSR.

A catastrophe of this type supposedly couldn't happen in this country because we don't have the same reactors — although we're going to build one on the model of Three Mile Island in the United States. The radiation level won't actually kill anyone, at any rate for a few weeks. And — a unique internationalist contribution from Neil Kinnock — the wind wasn't actually blowing over Britain in any case. Nothing to worry about, nothing at all — and if there was, it was the 'Reds' fault.

First thought in the disaster must go to the Soviet people suffering from it — and reports indicate high casualties. But the second thought must be that the proposed Sizewell B reactor — the model for the entire next wave of nuclear construction in Britain — is actually *more* likely to melt down than the Russian designs. UK plants also have a 'containment vessel' around the reactor which is intended to limit the damage, should there be a melt-down. But this does not mean that a melt-down is any less likely! It simply means the damage might be more limited.

The Three Mile Island plant in the USA, which threatened a melt down not long ago in the most serious nuclear accident until that time, was also a pressurised water reactor and also had a containment vessel. That didn't stop the radiation leak. It simply limited its effects. It also proved 'our allies' nuclear plants, or 'our own,' are no more safe than 'the reds.'

Are the nuclear industry's apologists trying to tell us that although there will be nuclear accidents, they won't be as disastrous as the one at Chernobyl? That instead of thousands, only hundreds will be threatened. Some comfort!

Day by day, the evidence is mounting that nuclear power is simply *not* safe. Melt-downs, fires, leaks and other accidents *will* happen and cannot be prevented because they are inherent in nuclear technology. There was a fire at Windscale, a smaller version of the Chernobyl one, in 1957.

Equally serious is the obvious connection between the nuclear power lobby and Reagan/Thatcher's war drive — as well as Thatcher's miner-bashing.

Why is the establishment so desperate to preserve and extend nuclear power? Not because it is cheaper. On the contrary, a very clear survey in the influential US magazine *International Business Week* two weeks ago concluded that: 'too much low-cost oil and coal is quickly transforming Europe's energy technology of choice, nuclear power, into an inefficient and even hazardous route to energy independence.' A reason for choosing nuclear power is to maintain or develop a capacity to produce nuclear weapons — and in the case of Britain to attack the NUM.

That is why Kinnock's failure to use the Chernobyl incident to argue against all nuclear power was totally wrong. That is why the labour movement must stick by the policy it has already decided on and go for a nuclear-free energy policy.

The 'it couldn't happen here', propaganda coming out of the press must not fool the labour movement for one minute. It *could* happen here — and if Thatcher gets her way one day probably will. Western scientists — those who brought us such wonders as Hiroshima, Three Mile Island, and the infallible space shuttle — are capable of anything.

Our position should be clear. First all aid and support for the Soviet people suffering this disaster — and as we go to press the full scale of the disaster is still not known. Second no nuclear power — starting with no nuclear power here, the closing of Sellafield, no building of Sizewell, and the closing of *all* existing nuclear power stations.

**May Day greeting to all our readers**



## Europe's rulers cut and run

IT TOOK just six days, from Reagan's airstrike on Libya, for Western Europe's rulers to cave in. On Tuesday night the air was thick with muted condemnation. By Wednesday night the streets were full of demonstrators. But from Thursday onwards not a further word of condemnation of the USA's act of state terrorism was to be heard from a single West European government. And by Monday the conference of European foreign ministers had capitulated to Reagan's campaign.

A package of 'sanctions against terrorism' was rushed through and the Libyan diplomats started being unceremoniously rushed out of Europe's capitals.

Britain, of course, led the way by inventing a new crime — being born in Libya. It expelled, not just Libyan diplomats, but every Libyan it could lay hands on. But others were not far behind.

The French foreign minister took to the radio to explain that, though France had refused the USA permission to fly over its airspace, France was only really worried about whether the action might succeed or not. A stronger attack, he hinted, capable of dealing with Qaddafi, might well receive French support. France was at one with the USA in the 'war against terror'.

To appreciate the full extent of his cynicism remember that a year ago the French government, at the highest level, authorised a terrorist attack on the completely peaceful Greenpeace boat in New Zealand, and that the government of New Zealand has tried and jailed two French agents for this purpose. But most

cynical of all, the French government is now applying economic sanctions to New Zealand on the grounds that New Zealand is holding two of its agents for actions undertaken in the line of duty!

By Alan Freeman

Reagan took the hint. His Tuesday night 'winds of freedom' speech was the *direct result* of the European foreign ministers' meeting. Brandishing pictures of Nicaragua's Ortega and Qaddafi together, he announced to the waiting world that Nicaragua was, just like Libya, a centre of world terrorism. And, surprise, surprise, the USA would be justified in attacking Nicaragua in 'self-defence' just as it attacked Libya.

The European governments — aided and abetted by the 'Eurosociologists' such as Kinnock, Craxi of Italy and Mitterrand of France — have brought an invasion of Nicaragua two giant steps nearer by their capitulation. They have publicly proved what Reagan counted on — that when the USA goes in with its troops, whatever moans and groans might emerge, they will in the end do

nothing to stop it.

What has this week proved? Not just the abject amorality of the capitalist governments of Europe whose stand registers one and only one principle in international relations: 'might is right'. A second principle also follows. Because the USA is the mightiest, it is also the rightest! Reagan has achieved an important objective of his diplomacy, necessary to prepare the way for an invasion of Nicaragua. He has proved that whatever Europe's governments' objections, they will do nothing.

The *Guardian* for once got it right in its editorial of Thursday 24 April. 'Last week most European countries sat scowling on their haunches,' it said. 'They were promptly called cowards and appeasers. Monday... has seen swathes of Libyans packing their bags and going home.'

'In America, this flurry of activity is viewed with glowing satisfaction. The cowards are real cowards. Watch Ronnie turn up the gas, and they scuttle into line. A debate which might — by now — have centred on the wisdom of bombing Tripoli in the first place has withered on the bough as the allies run for cover.'

The *Guardian* forgets, however, that since Roy Jenkins returned from Brussels it has been the proudest advocate of a 'European alternative' to the USA. Well, where is the 'European alternative'? Where is the proud independence of Eur-

ope's capitalists from US imperialism? The *real* opposition to US imperialism has come from Europe's workers, youth, and peace movements.

The fact is that Europe's capitalists are rivals of the USA only in the struggle to hold down and smash up the third world. West European imperialisms, true, are in increasingly open rivalry with the USA. But this rivalry cannot be mistaken for an independent, peaceful alternative.

European capital is quite willing to resist US capital when it tries to take over European helicopter firms — but let the USA invade Grenada or bomb innocent civilians in Tripoli, and all we get is the most disgusting and hypocritical mumbblings prior to abject capitulation.

The working class, not capitalist governments, are the only force that will oppose imperialism — US or their own — in Western Europe.

## Thatcher grinds Reagan's axe

**PRIME MINISTER Margaret Thatcher used the opportunity of a radio interview last Sunday to make clear her full backing for the 'Reagan doctrine,' the**

By Annie Brady

name given to recent statements emanating from the US government that indicate its policy of using direct force against governments whose political complexions it doesn't care for.

Thatcher supported Reagan's package of measures against 'international terrorism' which he plans to introduce at the Tokyo summit next weekend.

She also indicated her possible future support for US military strikes against

other Middle East countries, such as Syria or Iran. Thatcher called on other governments to follow her example of stopping arms sales to Libya.

At the same time as Thatcher was broadcasting her readiness to follow behind whatever policy of state terrorism the Reagan government pursues, US secretary of state George Shultz was explaining to the US forces in Honolulu what these policies were. The United States, he said, planned to increase economic sanctions and to carry out 'covert actions' to bring down Qaddafi.

It became clear in the aftermath of the Libyan attack two weeks ago that Qaddafi himself was a prime target of the US air-raid. Clearly some US government forces are still considering alternative ways of pursuing that failed objective.

### A PIECE of the ACTION



## The next step for the peace movement

**REAGAN'S ATTACK on Libya is just the logical outcome of the rapid path of rearmament which the United States started on in the mid-1970s. The West European states have been openly complicit in that policy ever since the 1979 NATO decision to install Cruise and Pershing nuclear missiles in Europe — and the speeding up the conventional weapons programme in Western Europe which accompanied it.**

Initially the focus of the mass movement in Western Europe was against the missiles. This was right. The missiles were the weapons which were being placed in Europe. They were also a direct part of the United States war drive.

By building the mass movement against the missiles the labour movement in Western Europe placed itself in the best position to fight against all the effects of the US war drive.

This was seen at the time of the Malvinas war. The main opposition to

that war came from the left wing of CND. The same pattern was seen with the attack on Libya, when again CND led opposition to the war.

More directly the success of the United States and its West European allies in getting the missiles into Europe was a real defeat for the working class and all those in the 'third world' countries fighting imperialism.

The United States had two aims in its military build up. The first was a rapid expansion of conventional armaments for use against semi-colonial

countries. The second was a build up of nuclear weapons to put pressure on the Soviet Union — and more specifically on its bureaucratic leadership, to cut off aid to semi-colonial countries.

The events of the last weeks have shown how the United States gained a real victory with the ability to install the missiles in Europe. Every commentator has noted how the Soviet leadership failed to respond to the attack on Libya. Gorbachev has continued to subordinate everything to gaining an arms control agreement with the United States and Soviet criticism of the bombing of Libya has been muted in the extreme.

The present situation means the focus of the anti-missiles movement is also changing. Initially the United States concentrated on gaining the

strategic advantage of putting the missiles in Europe. It built up its conventional armaments but held back from using them.

The invasion of Grenada in autumn 1983 was the first time the United States was able since Vietnam to directly attack a semi-colonial country — although even here the issue was clouded for many people because of the criminal activities of the Coard gang in Grenada.

In these years the US was also undoubtedly concerned that if it moved rapidly against the colonial revolution, the anti-missiles movement in Europe would grow to uncontrollable proportions — and the US would suffer a tremendous defeat in Western Europe through inability to site the missiles.

With the attack on Libya, and the missiles now in place, the United States is moving to direct use of its military forces against those struggling for their freedom in the

third world. Libya was the first to suffer US attack. But the US's final, and most important, target is Nicaragua.

The so-called 'Reagan doctrine' now publicly proclaimed in the United States envisages using armed force against governments, or liberation movements, that the US does not like. The US is moving to an entire period of open military attacks on semi-colonial countries.

This means the peace movement has got to widen its activity and aims. It has to continue to oppose the missiles — and British nuclear weapons — but must extend itself to taking up every threat to peace — and in particular the US attacks on semi-colonial countries. That means opposing every single part of the British government's complicity with the United States. The campaign against the US bases is the key practical step in that.

It also means building within that a powerful current which opposes the US



threat to Nicaragua — and opposes NATO. Building and strengthening the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, linking it to the left wing of CND and growing opposition in the Labour Party to NATO, an open campaign against the US bases leading to Labour Party conference and

beyond, can aid everyone of these struggles.

By placing in the centre of politics the issue of the bases every aspect of Britain's relation with the United States will be called into question.

● Reagan's lies on Libya and 'terrorism', see p8.

## US Bases Out Campaign launched

**THE US BASES Out Campaign was launched last week at a meeting in the House of Commons called by Labour CND and attended by Labour Party organisations and campaigns. Those present included the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Labour Action for Peace, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the LPYS.**

The meeting agreed that the basis of the campaign is a drive to commit the next Labour government to throwing out all United States bases from this country. The meeting also agreed to hold a launch rally in London as soon as possible in May.

By Carol Turner

A model resolution, co-sponsored by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Labour CND, and Labour Action for Peace (and reprinted on this page), which calls for just that is being circulated for this year's party conference. Present policy only commits an incoming Labour government to removing nuclear bases: a policy which would have had zero effect on the US air-raid against Libya two weeks ago.

The immediate and devastating mass opposition which came in response to the United States bombing of Libya and the complicity of prime minister Margaret Thatcher, shows the possibilities which exist for mounting a campaign centered on the demand that all US bases must go. One opinion poll after another has recorded big majorities against the attack. Labour Party canvassers, on the doorsteps for the forthcoming local government elections, confirmed that — and so did the thousands who took to the streets to demonstrate in the immediate wake of the bombing of Libya.

Protests have been led and organised by activists in the peace movement, and joined by local Labour Party members and trade unionists, as well as Central America solidarity campaigners and Anti Apartheid Movement activists.

It is from among these activists that the biggest possible campaign can be built, the objective effect

of which will be not only to oppose the bases but to help confront the United States government with a serious obstacle to its war drive plans in Central America, the Middle East and elsewhere. If the Labour Party leadership were to campaign on the issue it would draw to itself the support of these broad sections of the working class and its allies. But so far Neil Kinnock and other parliamentary leaders have shown nothing but apologetic capitulation to Thatcher's backing for the Reagan attack.

Kinnock has called for economic sanctions instead of military intervention — as though the real criminal was Libya and not the United States. The Labour leadership has even supported the expulsion of Libyan students from this country who are being rounded up by the Thatcher government at this very minute. Kinnock has rejected all calls for the removal of all US bases.

The issue of the bases, and Reagan's attacks on Libya and Nicaragua is a vital issue and perhaps more than any other at this year's party conference, will drive a wedge into the support that the Kinnock and Hattersley have been building within the party over the past 12 months.

The basis of their 'unity' demand is that the party close ranks around its leadership, not around conference policies — or policies that serve the interests of working people. It is this drive, against the threat of losing the next election, that has allowed the Labour leadership to begin to drop one policy after another: on full



Anti-missiles demonstrators took to the streets to protest the siting of United States missiles in Britain early in the 1980s — a week ago they demanded US bases must go

employment, on the Common Market, on incomes policy, and so on.

The mood developing within the party, that no challenge to current conference policy can be developed before the next election, will be shattered

by the overwhelming sentiment in favour of throwing out all US bases which the Libyan attack has thrown up. It will contribute towards building the most powerful movement possible to help block the attack on Reagan's key target:

Nicaragua.

● For further details about the US Bases Out Campaign contact: US Bases Out Campaign, c/o Labour CND, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, London SW9 6HH.

### Model Resolution to Labour Party Conference

Sponsored by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Labour CND and Labour Action for Peace

Conference calls on the next Labour government to remove all US bases, including nuclear, conventional and communications bases from British soil and waters.

### Emergency resolution to Labour women's conference

Conference notes with alarm the attack on Libya by the United States government and the complicity of prime minister Margaret Thatcher who sanctioned the use of bases in this country from which this air raid was launched. Conference calls upon the next Labour government to remove all US bases, including nuclear, conventional and communication bases, from British soil and waters.

### Oldham demands 'Hands off Libya'

ON Saturday 26 April over 100 people marched through Oldham to demand 'Hands off Libya'.

The main mobilisation for the demonstration came from the Asian community. But it was also joined by CND, trade unions and anti-apartheid activists.

A rally afterwards was addressed by Glynn Ford (Labour MEP for the area) who drew out the links between Britain's backing US aggression and Thatcher's involvement in the Star Wars project. Phil Widdall of the NALGO na-

tional executive told the rally of his union's condemnation of the American attack and warned people of the need to oppose imperialist policy both in the Middle East and Central America.

A speaker from the Anti Apartheid Movement outlined British and American support for the apartheid government of South Africa. These were the real terrorists, the AAM speaker said.

The rally was also addressed in Urdu by members of the Pakistani People's Organisation and the Kashmir Liberation Front.





## Black Section youth plan student campaign

by Kingsley Abrams

FOLLOWING on the success of the black section campaign for the LPYS place of the Labour Party NEC, the black sections youth committee has decided to launch a major campaign amongst students aimed at winning support for black self-organisation and black sections, for the defence campaigns and for black people in struggle throughout the world — and a campaigning commitment from the NUS itself. The black section campaign in the LPYS was all about how it is crucial for the labour movement to win the support of black youth. This will only be done by supporting the struggles and demands of black youth and supporting alliances with black people through self-organisation.

# Campaigning on Broadwater Farm

ON 8 MAY one of the most important local government elections will take place in the Bruce Grove ward in Haringey — the ward that covers the Broadwater Farm Estate where an uprising against the police took place on 6 October last year. MARTHA OSAMOR is one of the Labour Party candidates for the ward. The others are Bernie Grant, leader of Haringey council, and Vince Gillespie.

Grant has been the subject of a vicious racist campaign in the media, and an equally racist local campaign by the Tories. LARRY HERMAN asked Martha Osamor about the campaign.

**WHAT are the issues in this election?**  
Racism and housing. There is no doubt that local people need and want better housing. But above all blacks suffer racism.

**Since last October, Bernie Grant has been the object of an intense and vicious media attack. How has that affected the campaign?**

I support Bernie and it is an asset that he is standing. He is supported by the black community and among those whites who have had brushes with the law — and, also, among those whites who understand that we want our own leaders.

The press can't keep saying 'Bernie, Bernie!' when it's an attack on all of us. The media not only attacks Bernie Grant, but the whole community. The way they talk about Grant is the way they talk about all black people.

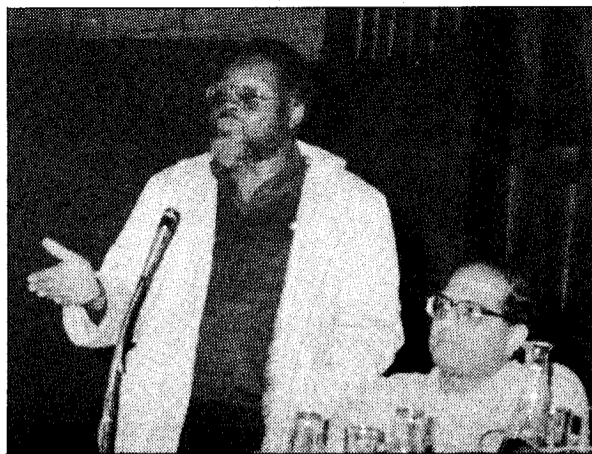
**What support are you getting from whites?**

As blacks we welcome allies. Anyone who supports our demands is an ally. But when the whites backed off — as many of them did after the uprising on the Farm last October — then they are not allies.

Some workers mobilised in a reactionary way against us after 6 October. People move when their interests are threatened and when you defend yourselves the establishment puts pressure on you. We're not saying 'throw stones every day', but we want everyone's support when we move. When we move and they don't support us they are not our allies.

**Outside of Tottenham and the black community where has your strongest support come from?**

Blacks have been screaming for years and everything we've said over the years is coming to be. You saw this with the miners and now the printers. As I said earlier, when you defend your-



Bernie Grant: vicious racist attacks from Tories

selves then the establishment puts pressure on you.

Our respect for the miners come from the days of the Grunwick strike. We've gone to mining areas many times. The miners are the kind of working class we look up to and want.

**What sort of election campaign has it been so far?**

We've been going to many

community meetings and talking to many people on the doorstep. The response has made us hopeful of victory.

The Tories have waged an overtly racist campaign. Some individuals from the National Front and other fascist groups have joined the Tory Party for more respectability and their tradition is being

taken into the Conservative Party.

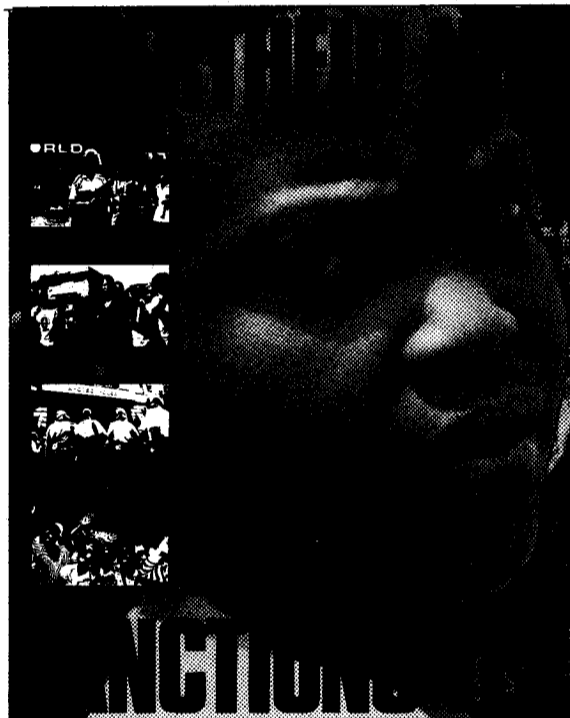
The local Tories are attacking gypsies in the area, but this is a cover for attacks on black people. The Tories say: 'send the gypsies out,' but they don't say where they will be sent.

The Tories don't talk about immigration laws anymore because these laws are as tight as they can be. They just say 'get them out', 'the day after the election we will get them out'. And they are talking about us of course.

**Do black people in Broadwater Farm see the Labour Party as an ally?**

Many black people, not in the Labour Party, come along and help us in the campaign. They are looking for supporters — any way of organising against their oppression. But the Labour Party should not assume that it is not racist. The Black Section will act as a conduit for taking our problem into the Party as a whole.

The Black Section will not be 'a dumping ground', but an arena for organisation as with the Women's Section and the Youth Section.



## Boycott Labour's 'Bantustan Committee'

THE LABOUR party leadership is continuing to insist on pushing ahead with its 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee'. The 'Advisory Committee', which is wholly appointed, was set up directly to head off the demand of black members of the party to elect their own representatives, and to form constitutionally recognised black sections.

The structure of the 'Advisory Committee' is in fact a caricature of the various 'native councils', and similar institutions, which were used by British colonial administrators in the days of the British empire.

The very idea of a committee appointed by an organisation overwhelmingly made up of white people, as is the Labour Party, believing they know best how the black community should struggle against racism, is a monstrosity — an attack on elementary democracy in the party.

Some of the individual members show the nature of such a committee. A person such as Roy Hattersley, with his notorious remark on 'my Asians', has no place on any body devoted to attacking racism. Even the name of the committee plays a decisive role — attempting to separate out 'Asians' and 'Blacks' when the Black Section movement has already insisted on uniting the black community.

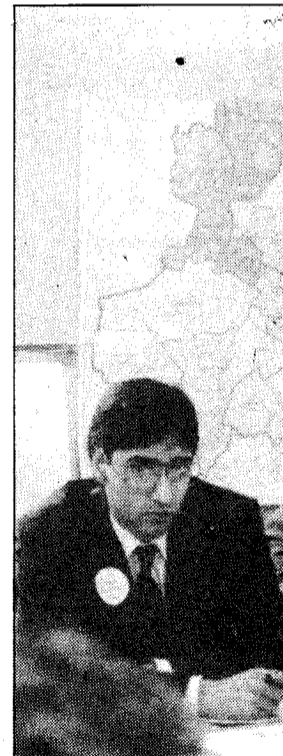
The Black Section National Committee, meeting last weekend, reaffirmed its call for a total boycott of the 'Advisory Committee' — a position adopted at the February meeting and reaffirmed at the Black section Annual General Meeting last month.

The resolution adopted by the National Committee called for all supporters

of the Black Section to break off all links with the 'Advisory Committee'. It extended previous black section positions to demand the withdrawal of all 'observers', and those with similar status, from the Committee.

The only form of committee which is acceptable in the Labour Party is one based on election by members of the black community itself — and that means accepting the constitutional existence of Black Sections within the party.

This racist and divisive committee must go and no members of the party should collaborate with it in any form.



Paul Sharma

## Black Section calls for inquiry into Sparkbrook

THE LABOUR Party Black Section calls for an immediate inquiry into the allegations of corrupt practices of Mr Roy Hattersley's supporters in Birmingham Sparkbrook Constituency Labour Party. The hard right in the constituency has been accused of delivering the parliamentary candidature for Mr Hattersley by massaging party membership figures and by the recruitment of non-existent members.

By Paul Sharma

Amir Khan formed a constituency black section. The social democrats in the constituency acted fast — Amir Khan was expelled. Kevin Scally, a leading member of the Labour Committee on Ireland, spoke out. Kevin Scally was expelled for his honesty.

The black community is the most disadvantaged section of society. Its true interests can perhaps only just be served by the radical proposals emanating from the genuine left of the party. Yet Sparkbrook constituency where the black population form nearly half of the residents, returns Mr Hattersley.

Mr Hattersley's position has been secured through the 'delegated godfather'. Handpicked community leaders, who are usually wealthy businessmen, deliver votes for their right-wing masters. Sometimes the votes represent real members — these 'real members' in many cases are alleged to have been

recruited en masse, allegedly often having their membership fee paid for them by their 'godfather'. At other times it is alleged membership forms are completed on behalf of people who do not exist but nevertheless are accounted for when their delegates vote. It was this that Khan and Scally exposed.

The Labour Party Black Section has always opposed expulsions from the party. We believe the purge against *Militant* in Liverpool is motivated by hostility to the politics of *Militant*. The National Executive Committee inquiry into Liverpool has concocted a half-baked case against *Militant* based on rumours and imagination.

The Labour Party Black Section states it can provide hard evidence of corruption, malpractice and manipulation by the supporters of Mr Hattersley in Sparkbrook Constituency Labour Party. We would welcome an NEC membership inquiry into Sparkbrook.

● From 'Witchhunt News'

**THE Black Section National Committee resolution on the 'Black and Asian Advisory Committee' is the following:**

'The National Executive Committee of the Black Section confirms our total opposition to the Black and Asian Advisory Committee agreed at our National Executive Committee of February 1986 and our annual conference of March 1986.

'We note that the Black and Asian Advisory Committee is based on a division of the black community and is therefore in total contradiction to the aims of

the Black Section in uniting the black community. We consider the members, supporters, observers, and those with any other connection with the Black and Asian Advisory Committee to be working against the interests of the black community.

'The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party Black Section believes that it is incompatible to hold membership of the Black Section and the Black and Asian Advisory Committee and therefore calls upon all black members of the party to abstain from any contact with the Black and Asian Advisory Committee.'



## News

# Labour Women's Conference: Women to challenge NEC

**WOMEN'S** conference this year looks set to put Neil Kinnock and Labour's NEC in a tight spot. After several years of campaigning for women's conference to have the right to elect the women's section of the NEC, this year women's conference proposes to get on and elect it any way.

Over the last months women's sections have been nominating the women that they would most like to see represent them, and they have come up with a very wide range of names. Twenty three women have been nominated by 65 local women's sections and one national trade union.

This high number of nominations guarantees the success of the elections at women's conference. It will be impossible for the party and trade union leaderships to claim that this does not really represent the views of Labour women.

Among the women nominated there are all those who have previously been supported by the Labour Women's Action Committee (LWAC) for the women's section of the NEC — Joan Maynard, Margaret Beckett, Clare Short, Diane Abbott and Frances Morrell. In addition there are women from 9 out of the 11 Labour Party regions.

Many of the women nominated are active supporters of LWAC itself, and include Mandy Moore, LWAC's national organiser.

The role of the Women

**By Jude Woodward,  
Labour Women's  
Action Committee  
Executive  
(personal capacity)**

Against Pit Closures movement in establishing the vital importance of women's self-organisation in the the labour movement as a whole is underlined by the nomination of Margaret Handforth, a national committee member of WAPC. The impact of black sections on all aspects of the party is marked by the nomination of three black women. In addition to Diane Abbott, Linda Bellos and Muna Al-Baldawi have been nominated.

The Labour Women's Action Committee decided at its annual meeting this year, not to support any



slate of candidates at the nominating stage of the elections. However, LWAC will be supporting a slate in the elections at conference itself, which it has arrived at by an individual ballot of its members.

Clearly the election of the 'NEC women's section in exile' will dominate women's conference. However, LWAC, and women's conference which supports LWAC's demands, has always seen the demand for constitutional change as a means to an end, and not an end in itself. The end women are aiming at is for their views on policy and campaigning priorities for the party to have real weight and influence.

Women's conference resolutions this year confront a number of crucial issues. As in previous years

a key debate will be that on Ireland, but this time with the additional element that women's conference looks set to reject the Anglo-Irish Accord. An amendment from Tottenham women's section calls for support for immediate and unconditional British withdrawal from the north of Ireland. If this is adopted, and there is a good chance that it will, this will be a dramatic step forward for the struggle for the right of Irish self-determination.

The Labour Women's Organisation has a good record of campaigning around democratic rights in the north of Ireland, particularly on the strip searching of women prisoners. Resolutions to conference propose that this is continued.

An important debate for the future of the Labour Party as a whole will be that around expulsions and the witch-hunt. Resolutions call for an end to the witch-hunt and the reinstatement of all those expelled. Two amendments call for support for the conference against the witch-hunt being organised by a number of CLPs and campaigning groups for 21 June.

The fact that the Labour Women's Organisation has the most advanced anti-imperialist consciousness of any of-

ficial section of the party is revealed again this year with the high number of resolutions against apartheid, and calling for support for the liberation movement in South Africa.

However, despite the large number of excellent resolutions on the agenda paper at this year's conference, there is one substantial absence, which unfortunately weakens the whole conference. There is no resolution confirming and continuing last year's support extended to Labour Party Black Section. Indeed the only resolution on the agenda paper dealing with racism and black people explicitly rejects black section.

An amendment deletes this opposition to black sections, and this should be supported, but the resolution as a whole is extremely weak. This weakness must be overcome next year by women working with the black section to ensure the issue is seen as crucially linked to the struggle for women's self-organisation in the Party.

As in previous years, women's conference looks set to throw down the gauntlet to Neil Kinnock and the party leadership. Women will reject Labour's support for the Anglo-Irish Accord, insist that the party campaigns adequately for sanctions against apartheid, and will reject totally the witch-hunt that is sweeping through the party. Most significantly of all, women will elect their own NEC women's section, and we will see how many of those women currently elected by the trade union block vote will be elected by women.

**The complete list of nominations for the shadow elections (followed by the number of nominations in brackets) is:**

Diane Abbott (12), Muna Al-Baldawi (1), Margaret Beckett MP (7), Linda Bellos (1), Joan Blackmore (1), Christine Crawley MEP (1), Kath Crosby (5), Irene Gilgallon (1), Margaret Handforth (1), Anne Henderson (1), Gill Jenkins (4), Helen Jones (1), Alice Mahon (1), Joan Maynard MP (4), Mandy Moore (1), Frances Morrell (2), Kate Phillips (2), Kathy Riley (1), Sarah Roelofs (4), Angela Reid (1), Theresa Russell (1), Clare Short MP (4), Pam Tatlow (8).

## Amir Khan appeal

**THE APPEALS** of Amir Khan, Kevin Scally and Mohammad Rafique against their expulsion from Roy Hattersley's constituency party were heard consecutively on 5 April by NEC member Ken Cure, with National Agent David Hughes taking the minutes.

When Khan and Scally asked why this unusual procedure was being followed they were told this would not necessarily be the same in future cases. They requested a copy of the appeal's recommendation to the NEC and were told that no recommendation to the NEC would be made but they would not be allowed to see a copy of the report.

The report is expected to go to the Appeals and Mediation Committee and full NEC in May. In the

meantime resolutions protesting against these expulsions of socialists for exposing malpractices and establishing a local black section should be sent to the NEC. The Labour Party black section suggests the following resolution:

This ... is appalled by the decision of the Sparkbrook CLP to expel from membership Cllr Amir Khan and Kevin Scally, both longstanding and respected members of the Labour Party. Cllr Amir Khan is a founder member of the Sparkbrook LP Black Section and Kevin Scally is a leading member of the Labour Committee on Ireland.

Such actions are likely to cause considerable damage to the Party's chances of victory at the next general election. This ... therefore calls upon the Labour Party to reinstate Scally and Khan.

## LCI Conference

The Labour Committee on Ireland annual conference met in London over the weekend 26-27 April. Debates centred on the response of the LCI to the new situation created by the Anglo-Irish Accord.

The view adopted by the conference was that: 'The LCI is totally opposed to the Hillsborough Agreement signed by the Tory government. In seeking to preserve British economic, political, military and social interests in Ireland through consolidating partition and escalating repression, the accord further delays a solution in Ireland which can only be found through unconditional military and political withdrawal of Britain.' The conference agreed on a series of steps to explain its position on the Accord in the context of continuing to develop its campaign against repression in Ireland and for British withdrawal.

LCI members rejected the view that the Accord had radically reversed the relationship of forces built up since the 32-county hunger strike campaign and the dialogue between Sinn Fein and sections of the British labour movement. They also rejected proposals that the LCI should now concentrate its work defensively against the Accord and adapt its magazine *Labour and Ireland* to work exclusively with forces in the labour movement sharing that analysis.

Instead conference recognised that the Accord was an attempt to stop the growth of Sinn Fein in Ireland and the growing pro-withdrawal sentiment in the British labour movement. But it has not succeeded. The decision of the National Union of Students conference for the first time to call for unconditional British withdrawal from Ireland; the debate on Ireland opening up in unions like the NUR; and the fact that even a section of the Parliamentary Labour Party is prepared to defy Kinnock's bi-partisanship — all show the true situation. The Anglo-Irish Accords is a dangerous attempt to defeat the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland by involving Dublin in policing the 6-county statelet. It aims to de-rail the movement for Irish self-determination. But it is wrong to conclude that it has already succeeded.

The LCI will therefore continue to look for every possible opening to link up with broader forces in opposing British rule in Ireland and building up a current that stands for self-determination and immediate British withdrawal. The new opportunities of working with the Labour Party black section, the Campaign Group of MPs and the student movement were stressed.

The proposals that the LCI should affiliate to the Labour Left Co-ordination was defeated after the meeting was addressed by LLC secretary Davy Jones, who explained that there would be no progress on any left policies in the party between now and the general election and that the LCI could only look to the hard left for support. This speech swung the uncommitted against affiliation and ensured that proposals to affiliate whilst preserving the LCI's autonomy were defeated. The LCI will maintain observers in the Labour Left Co-ordination.

The annual meeting also voted to oppose the witch-hunt and expulsions in Birmingham, Liverpool and elsewhere. It adopted an emergency resolution condemning the US bombing of Libya and the government's collaboration with it. Conference heard a series of guest speakers including the feminist writer Neil McCafferty and Francie Molloy of Sinn Fein, who was given a standing ovation. Peter Archer, speaking for Labour's front bench, tried to justify their support for Thatcher's Anglo-Irish Accord. For the first time there was an official delegate, Dennis Murphy, from the National Executive Committee of the NUM at the conference.

Conference heard speakers on the campaigns against strip-searching. A speaker from Irish Prisoners Appeal explained the barbaric conditions in which the six men and two women are being held on remand in Brixton prison, one charged with the Brighton bombing and the rest on conspiracy charges.

The speaker reported that the two women were being subjected to strip-searches three or four times a day. Given the policy of the Labour Party and TUC against strip-searches, a major task is to mobilise activity on the basis of that policy against strip-searching in Ireland and Britain.

Overall the conference maintained the LCI on its course of taking the fight for British withdrawal from Ireland deeper into the trade unions, the Labour Party and student movement.

## Justice for CLPs

**A MAJOR** item on this year's Labour Party conference agenda will be a proposal by the NEC to increase the proportion of votes at the conference for the Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs). But the NEC's proposals are based simply on the affiliation fees paid centrally to the party and would increase the CLPs proportion of the vote to 18 per cent. The NEC proposals, generally referred to as the Kitson proposals, however refuse to take into account the local part, 50 per cent, of the individual members affiliation fees — despite the fact that this is used wholly for Labour Party activity.

**CLPD** is therefore taking as one of its priorities at conference arguing for proper representation for CLPs. The following article presents the position of CLPD.

AT this year's Conference, delegates will have an opportunity to gain a larger share of the vote for Constituency Labour Parties. For many years CLPs have been demanding greater influence at Conference and at last the NEC is supporting them.

Earlier this year the NEC circulated to all affiliated organisations a constitutional amendment which it intends to put to Conference and which would give CLPs some 18 per cent of the total Conference vote. Honiton CLP submitted a constitutional amendment on Conference Voting in 1985, but, in

accordance with custom and practice, it will be brought before Conference this year. The Honiton amendment would give CLPs some 30 per cent of the vote.

It is essential that the Honiton proposal, together with any constitutional amendments submitted in 1986, be taken alongside the NEC's and not given the usual treatment of being left on one side. Our 'model' resolution has been worded to ensure that this does not occur. Conference should therefore be able to choose from a number of options rather than be faced with a single

'take it or leave it' proposal from the NEC.

The case for giving CLPs a greater voice at Conference is very strong. The proportion of CLP votes at Conference has declined steadily (in 1945 it was over 16 per cent; now it is about 9 per cent). The present system gives affiliated members (who each pay the Party an affiliation fee of 70p) exactly the same vote as individual members (whose national affiliation fee now stands at £4.30). In the past the two affiliation fees were roughly the same. Thus the existing system had some financial justification. Now that a wide gap has opened up between the two, this excuse has gone. CLPs now provide some 30 per cent of the Party's total income from subscriptions and affiliations as against 70 per cent from the unions who have some 90 per cent of the total vote at Conference.

The derisory vote which CLPs have at Conference in no way reflects either their financial or political contribution. It is their continuous work which puts the Labour Party into government and keeps it there.

Some opponents argue that an increase in the CLPs' vote would undermine the link between the political and industrial wings of the Movement. The opposite is the case. An increase in the vote of CLPs will encourage trade unionists to take a more active part in CLPs so as to influence their decisions. This would lead to greater mutual understanding. A bigger vote for CLPs would also eliminate the current bitterness they have when faced by their total insignificance at Conference.

### CLPD resolution

Conference welcomes the NEC's support for the principle of giving CLPs a fairer share of Conference voting strength, and also welcomes the NEC decision to submit a constitutional amendment to this Conference to give CLPs some 18% of the total vote.

Conference notes that Honiton CLP submitted a constitutional amendment to the 1985 Conference which would give CLPs about 30% of

the vote, and that this amendment is coming before Conference as part of the NEC Report.

Conference instructs that this constitutional amendment and any others on this subject which have been submitted to the 1986 Conference should be moved and debated alongside the NEC's proposal, so that Conference can make its choice from the full range of options which have been put to it.





Black women workers in the 1982 health workers dispute

## Black workers and the unions

EVERY STUDY has found as one would expect, that black workers in Britain are more highly unionised than whites. A survey for 1982 found that 61 per cent of black workers in Britain are in trade unions compared to 57 per cent of white workers. Two years later the Policy Studies Institute, in 1984, found that 56 per cent of black workers were in unions compared to 47 per cent of whites.

But despite the fact that black workers show a higher degree of support for unions than whites, are confined by racism to jobs that are highly unionised, and despite the urgent need to combat racism in the whole of society, the failure of the TUC to take up the fight against racism, its active collaboration in racism, and its failure to take up the needs and demands of black workers, form one of the most disgraceful and recurring threads in its history. It is matched only by the refusal of the Labour Party to respond to the needs of the black community on which it relies so massively for votes and to recognise Black Sections.

Despite the massive unionisation of black workers, and the need to fight racism in every sphere of life, there were no moves at all by the TUC until the 1970s to deal either with racism within the unions or black self-organisation within them. In 1965, for example, a TUC official could still declare: 'There are no differences between an immigrant worker and an English worker. We believe that all workers should have the same rights and don't require any different or special considerations'. In 1971 the TUC in its evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee claimed absurdly: 'we treat all our members the same'.

Not merely was such a position no way to fight institutionalised racism but it was demonstrably untrue. In both 1965 and 1971, despite the TUC's claim to 'treat all our members the same', there was not a single black trade union official in the whole of Britain. TUC affiliates had in the past supported totally explicit racist laws — such as the National Union of Seamen's support for the Special Restrictions (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order of 1925. The TUC as a whole had campaigned in favour of the racist immigration laws and had opposed laws introducing anti-racist measures into the field of employment and industry. The TUC hotels committee has made a completely central campaign one to keep out 'immigrant' workers.

At long last in 1972 the first ever full time black trade union official in Britain was appointed. But by 1983 still only eight unions affiliated to the TUC, out of more than 100, had even one full time black official.

The same situation of institutionalised racism exists at every other

level of the unions. The 1984 PSI study *Black and White Britain*, for example, found that black and white workers attended trade union meetings in almost the same proportions — 40 per cent of black and 40 per cent of white union members had attended some form of union meeting in the last six months. But only 4 per cent of black male trade unionists had held office in the union compared to 11 per cent of white male trade union members. Only 3 per cent of black women trade unionists had held union office compared to 6 per cent of white women trade unionists.

A detailed study in Lancashire in 1985, *Trade Union Structures and Black Workers Participation*, found that there was not a single black full time trade union official in the whole of Lancashire. This is despite the fact that 8 per cent of the population of Manchester, and 12 per cent of the population of Blackburn, for example, is black. An exact study of companies found the same pattern of racism at every level.

A survey of a rubber manufacturing plant found that 27 per cent of the 250 workers were black. However not one out of the eight shop stewards was black.

A survey of the foundry section of a heavy vehicle manufacturer found 19 per cent of the workers were black, but only 1 out of 9 shop stewards was black — and that one was for a section which was almost exclusively black but where the one skilled job was held by a white.

The only place of work surveyed where there was a major representation of black workers — a transport firm — was also the one where black self organisation had developed in response to racist attacks.

Thirty per cent of the workers in the company were black but white workers had consistently voted down all black workers presented for election to the TGWU branch committee. Black self-organisation, in the form of an 'Employees Welfare Association', had then been formed when the branch secretary refused to read out at a social evening the names of Asian workers who were to be presented with safety awards on the pretext that he 'could not pronounce their names.'

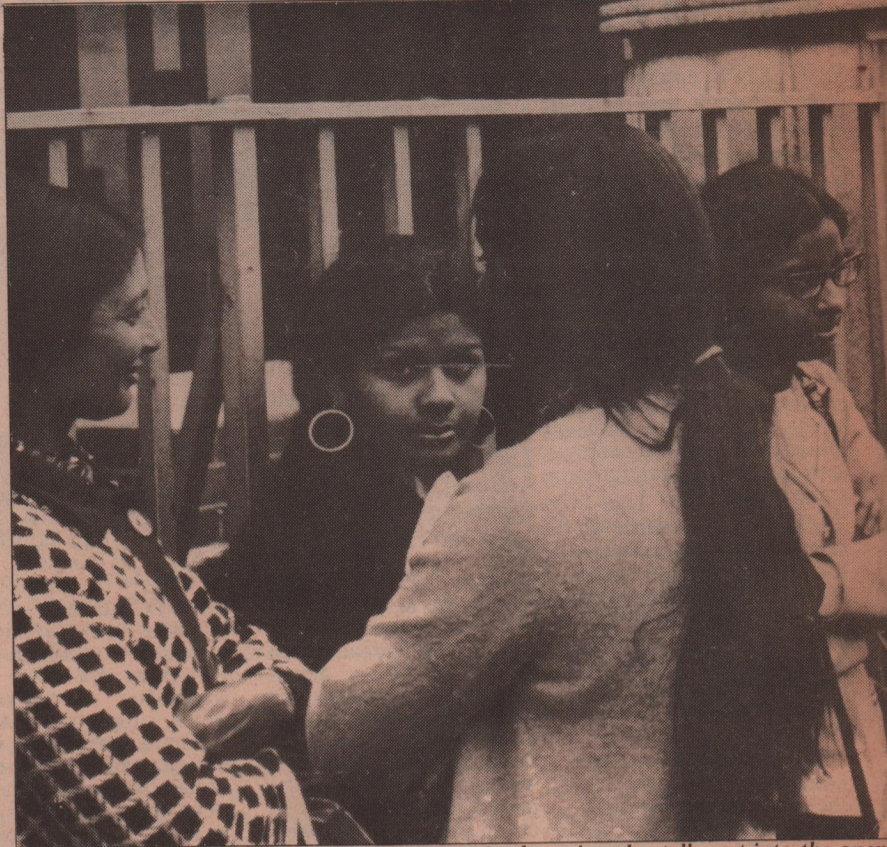
A united welfare committee was formed only after the white workers' representatives agreed to the demand that a written apology for the actions of the branch secretary should be posted on the notice board and that he should resign his post. The secretary of the black workers committee was first co-opted onto the branch committee and then elected — to become the first black branch committee member — at the next election. After further struggles by 1984 six out of ten branch committee members were black, and three out of ten inspectors who were employed were now black workers.

Given this pattern of racism at every level of the unions every fight by black workers necessarily has involved a clash not only with the employers but with the situation in the unions as well. It is solely this that has ever produced a change of policy by the TUC.

# RACISM and

IN 1984, for the first time, the TUC Congress adopted a formal position in favour of black self-organisation in the unions. The 1984 Congress resolution on racism stated that the TUC: 'will encourage affiliated unions to set up appropriate structures, eg Race Equality Committees and Black Members Groups to coordinate unions work on racism.' As the 1986 trade union conferences get underway the fight to transform these TUC words into action also started.

At the NUT conference 42 per cent of votes were cast in favour of black self-organisation in the union — against the opposition of the executive. The NUJ conference unanimously passed a resolution stating: 'Chapels should be encouraged to give support to black members in organising in caucuses in line with TUC policy.' LAWRENCE DREW looks at some of the studies of the long history of racism and default by the TUC.



Imperial Typewriters dispute brought racism in the unions brutally out into the open

## The fight against racism

THE FIRST nationally prominent strike specifically by black workers was at Courtauld's in Preston in 1965. Despite a large black workforce only one shop steward at the Courtauld's plant was black — and there was no formal relation between the black membership and the union committee at all.

### Shift

But it was the key struggles in the early 1970s by black workers at Mansfield Hosiery Mills and Imperial Typewriters in Leicester which brought the racism in the unions out into the open and for the first time forced a verbal shift in TUC policy. In both strikes white fascist and racist organisations were directly involved in organising white scabbing committees, and a brutal state of racism in the unions was revealed.

These struggles were decisive because a chill fear began to be felt even by the trade union bureaucracy that the situation had become so extreme that black breakaway unions would be created. The official enquiry into the Mansfield Hosiery strike — and into the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers (NUHKKW) which organised the workers there — stated that continued exclusion of black workers from all positions in the unions: 'could result in the alienation of immigrant (sic) members to such an extent that they might feel the need to enlist the support of alternative organisations or to break away completely and form a union exclusively for immigrant workers.'

As with the inner city rebellions of 1981 and 1985 it was not 'guidance' and patronage from above, but only action from below, that smashed even a beginning of sense, and even purely verbal adherence to what needed to be done, into the heads of the trade union officialdom.

As already noted, until the beginning of the 1970s the TUC refused to give even verbal adherence to the needs of black workers. Instead it had been directly involved in promoting racist laws and policies such as the Immigration Acts. It also opposed the introduc-

tion of any legal anti-racist measures into the field of employment and industry.

The eruptions which led to the Mansfield Hosiery and Imperial Typewriters disputes however forced a verbal change in emphasis by the TUC. It remained committed to the racist immigration laws but it began to make certain verbal and tactical concessions to black workers and the fight against racism. By the mid-1970s the TUC had established an Equal Rights Committee with a 'subsidiary' Race Relations Committee. This, needless to say given the nature of the trade union bureaucracy, was a wholly appointed body with no element of democratic election whatever.

The TUC however still did not give any directions for action — or even pass any resolutions at Congress. The TUC continued not even verbally to acknowledge racism in the unions until 1981.

### Charter

In June 1981 however the TUC was forced to issue its *Black Workers Charter*. This was given urgency for the TUC by the explosion of the inner city rebellions three months earlier. The Charter declared in its opening sentences: 'Trade unions cannot just talk about equal opportunity they must be seen to be taking active steps to make it a reality. As a first step they should examine their own procedures and structures.'

This 'self-criticism' for the previous decades of racism however was given no teeth whatever. It did not even mention black self-organisation. The entire document was completely bland and aimless.

Ken Gill, moving the adoption of the *Black Workers Charter* at the 1981 Congress, declared it 'demands the removal of direct and indirect discrimination at the workplace; more it demands that trade union themselves look at their own structures and organisation, and break down the barriers within the unions, to advance to decision-making bodies, to executives and to officialdom. If in your industry or your occupation there are no blacks, why? If there are no black lay or full-time officers in your organisations,

why? If there are no black activists, why? All those questions have to be asked within our movement.'

### Solemn

Gill solemnly declared that the TUC was going to mend its ways and that: 'media critics were very cynical. They simply said that our Charter is just words. We insist that it is not just words.'

The TUC's position, however, did turn out to consist chiefly of words. A follow up by the TUC itself a year later, after all the solemn declarations of the congress, found that only 12 unions, out of more than 100 affiliates, had taken 'some action with regard to race relations matters.' It found that the great majority of affiliated unions had taken no action, 'even of a limited type' eg articles in the union journals.'

One delegate from the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) to the 1982 Congress summed up the situation one year after the adoption of the *Black Workers Charter* very well: '(the General Council) report states that some unions held race relations conferences, established advisory committees, issued statements and so on.'

'What does this mean in effect? A small number of unions are already carrying out their commitment of a year ago. However, there is little evidence of increased activities at shop floor and branch level or in the recruitment and promotional opportunities at union headquarters.'

'As to the conclusion that the general level of activity between unions has increased, let me say that if you start from nothing than anything is an improvement.'

A survey carried out by the Labour Research Department in 1983, that two years after the *Black Workers Charter* was adopted by the TUC found that still only nine unions, out of more than one hundred, had issued positive statements against racism and had set up bodies to monitor these policies. Only one union, the GMBATU had held national meetings and conferences, 'on the implication of policies passed by conference.' As we have already noted only eight unions even by 1983, had even a single black full time official.



# the TUC



## The GLC survey

By far the most thorough recent study of the position of black workers in the trade unions was that carried out in 1984 by the GLC by the GLC Anti-Racist Trade Union Working Group. As this study was carried out three years after the adoption by the TUC of the Black Workers Charter, and provides the background to the 1984 TUC resolution, it is worth looking at in detail.

The GLC study was comprehensive — gaining official responses from unions representing six million workers out of the ten million trade union members in the TUC. Significantly the two biggest unions which in practice refused to co-operate in the study on racism were the big two right wing craft unions — the EETPU and the AUEW.

The EETPU refused outright to give any answers on its policies on racism and the AUEW stated it would reply through an interview. But then, in the words of the survey, 'despite numerous efforts the appropriate officer could not be contacted (!)'

If the EETPU and AUEW were the worst — together with COHSE, the situation was not much better with other unions.

The UCW declared in its reply that: 'We have no anti-racist policy.' It stated that no 'trade union referrals' had been made at all concerning racism in the union. The UCW official interviewed however declared that there were many 'coloureds' (sic) who were members of the union, and that the entire situation confirmed his view that there was no problem of racism in the UCW!

The NUR official replying for the union declared that: 'Most of the questions in the questionnaire appear to me to be irrelevant to the situation in this union as all of our members have equal opportunity and there is no discrimination against any member for any reason whatever... Have we adopted an anti-racist policy? The answer to that question as it is phrased must be "No".'

The NUR stated: 'No particular encouragement is given to members of black and other minority groups to participate actively in the union's activities or to play a leading role in the union.'

The NUR however declared it had 'issued propoganda inviting foreign nationals employed in the catering depart-

fecting women particularly.' It stated it had no special provisions for black women 'but we do have a Women's Advisory (Committee) nationally and in the London division. Most members of the Race Relations Advisory (Committee) in London are ethnic minority women.'

The GMBATU had held a regional conference, issued publications, negotiators handbooks, and had an officer designated 'to include Race Relations matters amongst his other duties.'

The ACTT ran schools or seminars on racism. It had established a black sub-committee of its Committee on Equality. The four day shop steward training courses run by the ACTT had a half day devoted to equal opportunities.

The NUT also ran schools or seminars on racism. It had held a number of 'racism awareness courses' at the union's training centre with the aim of enabling participants to run their own workshops locally. It had two black members co-opted to serve on its working party on Multi-Ethnic Education. As already noted 42 per cent of votes at the 1986 NUT conference were cast in favour of black-self organisation in the union, despite the opposition of the executive.

TASS stated it 'operates a Positive Action Programme for appointing officials with ethnic backgrounds, or females, to the union. Divisions regularly give advice on positive action programmes.' No figures on the success, or otherwise, achieved were given however.

ASTMS had established a Race Relations Sub-Committee through its NEC in 1978. This had organised several conferences. It had an active race relations sub-committee in the London division. The NEC had also agreed the setting up of a Race Relations National Advisory Council based on divisional representation and this Council held its first meeting in January 1984. Its members, however, were mainly white. In 1982 the union conference voted to instruct the NEC to instruct the union to operate as an equal opportunities employer. But two years later the union still did not know the ethnic composition of its own employees.

The NUJ had established a Race Relations Working Party. However the union operated internal institutionalised racism. It claimed that 20 per cent of its employees were black. However on investigation every single one was found to be in a low level clerical job with little chance of promotion. The union at its 1986 conference however took a significant step forward when it unanimously voted that: 'Chapels should be encouraged to give support to black members in organising caucuses in line with TUC policy.' The union also elected a black vice president, Lionel Morrison.

NALGO, which has by far the highest experience of self-organisation by black members of any trade union, was looked at in a special article in Socialist Action of 18 April. It was amid constant pressure by black NALGO members that the union proposed the successful resolution to the 1984 TUC Congress which included the position that the TUC 'will encourage affiliated unions to set up appropriate structures, eg Race Equality Committees and Black Members Groups to coordinate unions' work on racism.'

But despite a major fight in a union such as NALGO the overall situation in the unions remains dreadful. A study in 1977 noted, in very understated language, that 'the minority communities have hardly penetrated the full time staff of the unions at all.' In 1984 the GLC survey found: 'we have yet to discover a union that has in its organisational structure black and minority group officers/executives, male and female, that is anywhere near their proportion as members of the union.'

The survey also found: 'no union had an officer designated to work entirely with the position and circumstance of the union's black and minority members, or to deal with issues affecting the union's position on racism more generally, that is, relating to affairs outside the union.'

'We found no equivalent of a race relations officer such as exists in a number of local authorities.'

## Fighting for the 1984 Congress resolution

THE situation revealed by the 1984 GLC study was a disgrace. Nine unions — ACTT, ASTMS, GMBATU, NALGO, NATFHE, NUJ, NUPE, NUT and TASS — had taken some, but inadequate, measures to fight racism inside and outside the union. These unions had a membership of 3,344,000.

Ten unions — the Bakers Union, CPSA, Musicians Union, NGA, NUR, NUTGW, TGWU, UCW, and UCATT — were prepared to state what their policies were on racism but had essentially taken no serious organisational or political steps to combat it within their ranks. These unions together had a membership of 2,443,000.

Thirty three unions — including such major ones as APEX, ASLEF, BIFU, CSU, Equity, FBU, IPCS, ISTC, NAS/UWT, NUM, NUS, NCU, SCPS, SOGAT, TSSA, Tobacco Workers Union, and USDAW — did not state/would not state what policy they had, if any, on fighting racism. Between them these unions has a combined membership of 3,833,000.

### Affiliated

In other words only one third of TUC affiliated unions had taken any steps to implement anti-racist measures, twenty five per cent were prepared to state that they had taken no serious anti-racist steps, and forty per cent couldn't even be bothered to state what their policy on racism, if any, was. All this was three years after the TUC had solemnly adopted a *Black Workers Charter*.

Furthermore the stronger 1984 Congress resolution is still not being implemented rigorously by the General Council after it was adopted. Speaking to the TUC conference on 'Trade Unions and Black Workers' on 6 July 1985 Norman Willis tried to avoid giving clear support for black self-organisation in the unions and — as in the 1970s — showed that the key motivating fear of the TUC was that extremes of racism might lead to breakaway unions. He said of the statement presented to the conference:

'The conference document — like the 1984 Congress resolution — raises a further key issue: that of black members groups. Some unions already have groups of black members who meet to discuss their special problems. They try to act as a caucus — American style — on union policy and activity. It will happen in other unions soon. 'We need to consider very carefully

our attitude to such groups. As Ken Gill (chair of the TUC Race Advisory Committee) told the 1984 Congress — handled wrongly, they could be the germ of breakaway black trade unions. Handled right they can contribute to the effectiveness of the union.'

Despite the words of the 1984 resolution Willis said: 'At present we are not recommending unions to establish such groups. But equally we are not asking unions to see unofficial black members groups as an automatic threat to the union's constitution. If black members feel that unions do not care about their problems, they will turn to other organisations.'

As with the Mansfield Hosiery Mills and Imperial Typewriter disputes in the early 1970s, as with the inner city rebellions of 1981 and 1985, it was not a genuine struggle to fight racism in every aspect that has moved the TUC leadership. It has only been an unremitting struggle by black workers that has forced the trade unions to shift in the fight against racism.

Fighting to support black self-organisation in the unions — without which socialist theory and all experience shows no successful struggle against racism can be conducted — must be today right at the top of the list of priorities for socialists and activists in the trade unions. Together with the interlinked establishment of Black Sections in the Labour Party they are the necessary condition to shake the labour movement to its foundations — and smash the virus of racism which gnaws at its very heart.

### Organisation

There have been advances in that struggle. The election of Lionel Morrison in the NUJ, the selection of Bill Morris in the TGWU, the black Labour parliamentary candidates who have been selected for the first time in safe Labour seats, are all real gains for black people — and because of that for the entire working class. But the struggle is not about a few individuals — individual successes are a means to an end.

The fight is for the liberation of the entire black community and the complete destruction of every aspect of racism. No possibility exists of success in that struggle without black self-organisation throughout the labour movement. Acceptance of that right is the sole basis on which the left, and indeed the entire labour movement, can cooperate with black people.

That fight is at the very core of any alliance for socialism in Britain.



Demonstration against racist murders in 1978



# Reagan's lies on Libya and 'terrorism'

RONALD REAGAN has been claiming that he carried out his attack on Libya because of that country's support for 'terrorism'. Many people have already pointed out that this is an absurd lie as the United States itself is the number one terrorist regime in the world — most openly with its support for the Nicaraguan contras.

But Reagan's lie can also be exposed from another angle. United States hostility to Libya, and attacks on it, started long before the recent attacks in Europe which were seized on by the US as a pretext for its bombing raids. The US has been hostile to Libya ever since the revolution of 1969 which overthrew the reactionary regime of King Idris.

Last week we looked at Qaddafi's place in the rise of Arab nationalism. This week GREG ADAMSON looks at 17 years of continuous US aggression against Libya.

'BEFORE Qaddafi seized power in 1969,' said US President Ronald Reagan, explaining his bombing raid, 'the people of Libya had been friends of the United States.' The US president failed to explain how he measured that friendship. A look at Libya before the revolution of 1969 makes it clear enough, however.

In the good old days, Libya was host to the USA's Wheelus airbase, from which the 1960 airborne 'United Nations' intervention in the Congo was launched. In this operation, the US used the mantle of the United Nations to bring about the murder of Congolese nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba.

Additionally, Libya allowed US and European oil giants to exploit its oil reserves, providing a quarter of Europe's oil at prices way below the world average.

All in all, throughout the 1960s and particularly after the 1967 Middle East war, Libya looked like one of the United States few friends in the region.

Relations between the United States and Libya have gone through three phases since World War II.

During the war, US troops were stationed in Libya. In *Libya: The Evasive Revolution*, Ruth First writes: 'By the end of the war, the United States had spent 100 million dollars on developing Wheelus airfield, on the outskirts of Tripoli. It was the first American airbase in Africa.'

When the former Italian colony was given independence in 1951, it became the third independent African nation, after Liberia and Ethiopia. This reflected diplomatic manoeuvres rather than the strength of an independence movement, however, and the newly independent monarchy relied heavily on British and US handouts.

The country's major exports were scrap metal from old weapons, and grass for paper manufacture.

While not helping the Libyan people, this dependent independence made the country an ideal target for mineral exploration, and following the discovery of oil in the 1950s, full-scale exports began in the early 1960s.

Knowing nothing of oil, Libya's ruler, King Idris, brought in company advisers, who put in place a pricing arrangement substantially inferior to that of other oil-producing states.

## Ideal

The low price of Libyan oil, its guaranteed availability to the European market, and its low sulphur content in an increasingly pollution-conscious world, combined to make Libya the ideal oil supplier to Europe. By the late 1960s, a quarter of Western Europe's oil came from there.

Both the US and Britain competed to supply expensive armaments to the Middle East oil-producing countries as a way of soaking up their oil revenues. In 1968, Britain won an order to install a complete missile air defence system in Libya.

Worth more than a billion pounds, it was the largest missile system order ever won by a British firm, and the most valuable export deal of any kind.

## Opposition

At the same time, internal opposition to King Idris began to emerge. This was directed against the presence of foreign military bases and the growing expenditure on military hardware.

To help its friends in the Libyan royal family, the United States offered to 'leave'. Ruth First quotes the official record of the episode: 'The United States government affirmed its adherence to the principle of withdrawal which enabled formulas to be found which permitted King Idris and the Libyan government to

allow us to continue our use of Wheelus Airfield Base.'

The 1 September, 1969, overthrow of King Idris by Colonel Muammar Qaddafi opened the third stage of relations between the two countries. Firstly, the huge weapons contracts were dumped. Secondly, foreign powers were asked to withdraw their military bases. Thirdly, Libya took on the giant oil companies and in 1970 forced them to substantially increase payments for Libyan oil.

## Results

This third move was to have the most dramatic results. It led to revitalisation of the oil producers' groups, OPEC. In *The Seven Sisters*, an authoritative account of the world oil industry, Anthony Sampson quotes one OPEC official as follows. 'The Libyan success was an em-

barrassment to other OPEC countries. It rendered further silence almost impossible.'

Following this early dispute between Libya and the oil giants, the oil companies later adopted a new response to OPEC price rises, seizing the opportunity to massively increase their own prices and profits.

Nevertheless, Libya had displayed independent economic initiative out of keeping with the US (and West European) ideal of subservient Third World raw materials suppliers.

Two other Libyan government measures also angered the United States. In contrast to the former Libyan policy, and that of other oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia, under Qaddafi much of Libya's large oil income was redirected from funding a small elite to funding social and economic development.

## Health

This includes a literacy campaign in the early 1970s, general improvements in health and education, and an ambitious agricultural programme aimed at irrigating large desert areas from huge underground water reserves.

At the same time, Libya has undertaken an aggressively independent foreign policy, which on important issues has challenged European and US domination of the region.

In addition to his consistent opposition to Israel, Qaddafi has taken action against the continued French military presence in central Africa.

Libya poses an additional problem for United States military planners. Attempts at economic sabotage have proven useless, and unlike some major oil producers, Libya's current

oil reserves would last 50 years at current rates of production.

In 1973, after Qaddafi threatened to cut off exports to the US because of its support for Israel, President Richard Nixon threatened economic measures against Libya. Nixon appeared on television to warn the Libyans of the dangers of a boycott of oil by Libya's customers, reminding them of the experience of Mosedeq in Iran 20 years before.

In that case, the United States had economically strangled an independent government before finishing it off with a CIA-organised coup.

Qaddafi has managed to avoid this fate, in part because of the changed international climate. Nevertheless, the United States has continued to harass Libya, hoping to develop sufficient internal or external pressure to cause the government's collapse.

## Embargo

Five years ago, in 1981, Washington imposed an embargo on imports of Libyan crude oil. Late last year, this was extended to refined products. Now, Reagan is pushing another economic attack. He is attempting to get US oil companies like Occidental, Conoco, Marathon and Amerada Hess to abandon their interests in Libya.

This is unlikely to have much effect, as Nocias Sarkis, editor of *Arab Oil and Gas*, pointed out in the February 1986 issues of the Paris-based monthly *AfricaAsia*: 'If they were to abide by the White House directive and pull out of the country right away, Libya would probably have no trouble in replacing them, unless there were a widespread international boycott, which is unthinkable, any more than it had difficulty in coping with the withdrawal of Exxon in 1982, and Mobil in 1983 or, come to that, the departure of British Petroleum, Bunker Hunt and the others Libya nationalised in the 1970s.'

The stagnation of world oil prices in the past three years has led to a drop in Libyan currency reserves available to meet its balance of payments deficits. It has also brought some cuts in government spending.

But Libya enters this period of economic difficulty without long-term debt, with substantial reserves, and with a population that has drawn considerable benefits from the higher prices of the past decade.

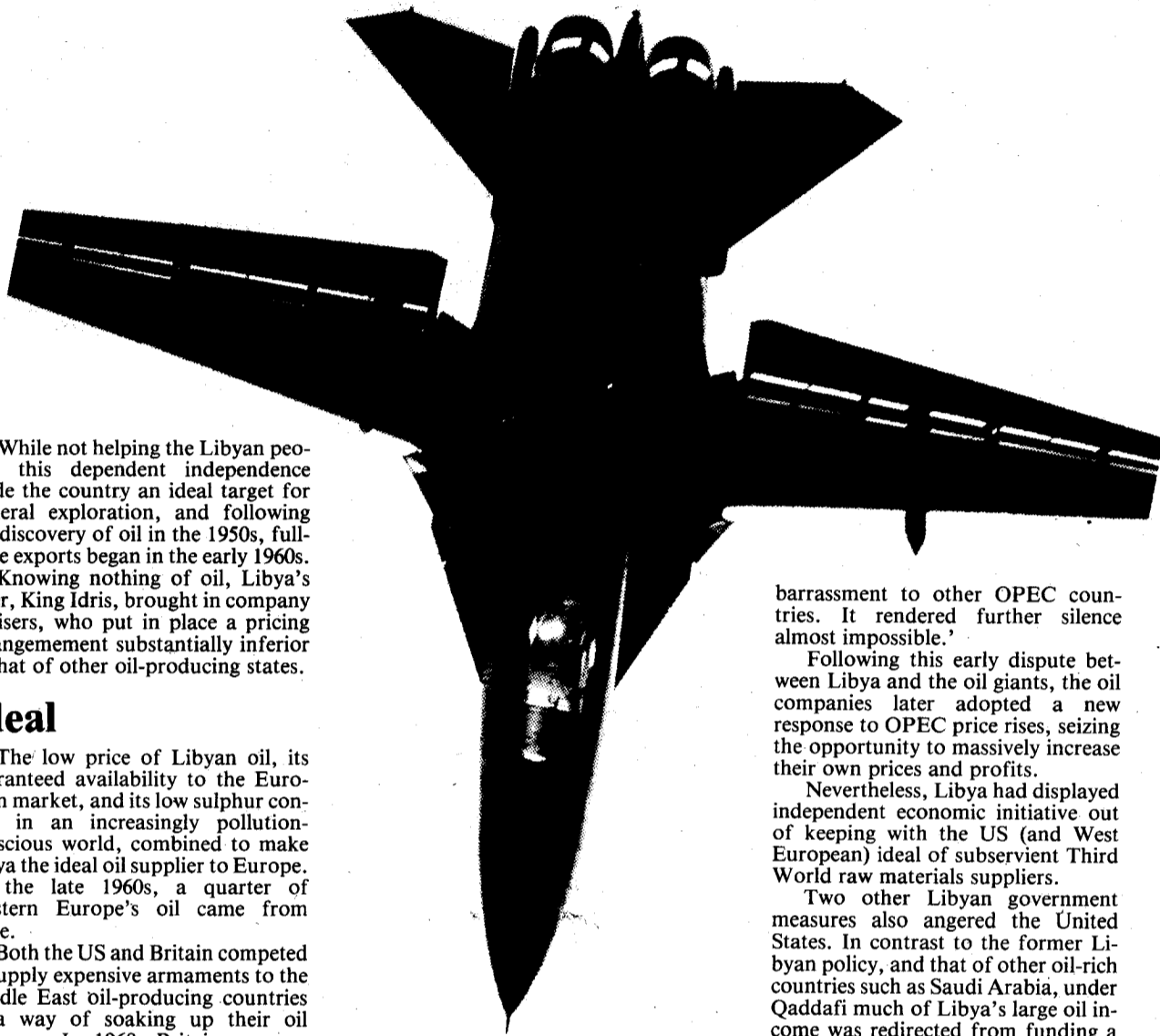
## Bleed

Libya's problems will be tiny compared to those of countries such as Mexico, Nigeria, and Indonesia. In addition, unlike the other oil-rich former US ally, Iran, Libya has a far smaller population to feed (three million compared to 40 million), and hasn't been bled by a long and costly border war.

The US administration is today on its most aggressive interventionist path since its defeat in Vietnam. Support for contras in Nicaragua, Angola, and Mozambique, increased military threats to Indochina through an arms build-up in Thailand, and even direct military intervention such as in Grenada and Lebanon, have increased tensions around the world.

Following the failure of the US economic attacks on Libya, the current military attacks are part of an effort to make military solutions an accepted part of international politics. In the Middle East, the bogey of 'Libyan terrorism' has been used to overshadow the plight of Palestinian victims of Israeli military aggression.

The attacks on Libya also send a message to any Third World country that might want to take its own independent stance: no matter what part of the world is involved, US bombers and warships are within striking distance.



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After the attack on Tripoli



# U.S. threatens direct intervention in Nicaragua

The United States is moving closer than ever to a direct attack on Nicaragua. The most public sign of this was Reagan's declaration last week that Nicaragua was a 'terrorist state' — and after Libya everyone knows what the United States does when it claims 'terrorism' is involved.

The accusation of 'terrorism' is of course even more ridiculous in the case of Nicaragua as it is the United States which is financing one of the biggest real terrorist operations in the world against that country with its open support for the 'contras'. But in addition to the verbal threats United States forces are now operating right up to the Nicaraguan border. CINDY JAQUITH reports from Nicaragua on the increasing US military pressure on that country and the response of the FSLN.

'We are now facing a Vietnamisation of the struggle in Central America,' Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega told a news conference here on 28 March. By sending US helicopters, piloted by US military personnel, to the Honduran-Nicaraguan border area, said Ortega, the Reagan administration has taken concrete steps that directly commit US troops in support of the mercenary contra forces attacking Nicaragua.

He warned that if this leads to a US invasion of Nicaragua, not only many Nicaraguan youth, but many US youth as well will die.

The news conference was held the day after the US senate approved \$100 million in military aid to the mercenaries. This continues to be discussed by the US Congress as a whole.

While sharply condemning the vote, Ortega stressed that 'this is not the most serious thing. The most serious act is the use of US helicopters piloted by US pilots which have been used to move troops

of the Honduran army to the edge of the border with Nicaragua, a border area that is in extreme conflict, that is extremely tense.'

Taking up the charge that the Sandinistas had invaded Honduras in March, Ortega explained the actions of Nicaraguan troops. 'There have been no battles between Honduras and Nicaragua,' he emphasised. 'Rather, there have been battles between our army, defending the sovereignty and integrity of Nicaragua, with the mercenary forces who had their camps in Honduras and are trying to penetrate our territory.'

The day before, Nicaragua's Ministry of Defence had released a communiqué reporting that Sandinista troops had dealt 600 casualties to the contras, 'at several points in Honduran-Nicaraguan border territories.'

'Our troops also destroyed several camps of importance to the enemy, including their principal training centre,' the Defence Ministry said, 'and put out of action

some means of transport including one helicopter.'

The Sandinista daily, *Barricada*, called the operation 'the principal military blow to the counterrevolution in the last few years.'

And, Ortega said, with the official introduction of advisers and helicopters in direct support of the contras, 'what the US Congress is doing is committing itself to a policy of intervention in Nicaragua.'

Ortega appealed to the US government to open talks with Nicaragua to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict, and reported that the Sandinistas had urged the Contadora and Lima support groups to intervene. (The Contadora Group is made up of the governments of Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela, and seeks a negotiated settlement in Central America. The Lima Group, in turn, supports the Contadora nations in their efforts, and is made up of Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay.)

'We are prepared to have a dialogue with the United States,' said Ortega, over matters of security and the war in the area. 'What we are not prepared to discuss with the US government — or anyone else — is our internal situation, the kind of political, social, and economic regime we have.' These questions, he said, are being decided by the Nicaraguan people in upcoming open hearings on the country's draft constitution.

Nor, he said, would the Nicaraguans accept Reagan's demand that



Women members of Nicaragua's reserve battalion on the Honduran border. 6,000 have died in contra attacks.

they negotiate with the mercenaries. 'We will never have a dialogue with them,' he asserted.

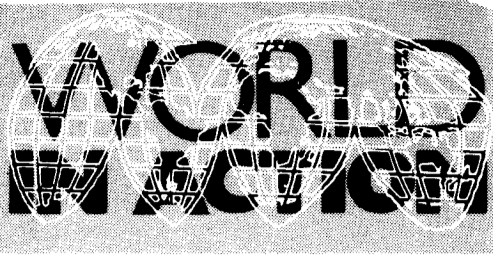
'Honduran territory, or a part of it, has been occupied by the mercenary forces,' answered Ortega. 'That is, Honduras has lost its sovereignty over a part of its territory. The mercenaries launched their attack (from there) against Nicaragua and thus the area has been converted into a zone of war. The US government and the CIA are robbing Honduras of its territory and giving it to the mercenary forces.'

'The mercenary forces, advised by the US government, are the ones crossing from Honduran territory into our territory to assassinate our people; to destroy the people's property, schools, and health clinics; to assassinate

children and women. Our forces are doing nothing more than defending themselves in the border area. We are violating no principles. The one who is violating the principle of sovereignty is the United States.'

He pointed out that the Nicaraguan commanders of the contra mercenaries have insisted all along that their bases are in Nicaragua. The Honduran government 'has denied that mercenary camps exist in Honduras,' he explained.

Ortega repeated that Nicaraguan troops would continue defensive operations in the border area 'so that the mercenary forces don't advance one single inch into our territory.' If US helicopters 'attack us, if they penetrate our territory, they will be shot down.'



## El Salvador

Duarte's regime is in serious difficulties. A new, broad popular opposition has emerged including organisations which supported him in his bid for the presidency and have now moved into opposition. The UNTS (National Union of Salvadorean Workers) with some 300,000 members, has held two large demonstrations and called a general strike last Thursday, demanding a solution to the economic problems facing workers, and a peaceful end to the war.

The UNTS includes, notably, the UPD (Democratic Popular Union) which not only supported Duarte in the past but entered a form of 'social contract' with him, and was set up by the AFL-CIO. On 21 February the UNTS held a demonstration of 80,000, and on 3-5 April a public forum 'in defence of the workers' which was supported by the Agricultural Co-operatives and the Association of Small Business people.

Duarte has responded by stepping up repression against the unions. On Wednesday 16 April his troops attacked and seized the San Salvador headquarters of the UPD.

## Anti-Reagan demos

MORE NEWS on world opposition to Reagan's attack on Libya: in Athens more than 100,000 took part in demonstrations demanding the removal of US bases and condemning the raid. In Italy demonstrations of several thousand took place on Wednesday and Saturday. On Wednesday all universities and secondary schools came out on strike in Rome and in Milan.

In Vienna a demonstration of 400 on the Tuesday of the bombing was banned and attacked by police because 'they hadn't been given notice,' and 22 arrests were made. But the next day around 3,000 came out, and again on Friday. In Dublin 500 marched from Parnell Square to a rally at the GPO where they were addressed by John Doyle, outgoing president of the Union of Students of Ireland, Danny Morrison of Sinn Fein, Abdu Sharif of the Libyan students and Eamonn McCann.

## Mexico

New figures from the US Immigration and Naturalisation office reveal that 1,200,000 Mexican workers were arrested and deported for crossing the border illegally in 1985. In January 1986 131,495 had already been arrested, 53 per cent higher than the same figure for 1985.

The reason for the rapid growth in attempted emigration from Mexico lies in the catastrophic economic crisis brought on by its debt burden and the collapse of oil prices.

## Pakistan

Around 70,000 people demonstrated on 4 April in Karachi on the seventh anniversary of the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Crowds burned effigies of Zia ul-Haq and his prime minister Mohammed Khan Junejo. This was the third major anti-government demonstration since martial law was lifted in 1985. All have been organised by an 11-party front called the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) which is campaigning for Zia to call elections. The past elections, in February last year, were boycotted by most opposition parties because of the restrictions imposed on them. Parties cannot become legal unless they agree not to criticise the armed forces and support Islam.

## East Germany

Two fourteen-year old school students were arrested and held for three weeks for circulating a draft programme in their school calling for a 'genuine socialist party.'

# Haiti: eight dead in protest

EIGHT PEOPLE died and dozens were injured when Haitian army troops fired on a demonstration in the capital, Port-au-Prince, last Saturday. The demonstrators, over 10,000 in number, were marching through the city following a memorial service for political victims of Baby Doc Duvalier.

Since Duvalier was driven out on 7 February the three-person junta



General Namphy

which replaced him has been on a collision course with the Haitian people. It is headed by General Henri Namphy, himself appointed army chief of staff in 1984 by Baby Doc Duvalier.

The Haitians are conducting what they call *operasyon dechoukay* — 'operation uproot' — a battle to destroy every vestige of Duvalierism. Responding to a call from the catholic Radio Soleil, a centre of opposition under Duvalier, they have set up neighbourhood committees in many areas. They

are rooting out former Tontons Macoutes — members of Duvalier's hated personal militia.

The unions are pressing their demands. CATH, the Independent Federation of Haitian Workers, is blossoming. A battle is under way for official use of the Creole language, spoken by the vast majority. There is an increasingly strident demand for elections to a civilian government to replace the junta, and for a constitution.

A series of exiles are returning: Serge Gilles, leader of the Union of Haitian Democratic and Patriotic Forces (IFOP-ADA); Rene Theodore, secretary of the Unified Haitian Communist Party (PUCH); Colonel Octaee Cayard who led a failed revolt against Francois Duvalier in 1970, and many others. Their statements and press conferences on return are provoking widespread political debate.

The government is resisting or marking time.



Slogans on Port-Au-Prince wall reads 'government should cut all prices. Long live democracy'

The junta claims it wants 'order'. In fact it wants to ensure that Haiti's wealthy classes do not lose the privileges they held under Duvalier. And it wants to protect the US interests on which they depend.

The theoretical minimum wage is \$3 a day. In fact, of the 50 per cent of the working population who have a job, earnings average \$130 a year. According to 1974 statistics, out of 129 Third World countries, Haiti was 127th in calorie consumption and 129th in protein consumption.

At the beginning of

April a congressional delegation visited Haiti, headed by liberal democrat Walther Fauntroy. 'How lucky you are in Haiti,' he said, 'that you have in power the interim government of General Henri Namphy. I am certain that he is an honest man. He deserves your confidence and support. I urge Haitian people to back the army high command during the coming critical days and months.' For some strange reason, it seems as though the people of Haiti don't quite see it the same way.



# Reviews

**SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR**, who died in Paris in April, was one of this century's greatest French writers and philosophers. But her writing had a particularly enormous impact for women. Her book *The Second Sex*, written in 1949, was 20 years ahead of the rise of the modern women's movement. **ROBYN MARSHALL** looks at what effect Simone de Beauvoir's work has had for women.

SIMONE de Beauvoir died on Monday April 14 in a Paris hospital. She was 78 years old. De Beauvoir was a leading theoretician, philosopher, distinguished journalist and inspired novelist who was passionately interested in politics all her life. But she will be remembered by millions of women all over the world for her brilliant insights on the feminine condition in her second book, *The Second Sex*. It was a pioneering work without parallel offering understanding and hope.

It was the first feminist book I read, some time in the early '70s. But it was so fresh, real and relevant to my experiences I never suspected it had been writ-

ten in 1949. The German journalist Alice Schwarzer interviewed De Beauvoir about the reaction of French society when the book first came out. It is a lesson in courage, determination and perseverance as the book was reviled by intellectuals and radicals alike.

Francois Mauriac, later to win the Nobel Prize for literature, immediately wrote to a journalist colleague of De Beauvoir's saying 'I have just learned a lot about your employer's vagina.'

Albert Camus, existentialist and novelist told her, 'You have made a laughing-stock of the French male!' French professors threw the book across the room as they

# Simone de Beauvoir

couldn't bear to read it, recalled De Beauvoir. When she went into a Parisian restaurant, accompanied by male friends, people would stare as she was generally reputed to be a lesbian. People thought a woman who dared to say such things simply couldn't be 'normal'.

Some even went so far as to say that Jean Paul Sartre, her life long companion, had written the books, not her.

'Even the Communists tore me to shreds. They accused me of being a "petite bourgeoisie" and told me, "You see, what you are saying really doesn't mean a thing to working-class women in Billancourt (a working class district of Paris)" — which is completely and utterly untrue. I had neither the right nor the left on my side,' explained De Beauvoir.

Through her books and her own life, De Beauvoir showed us we can and must throw off our slave mentality. She never married, didn't set up house with Sartre and

never succumbed to the pressure to have children she didn't want. She built a life for herself different from her strict Catholic middle class upbringing. With a few close friends and dozens of acquaintances life was never lonely or dull. Her work was all important and a central part of her life.

In 1971 with the rise of the radical women's liberation movement, she lent her support. In Catholic France, abortion was illegal. De Beauvoir worked on an abortion manifesto making public that she and hundreds of other famous women had had an abortion. The government passed a new law in 1975 permitting abortion in the first 10 weeks of pregnancy.

At the end of *The Second Sex*, De Beauvoir said she was not a feminist because she then believed the problems of women would be automatically resolved by the arrival of socialism. But she changed her mind as time went on, seeing the need for a separate organisation of women to fight specifically

on women's issues.

'We realise that simply altering the means of production is not sufficient to transform society, to transform people... Even in socialist countries, equality between men and women has not been achieved. Therefore it is absolutely essential for women to take their destiny in their own hands.'

But although she believed the women's struggle was unique, she rejected the total repudiation of men. She felt women had to struggle against the social system but it had to be linked to the struggle women have to conduct along with men. She cautioned women in their relationships with men so that their talents and potentialities weren't swamped. 'Women don't want to be granted equality; they want to win it, which is not the same thing at all.'

For generations of women, Simone de Beauvoir represents a towering model of intellectual honesty, integrity and strength.

# Fighting for a weekly paper

**SOCIALIST ACTION** costs £250 more per issue to produce than we realise in sales or receive in donations from our readers. This deficit was made worse by the split which took place last autumn, when some of Socialist Action's editorial board members decided to go off on a sectarian policy and launch their own alternative journal.

## By The Editor

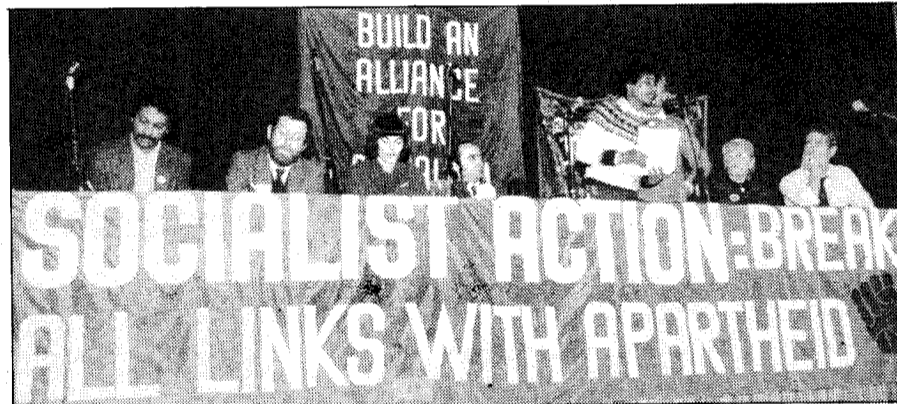
To raise money to defend the weekly production of our paper we launched a £15,000 fund-drive to be completed by Whit-sun. So far we have reached £12,566. But that isn't enough to bridge the gap — and, not surprisingly, there are no banks or financial institutions prepared to give unlimited credit to papers like ours pledged to fighting the system they uphold and profit from.

In its early years Socialist Action was run on a huge deficit. Now we do not intend — and can't

— continue to operate that way. It would endanger the long-term appearance of the newspaper. Therefore, if we do not raise the £250 a week needed to bring the paper out we have no choice but to miss an issue.

Over the next 10 weeks, unless we make our fund-drive targets, we have been forced to cancel four issues. They are the ones due to appear on 7 and 30 May, 13 June, and 4 July.

We know that the non-appearance of these issues of the paper will seriously affect our readers. We are publishing these dates in



advance so that you have a financial — and political — target to aim for: each £250 raised over our normal income will reinstate an issue of the paper.

Socialist Action's appearance, or non-appearance, affects the whole of the left. Our paper has built up a record of defending those in struggle: the miners, women, black self-organisation in the Labour Party — a record which is unparalleled by other papers on the left.

In the last two weeks alone we have been campaigning flat out to defend Libya against the attack launched by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, and we are fully involved in the campaign to remove all US bases from Britain.

In fact another left

paper paid us a back-handed compliment last week. It accused Socialist Action of being based on 'knee-jerk anti-imperialism'. It was a charge which that paper funnily enough regarded as a vicious attack, but one to which we frankly plead guilty! In a country with the longest and bloodiest record of colonial plunder in the world, we took it as a compliment.

So, for more 'knee-jerk anti-imperialism', get your money into Socialist Action. There is no need to miss those issues. For every £250 we raise over and above our regular income, we will restore one issue of the paper. If we make the entire £15,000 by Whit we will not have to miss any at all.

By presenting the finances of the paper

openly and above board we hope that our readers will see the seriousness of the situation we face — and that we can maintain a weekly Socialist Action.

We ask all our readers to make a contribution to the paper and to discuss during the next week how they can raise the money so that we do not have to miss a single issue of Socialist Action. It can be done!

Thanks to our supporters in Newport for the £59.34 contribution, and we would like to remind all our supporters that the most important source of funds for us of all is regular weekly and monthly contributions.

So please consider filling in the Bankers Order form we print on this page.

To give regularly to support a weekly Socialist Action please fill in the form below and send to your bank.

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# INSIDE THE UNIONS

**PORTSMOUTH HEALTH** workers have been in dispute with their health authority since 13 January over its refusal to stop buying South African goods. One of those workers **ANDREW LAVENDER** of NUPE visited Leeds during the anti-apartheid trade union week of action. **PAUL HODGKINSON** of Leeds NUPE spoke to Andrew about the dispute.

**AFTER** a resolution opposing apartheid was passed at the TUC conference last September it came before our district shop stewards committee and we agreed that there was a need for action. We then approached the health authority with a view to changing their buying policy of South African goods. However the authority argued that it would not 'discriminate against the country of origin'.

So we won support for a boycott in the stores. We were fully supported by the health service drivers. We refused to unload lorries with South African goods. When management unloaded them, we responded by forming pickets outside the store for the rest of the day on which it happened.

Management stopped our bonus and hired contract drivers. Fortunately our hardship fund received massive support and we were able to make up the wages of those affected.

We appealed to a committee of the health authority on 3 March, but while we were giving evidence the chair, who boasted of his connections with South Africa, fell asleep. The appeal was dismissed and members were so disgusted by this attitude that they decided to hold a two-day stoppage in the Portsmouth district to highlight the issue.

After we returned from the strike on 6 March we were locked out. Later scab labour was brought into the stores. Then the two main hospitals in Portsmouth were put on red alert, with a ban on all non-emergency operations. We felt then we were in danger of losing some of the public support we had gained, and we negotiated the return to work.

This involved some staff being allowed not to handle South African goods for a period of two months in return for the withdrawal of the contractors and no victimisation. At the end of this period, on 12 May, management will ask us to resume normal work and the usual disciplinary procedures will apply. We have been using this period to lobby for support from other parts of the country and to try and get boycotts in other health districts. A number of districts have been approached by the union and have agreed to change their buying policy.

Our NUPE full-time officer has given us full support from the start. We've also had support from Rodney Bickerstaffe and the NUPE executive, but we are also pushing for the union to approach all employing authorities, local authorities as well as health authorities, and call on them to change their buying policies if they include South African goods.

The response to the hardship fund was marvellous and we've had lots of messages of support. But what we really want is more action from other parts of the country.

The Parliamentary Labour Party put down an early-day motion in the Commons supporting our action and we've also had support from the Labour group in Europe. We need a commitment from the Labour leadership to make this issue a priority and prepare for when Labour gets into power. Its anti-apartheid policies must be put into effect and not left on the shelf as happened in previous years.

Our action has overcome the doubts of some workers and showed that action can be taken by trade unions. It has had an impact. Whatever happens to us after 12 May, the important thing is that it has raised consciousness on this issue. Hopefully that will lead to much more widespread action against South Africa.



# No wage controls!

ONE OF the most serious developments going on behind the scenes at the Scottish TUC conference were the open moves towards wage controls by Ron Todd, general secretary of the TGWU, and John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMBATU.

Labour's economic policy has been openly moving towards incomes policy in a series of speeches by Kinnock and Hattersley, but this is the first time it has been openly discussed by leaders of two of the most important unions.

Todd spelt it out initially as follows in talking about wages. 'If you want to see a Labour government in power, restoring the economy and getting people back to work, there has to be a form of discipline exercised by us. It is not going to be all grabs for the first two years.' He added: 'we have to accept that there will be some measures of responsibility and self-discipline in the way that we see the way forward.'

Edmonds swept away the lessons of the catastrophic experiences

of the wages controls used by the 1964-70 and 1974-79 Labour governments — claiming unions had learnt from the Thatcher government.

'We now know how much money is available, and we know these priorities are very expensive, but they are very important for us as a civilised society. The unions know this very well indeed. In the last three or four years we have learned quite a bit.' He spelt out his views: 'there are not many groups which will get much sup-



Photo: GM COOKSON

Todd: 'responsibility and self-discipline'

port for the idea that the reduction in unemployment should take second place to an extra percent on wages.'

Edmonds listed unemployment, public spending on infrastructure, and an expansion of welfare spending as Labour's three

main priorities. He said: 'I accept that they don't leave a great deal of room for substantial improvements in sectional claims from the whole movement.'

Kinnock spelt out the significance of Todd's words immediately, and took them up at the conference. 'When the leader of the TGWU says that', stated Kinnock, 'it is a very clear and precise definition of the understanding that exists.'

Kinnock declared that Labour's priority was cutting down unemployment, and that: 'when we say that we are putting employment as the cutting edge of the next Labour government, everybody understands that there are going to have to be attitudes, practices, agreements that enable us to

make the first claim on resources the claim of investment, training and employment.'

He said there was now a 'common sense understanding' between the Labour Party leadership and the unions regarding 'income rises that they can expect to claim.'

While wage controls were carefully kept off the formal conference agenda, the STUC was in fact used as a launching pad for a campaign for incomes policy. Todd and Edmonds put forward positions which have never been endorsed by their union.

Members of every trade union have to step up the campaign to completely reject incomes policy/wage controls as part of the policies of a future Labour government.

## STUC conference avoids key issues

THE STUC was held this year in Aberdeen from Monday 21 April to Friday 25 1986. This year's congress was publicly a very low key affair with an unparalleled degree of unanimity on most issues. The general council managed to have all but a very few of the most contentious resolutions withdrawn — including one from Edinburgh Trades Council opposing witch hunts and expulsions.

Most of the large composites pledged only formal opposition to current Tory policies in the private and public sector, on the welfare state and national health services, and on nuclear armaments — calling upon the next Labour government to renationalise those concerns privatised, expand social services, and cancel nuclear arms programmes.

An emergency motion moved by the general council condemned the US attack on Libya as 'a threat to world peace', called unequivocally for the removal of all US bases — nuclear and conventional — from the UK, and for the setting up of an international forum to discuss the problems of the Middle East. This was carried unanimously.

A further emergency motion by SOGAT '82 provided the sharpest debate of the entire congress. This motion deplored the EETPU's involvement in recruiting scabs at Wapping and Kenning Park, and called urgently for all affiliated unions to support the pre-

sent boycott of Murdoch titles. But it stopped short of demanding industrial solidarity or mass support for the pickets.

By Jim McGrory, NUR delegation member (personal capacity)

In a courageous speech supporting the motion an EETPU member dissociated the majority of rank and file EETPU members from the present union leadership's scabbing on the print workers. Running the risk of expulsion from the EETPU, and therefore sacking from his job, he praised the role of the Broad Left organisation in the EETPU in 'challenging the leadership, restoring democracy in the EETPU, and purging the contempt of our union.'

The motion was carried overwhelmingly and Tony Dubbins of the NGA called for mass support for the 3 May demonstration in support of the print unions.

A motion from Aber-



Printworkers lobby the Scottish TUC

deen Trades Council allowing the STUC women's conference to submit motions directly to congress was lost overwhelmingly. One of the speakers in this debate opposed 'special privileges for any group'. The congress was attended by 560 delegates of whom only 74 were women — showing the very high degree of 'special privileges' enjoyed by women in the TUC! Neil Kinnock address-

ed the congress on Wednesday afternoon and gave a very low key speech which did not mention the Liverpool enquiry or the current state of the print dispute. Predictably he attacked the Tories over their handling of Libya (he called for economic sanctions instead of bombing!) but gave only the vaguest pledge about what a future Labour government might do with the US bases. He received a standing ova-

tion from some, but by no means all, the delegates. Clearly there are still some on the left who view Kinnock's role in the party with distaste.

On South Africa the conference did not break new ground — although it reaffirmed all existing policies. It however gave its opinion of apartheid decisively by voting to invite Winnie and Nelson Mandela to attend the next STUC!

## Fords victimisation

THE FIGHT for reinstatement of a sacked woman worker in Ford's Dagenham assembly plant has been lost — due to sabotage by TGWU district official Steve Hart. The woman's union branch, TGWU 1/1107, and the plant shop stewards committee had destroyed the company's case for dismissing her — allegedly for not declaring her degree — and proved her sacking was anti-union victimisation. In particular, it was shown that her former employer, British Telecom, kept blacklists of union activists which could be passed to future employers.

As a result of this her section voted overwhelmingly to walk out on indefinite strike on Monday 21 April when the company failed to reinstate her at the final appeal. There was also unprecedented

sympathy action in the corresponding area on the nightshift.

Nevertheless, without any move by the company to lift the sacking, the district officer and convenor agreed to recall the



section on Tuesday morning. At this meeting convenor Joe Gordon repeated company lies against the woman and stated that the action would not be made official despite a 'failure to agree' having been registered at the final appeal.

Using the lack of official backing as an excuse, Gordon advised a return to work. Yet a fortnight earlier the shop stewards had unanimously agreed to fight for action by the woman's section regardless of Hart's attitude. Stewards, branch

officers and the numerous Labour MPs who backed their case had recognised that fundamental issues of civil liberties were at stake and wanted to directly challenge victimisation lists.

Following Tuesday's return to work the assembly plant stewards met in emergency session and voted not to allow Hart back into the plant until he started supporting the union position. The 1/1107 branch will be pursuing the matter both within the TGWU, and with the National Council for Civil Liberties and the other unions intimately hit by victimisation lists — particularly in British Telecom.

## AUEW keeps right

THE ANNUAL policy-making body of the AUEW, the national committee, met in Eastbourne last week, prior to the announcement this Tuesday of the results of the ballot to decide the union's next general secretary.

Jordan beat Broad Left candidate John Tocher by 119,220 to 95,511 — a big improvement in the left's share of the vote.

By Carol Turner

Against the background of a serious decline in membership, the delegate meeting confirmed the control of the union's right wing. While closures and redundancies have undoubtedly affected the engineering union's membership, this decline also has much to do with the short-sighted policies of its right wing executive, which has given no lead in the battle to save jobs.

The committee came within five votes of reversing the AUEW's wage control policy, and voted in favour of pursuing a four-hour cut in the basic 39-hour working week — but without backing this up with plans for action to secure the improvement.

By 68 votes to 53, the annual committee called for the expulsion from the Labour Party of those who 'persist in having associated with the publication *Militant*'. This was followed up on the Friday of the week-long committee by the exclusion of a *Militant* journalist. Chair of the standing orders committee, Ben Graham, moved the ejection on the grounds that the paper was 'extremist', and linked it to throwing out a *Sun* reporter earlier in the week.

## Cardiff postal strike

CARDIFF post office has recently attempted to victimise two leading union militants, to weaken the local union branch for a big rationalisation plan.

Fifty thousand jobs are to go nationally, 20 per cent locally. The current strike developed around the attempted sacking of Jimmy Quigley, assistant secretary of the Cardiff uniform branch of the UCW.

The 1000-strong UCW branch held a meeting on Sunday 20 April to discuss this victimisation. They decided overwhelmingly to fight, through an overtime ban leading to all-out strike action.

By Tuesday afternoon,

as the union moved to strike action, the branch delegation to the district council reported complete solidarity within the South East Wales region. Picket lines were set up at the Cardiff depot, comprising many enthusiastic young postal workers. Just 30 scabs went to work.

The strike grew as support workers spotted Cardiff mail and refused, as promised, to handle it. Threatened with suspension all 350 walked out. Officers from Barry and the valleys have followed suit.

On Wednesday afternoon Jimmy won his appeal unconditionally. However, on returning to work, management insisted on three 'reforms': an increase in non-union casual labour, unlimited sorting diversions without union agreement, and an increase of labour 'flexibility'.

The Newport and Cardiff depots rejected these measures and agreed to a joint front to deal with such offers. Approaching 4000 postal workers in South Wales are now on strike. Each day the picket lines grow and the scabs diminish.

The strike is still unofficial, run by the democracy of mass meetings. Delegations to the picket lines are welcome.

● Further information and messages of support to: Strike HQ, Bronte Hotel, 160 Newport Road, Cardiff.

## Rail against apartheid

By Doreen Wepler 'WORKERS IN South Africa who want a peaceful future need to join COSATU, the new union federation. United through COSATU and through community organisations workers are today participating in the liberation struggle.'

'They are adding their voice to the spirit of defiance which is sweeping through our people. These were the words of Mbesi Mefazi when he addressed last week's meeting called by Rail Against Apartheid (RAA).

This successful meeting — attended by over 40 members of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) and a handful of activists from the drivers' union ASLEF — marked the AAM's trade union week of action. RAA was set up on a London basis in March to bring together railworkers who are disgusted with apartheid rule, and our government's full backing to it, and who want to do something about it through their union.

Geoff Revell, NUR member of the RAA who chaired, outlined the projects of Rail Against Apartheid. 'We have a new banner being made and we hope to get the biggest response possible to the Freedom March called by the AAM on 28 June. A few days after, we'll be holding a fringe meeting at the national conference of our union. Then we'll have a meeting of activists to work out the next stage of our work.'



# A Socialist ACTION

## 28 June — build South Africa's Freedom March

# MAY DAY - WAPPING DAY



Saturday night pickets display a stark image of the man who sacked them

**ROBERT MURDOCH**, boss of News International, has given the print unions till 7 May to respond to his gimmicky offer of the *Times* Grays Inn Road premises, plus £15 million in compensation to the sacked workers. Trades unionists have a big opportunity to help the printers find the strength to reject this offer by mobilising in their thousands in support on May Day and on Saturday 3 May.

By Brian Grogan

The lack of determined support from the rest of the labour movement is strengthening the hand of those like Brenda Dean, who want to throw in the towel at Wapping. But the national union officials are facing stiff opposition from the rank and file leaders.

The mothers/fathers of the chapels representing the sacked workers have rejected the national leaderships proposals to Murdoch which would have excluded the print unions from any direct representation at Wapping. This followed the joint clerical chapels 'rejecting totally' the sell out deal being offered by SOGAT nationally. (See last weeks Socialist Action for details).

Meanwhile, pickets at Wapping are getting more organised. Last Friday, over 200 members of SOGAT clerical branch managed to surprise the police and for the first time get to the main gate. They turned away coaches carrying the scabs to work until police reinforcements arrived. Despite brutal tactics, it took the police an hour to clear the main gate. Many of the pickets were women.

The role of the police was again in evidence at the mass picket on Saturday night. It was again only their presence which allowed the scab papers to get out. Seven per cent of the gigantic police force of London is committed to Wapping. Amongst the printworkers supporters on the march from out of London was a coach-load of printers, engineers and other trade unionists from Oldham in Lancashire.

Local solidarity actions are taking place in many areas on May Day. In Manchester there is a picket of newsagents and wholesalers in the city centre in the early morning.

And on Saturday 3 May printers who have marched from Scotland and the North East, rallying support up and down the land, arrive in London to what will be a massive picket of Wapping at 9 pm that evening.

**THE ANTI APARTHEID Movement (AAM)** is moving into top gear to build the biggest ever demonstration in solidarity with the South African people on 28 June.

By Celia Pugh

The march and festival for people in Namibia and South Africa will assemble at 11 am in Hyde Park for a rally and march to Clapham Common — where Artists Against Apartheid are lining up a platform of top bands.

AAM secretary Mike Terry reported on the plans for the demonstration to a meeting of London AAM groups on 23 April. He explained that the June demonstration will come at a time of heightened attention on South Africa.

In June the black South African union federation COSATU, and the South African student organisations have called for strikes against apartheid. The same month the Commonwealth 'investigation team' will publish its fact finding report, and the United Nations will hold a conference on sanctions which Britain is likely to boycott.

Terry said: 'All these events bring the sanctions issue up front and allow us to remobilise solidarity.'

The task now is to get out the message about the Freedom March, the demonstration called on 28 June. Local AAM groups and supporters in the Labour Party, trade unions, peace and youth movements are asked to distribute leaflets and posters and get agreement for banners to be brought on the day.

On Saturday 21 June, AAM groups outside Lon-

don will have a day of action to leaflet public places. Wednesday 25 June will be 'blitz day' for every London tube station to be leafleted with a final reminder of the Freedom March.

With the estimated cost of the march at £80,000 local groups are asked to raise at least £200. Every member is asked to offer their help with the hundreds of tasks of stewarding, selling AAM badges and newspapers, setting up marquees for stalls and exhibitions.

● For leaflets, posters and offers of help contact: AAM, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 (01-387 7960).

### Ealing NALGO week of action

Ealing NALGO is holding a week of action against apartheid on 12-16 May. Exhibitions, videos and stalls will be held every lunch time from 12.30-2pm in the NALGO canteen, Ealing Town Hall Annex.

There will be lunch-time meetings, with speakers from the South African Congress of Trade Unions, at 12.30pm on Monday at Acton Town Hall, on Wednesday 14 May at Southall social services area office, and on Thursday 15 May at the NALGO canteen. There will be a social on Friday evening, 16 May at West London Trade Union Club, Acton Vale, 7.30-11pm. Admission £2.50, £1.50 unwaged.

Other trade unions are strongly urged to hold similar weeks of action leading up to the Freedom March on 28 June.

### COSATU prepares May Day strike

## Apartheid's pass law fraud

**IN A GESTURE** which changes little for South Africa's majority black population, the apartheid regime has repealed the country's notorious pass laws. A new identity card is being introduced to police black people's movements, and the Group Areas Act, the cornerstone of apartheid will remain in force.

During the 60 years in which the pass laws have been in force, over 18 million black people have served prison terms for pass offences. The purpose of the pass laws was to deprive black people of the right to settle permanently in white areas, particularly in the towns, and so provide a pliable migrant labour force which could be shipped in from the countryside to work under near-slave conditions.

Announcing the changes, which abolish 34 laws, Chris Heunis, who rejoices in the title of minister of constitutional development, explained that freedom of movement 'should not be seen as a free-for-all and a no-holds-barred opportunity to settle anywhere at any time'.

Just to make sure, the pass book which all black people previously had to carry will be replaced by an identity document which everyone must carry. And the Group Areas Act is to stay. This divides the towns into racially segregated areas.

Black people will only be allowed to live where

the apartheid authorities decide they should live. 'Squatting,' said Mr Heunis, 'defined as the illegal occupation of land or building for living purposes, will not be allowed.'

In short, nothing has changed.

Reporting the changes, the *Financial Times* cites an example of the 'orderly urbanisation' the government now wants, at Khayelitsha, 35 kilometres from Cape Town. The authorities plan 14,000 new housing plots which are leased to poor people to erect tents and build shacks. They are surrounded by a 10-foot security fence and patrolled by the army and police.

Black South Africans aren't fooled by the regime's phoney abolition of the pass laws. Against this background the South African unions look set to turn May Day into the biggest day of industrial action in South African history. The National Union of Mineworkers, backed by COSATU, is calling out its members in support of its demand for paid holiday on 1 May to celebrate the centenary of Labour Day.

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